

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

Present: Stephen Harrod (Chair), Bill Fox (Vice Chair), Councillors David Harms (DH), Sarah MacMahon (SM) and Andrew Noble (AN)

In attendance: Jacqueline Wren (Clerk), Georgina Heritage (District Councillor), Andrew Waterman (AW) and Andrew Busby (AB) (South and Vale DCs) and a member of the public.

188/24 Apologies for Absence: Councillor M Horsley

189/24 Variation of order of business: None

190/24 Declarations of members' interests: None

191/24 Haseley Trading Estate

Andrew Waterman (Project Manager) and Andrew Busby (Corporate Landlord) from South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse District Councils gave information about the Council's plans for the site.

The site (known locally as Countax or Ariens) was purchased jointly by SODC with Vale of the White Horse DC in Summer 2024. The property includes the woodland adjacent to the A329 through which there is a public footpath.

- There are a number of dead trees which need to be removed for safety, this work will take place before any further development.
- The Councils plan to invest in the site and retain the largest building