

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of Great Milton Parish Council (GMPC) held at the Pavilion on Monday 17th February 2025, at 7.30pm

Present: B Fox (Vice Chair), Councillors M Horsley (MH), David Harms (DH), Sarah MacMahon (SM) and Andrew Noble (AN)

In attendance: Allison Leigh (Locum Clerk), Jacqueline Wren (Clerk), and the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator.

175/24 Apologies for Absence: Stephen Harrod (Chair), Georgina Heritage (District Councillor)

176/24 Variation of Order of Business: None

177/24 Declarations of members' interests: None

178/24 Reports:

South Oxfordshire District Council

A report was received from the District Councillor. See Attachment 1.

DH noted that new calculations show South Oxfordshire has a land supply of 4.5yrs and that OCC have set the budget to include a 4.99% increase in council tax.

Oxfordshire County Council

A report was received from the County Councillor. See Attachment 2.

The Vice Chair advised that the Police Report should be removed from future agendas as Thames Valley Police have advised they will no longer be providing reports.

179/24 Correspondence and Public Discussion

Updates from Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) were noted.

An invitation to the Community Currents Workshop from River Thame Conservation Trust was received.

180/24 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the 20th January 2025 were approved and signed.

181/24 Actions from the previous meeting: The council reviewed the actions from the previous meetings:

- Vice Chair to review moss on pavement in Oxen Piece
- Photographs for the website needed from DH, SM, AN

- Clerk to complete the mandate changes on Unity account to enable the account switchover

182/24 Training: It was agreed that the council will fund two upcoming training courses with OALC:
 New Clerks' Finance – 30th April
 New Clerk's Training – 8th May
 Clerk to book training and advise council of the costs. It was noted that any funds remaining in the 24/25 budget should be used for these courses.

183/24 Planning Applications: The council discussed the following application:

P25/S0336/HH and P25/S0337/LB

Tanners Cottage Lower End Great Milton OX44 7NF

Single-storey glazed extension to side/rear. Infill existing covered bay to rear.

It was agreed that there is likely to be limited impact as the extension is already a covered area. This property falls within a ward which does not currently have a Councillor, therefore SM was allocated to discuss with the property's immediate neighbours to understand any concerns they may have. The council resolved to ask for an extension to the consultation deadline to allow for a decision to be made at next month's meeting.

184/24 Finance

A Payments authorised:

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Element</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cheque number</u>	<u>Power to Spend</u>
Jacqueline Wren	Clerk's expenses	£33.56	31/1/25	2467	Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 s111
Staff	Staff costs	£172.40	17/2/25	2468	LGA 1972 s112
Staff	Staff costs	£540.48	28/2/25	2469	LGA 1972 s112
Allison Leigh	Locum Clerk - expenses	£58.65	17/2/25	2470	LGA 1972 s111
Allison Leigh	Locum Clerk - February	£600.00	17/2/25	2471	LGA 1972 s111
Bibby Financial Services	Tactical Facilities Management – Dec 24 + Jan 25	£1163.20	17/2/25	2472	Open Spaces Act 1906 s10
Jonathan Dudley	Bulletin – Layout and printing February 2025	£287.60	17/2/25	2473	LGA1972 s 142

Receipts – There were no receipts.

B Bank Reconciliation and Accounts: The bank reconciliation and statement of accounts were agreed and signed.

185/24: Asset inspection: The Locum Clerk noted that the Asset Register required updating with details of the routine inspection of assets for internal audit. The Asset Register was updated accordingly and the Clerk will review in preparation for the forthcoming audit.

186/24 Security in the village: The Neighbourhood Watch coordinator advised that it had been a quiet December and January for security concerns but that he was notified of a break-in on Lower End on 2nd February where a car and cash was stolen. This was reported to Thames Valley Police. The Neighbourhood Watch coordinator emphasised the importance of timely reporting in these instances.

187/24 Items for next agenda or information only

- It was noted that the correspondence address for the council needs to be updated with SODC Planning.
- DH noted another Litter Pick needed before spring growth makes it impractical. Litter on village roads to be added to the agenda for next month.
- The Vice Chair advised that the meeting with Highways has been rearranged for 9th April at 10am.

The meeting closed at 20:30.

The next meeting of Great Milton Parish Council will be held on Monday 17th March starting at 7.30pm in The Pavilion.

Agenda items for the March meeting are due to the Clerk by Wednesday, 6th March 2025

Attachment 1

District Councillor Report
Haseley Brook ward
05 February 2025

Cllr Georgina Heritage



Local Government Reorganisation

As I write this report, there has been no update from Government on Oxfordshire's position. However I thought it would be helpful for parish councils to be aware of the preferred direction of our Council Leader Cllr David Rouane, who is working closely on this matter and involved in daily meetings and discussions in the interests of South Oxfordshire residents. His Leader's Update issued on 24th January is as follows (and a press release was issued to summarise the same):

"Following the publication of its White Paper before Christmas, the government asked upper tier authorities (the County Council in our case) to respond with their views on the nature and pace of change. With this in mind, their cabinet met on 9 January and I, along with the leaders of the other district councils, took the opportunity to set out our view.

The full meeting can be watched [via the Oxfordshire County Council \(OCC\) website](#) but the points which I made were:

- that we should act quickly in order to give residents and businesses confidence that we will continue to deliver excellent services, and;
- that there was a broad consensus that the footprint of the Strategic Authority should be guided by existing institutions such as the Thames Valley Police or the integrated care board area (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West) and that we should make this preference known to government.

Given that this is a decision for OCC, as the 'upper tier' authority, I had intended to leave my comments there. However, since then, Oxford City Council has written to the minister expressing a different (minority) view and the leader of Swindon [has written in their local newspaper](#) about their preference to join a Mayoral Strategic Authority with Oxfordshire and others.

It is my view that we should be looking to work together in a Strategic Authority with those councils in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire who wish to join with us. This is because: these areas all have vibrant economies which will contribute to the sustainable growth which the government is looking for, we have a record of working together in the police and health authorities, we have a shared identity as part of the South East Region, and we have historical connections in that much of South Oxfordshire was in Berkshire prior to the previous local government reorganisation.

As I reported to the December Council meeting, "At the invitation of the Leader of Swindon Borough Council, I joined other council leaders from Oxfordshire and Berkshire to discuss the potential shape of any new Combined Authority, and specifically whether Swindon should be included in any submission made by us.

After listening to the arguments, I have written to the participants to say that I do not support this idea. The reasons for this were that Swindon does not meet the conditions which I have set out above for joining together: They are in different health and police geographies, their long-term identity is one of being the 'Gateway to the West Country' not part of the South East, we have no historical ties, and they are at a very different stage in the economic cycle.

OCC sent their letter and are expecting a reply next week, although government responses don't always run to time, and Oxford City Council have invited council leaders to a meeting on 31 January to discuss this ever-moving picture. I would prefer that OCC made their position clear on a preferred geography as soon as possible and have asked their Leader to do so".

NPPF and Joint Local Plan Update

In mid-January officers ran a planning training session to update councillors on local and national policy. The update covered the new National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024), what's on the planning horizon from government for 2025, and the proposed AI growth zone at Culham, although things are moving fast in the planning world so did not cover more recent announcements like the revival of the Ox-Cam Arc.

There was good news on the Joint Local Plan, which was submitted for independent examination on time in December, with Inspectors Bust and Mulloy appointed at the end of December. By completing and submitting the Joint Local Plan to an accelerated timetable, under transition arrangements it will be tested against the previous housing numbers and the government planning policies set in the NPPF 2023, rather than the new (higher) housing numbers and new policies of the new NPPF 2024.

At the moment when making decisions on planning applications, appeals and enforcement, the adopted local plans and made neighbourhood plans form the development plan, and the emerging Joint Local Plan policies hold limited weight during the examination period (or moderate weight in the case of a minority of policies which attracted little or no objection).

Although the Joint Local Plan will not be required to meet the new higher housing numbers, and once adopted the housing numbers will be pinned to those in the Joint Local Plan for five years, the new NPPF requires us, straight away, to calculate housing land supply differently. A key change is that all authorities must now demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, regardless the age of their local plan. This reversed the changes in the previous NPPF, which had withdrawn the 5 year land supply test for councils where their plan was less than five years old – as is the case in South Oxfordshire. Furthermore, the new NPPF removed a lower, 4 year test for councils who did have to demonstrate a 5 year supply where that council had consulted on a new plan with housing targets and allocations – as is the case in South Oxfordshire with the JLP. Finally, the NPPF requires that all authorities add a

5% buffer on top of the housing requirement, which raises the bar further still. Under the new calculations, South Oxfordshire has a land supply of 4.5 years.

However, it's important to note that in the NPPF there is some protection for areas with a neighbourhood plan that is less than 5 years old and which contains housing policies and housing allocations. Officers anticipate extra interest in neighbourhood planning, and now is a very good time for town and parish councils to produce a neighbourhood plan, or update one in a neighbourhood plan review. For those parishes without a plan, please contact the neighbourhood planning team for help and advice via planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk.

Garden waste service changes in South and Vale

Residents who use the garden waste service in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts will have a change to their service subscriptions this year.

Each year, the two districts combined collect around 25,500 tonnes of garden waste, and a change to how the popular service is paid for is coming this spring to improve the efficiency of the subscription process for residents.

South and Vale District Councils are introducing a permit scheme from April 2025 that will involve customers receiving a sticker permit for their bins to identify them as fully paid-up garden waste customers. This kind of scheme is offered successfully by many other local authorities, including in neighbouring West Oxfordshire.

As this is a change to how the garden waste service is managed, there are actions subscribers will need to take to continue receiving garden waste collections. The new permit payment system opens towards the end of February.

When the new system goes live, all existing customers will be invited to subscribe to the service. Existing customers will be notified directly, with full information on the council websites and each house getting a bin hanger flagging the changes.

Customers will then need to make an annual payment for a permit – this replaces the existing direct debit scheme. Everyone's payment year will run from 1 April to 31 March each year.

When customers sign up they will be sent a garden waste permit sticker to put on the top of the lid of their brown bin. Each bin needs its own permit and all customers will receive a new sticker annually each time they renew.

The permits will help the waste collection crews identify which bins should be emptied. This will ensure that only households that have paid for the service have their garden waste bins emptied and the changes are part of the councils' ongoing work to improve the efficiency and value of public services.

Benefits to customers include a new online system so they can manage their account and change their details much more easily. This will also mean the councils can contact people quickly if there are any major disruptions to the service, such as during adverse weather. When customers pay for a permit, there will be a link to sign up for an account and the account sign up is also available on the councils' websites.

Attachment 2



Focus on Parishes with Cllr Freddie van Mierlo (Chalgrove and Watlington)

January 2025

OCC NEWS

Budget setting: OCC has analysed funding announcements by the government and proposed a balanced [budget](#) for 2025/6, with a recommendation for a 4.99% rise in council tax (with 2% ringfenced for social care). The budget setting process will determine revenue (day-to-day) spending, as well as the future of capital projects like the Watlington Relief Road. On 28th January, the cabinet will sign off its final proposals, which are then voted on at full council on 11th February by all councillors.

Devolution: OCC has [responded](#) to the government's White Paper on devolution and local government reorganisation. The government is seeking to abolish district councils in favour of unitary councils and create groupings of unitaries called strategic authorities (which can come with a mayor). Oxfordshire County Council is the lead authority in the process for our area and has expressed to the government a wish to be included in the first wave of changes. There are clear advantages to this, including avoiding a prolonged period of uncertainty. OCC's response focuses on what geography the strategic authority should take, expressing an interest in forming a Thames Valley authority. Options being suggested for unitarization include an Oxfordshire wide unitary authority, or multiple unitary authorities within Oxfordshire.

Local elections 2025: OCC's [letter](#) to the government's White Paper, includes a preference for local elections to the county council scheduled to take place in May to go ahead as planned.

Safeguarding children: The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) has been replaced by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership ([OSCP](#)). This implements revised statutory guidance made in December 2023. The OSCP will be equally led by three named statutory partners:

- Chief executive of Oxfordshire County Council;
- Chief executive of NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board; and
- Chief constable of Thames Valley Police.

Information on what to do if you think a child is at risk of abuse or neglect can be found here: <https://www.oscp.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child/>

Potholes: OCC's share of a new pothole fixing budget from the government is £24.5 million. Whilst welcome, councils are calling for long term certainty with a multi-year financial settlement from the government. For context, OCC has an annual gap in funding on road maintenance from the government of £45 million.

Government approved 'HIF1' road: Following intervention from the government, planning permission has been granted for a major [infrastructure](#) project around Didcot.

NEWS IN BRIEF

CQC Inspection: The Care Quality Commission is currently inspecting OCC's adult social care.

New year's honours: Fire Chief Rob MacDougall has been [awarded](#) King's Fire Service Medal

Cycle training: Primary schools can request [bike training](#) for children through OCC

Defibs: The [British Heart Foundation](#) has a scheme to apply for a free defibrillator

PARISH ROUND-UP

Not all parishes are covered – below is a selection of the main updates.

Brightwell Baldwin

- 20mph: Officers have confirmed work to install 20mph will begin early in the new year.

Berrick Salome

- Benson Relief Road: Construction [complete](#) on a section of the relief road
- Drainage: Meeting was held with the drainage group to discuss ongoing issues, including water contaminated with sewage rising Thames Water manholes.

Ewelme:

- Wallingford cycling plan (LCWIP): A meeting will be held in January with County, District and Town/Parish Councillors to discuss the development of a Wallingford Area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Lewknor

- Manor Close: No update – awaiting further news from developer & OCC (no response to chasing).
- Hill Road steps: No update – implementation should be this financial year.
- Footpath damage from road traffic accident: Officers have visited the site and will arrange for work to be carried out.

Nettlebed

- Brick kiln: Updates being sought on completion of work to restore the kiln

Watlington

- Relief Road: The application will be determined at a planning committee meeting in February (rather than January), with the budget to be determined also in February (see above).
 - Charlotte Coxe Trust: The accounts will be reviewed and asked to be signed off in January by the Charlotte Coxe Trust Committee; the report by Geldards into the future governance of the trust will either be reviewed at that meeting or at a later meeting in February/March
 - Red Kite View to Cuxham Road path: Representations are being made to relevant stakeholders (Bloor, SSN, OCC) to progress the work to completion as soon as possible
 - Damaged barrier: OCC is seeking quotes for like-for-like replacement. However, as the barrier is not a threat to the highway, no timescale has been given yet for the work.
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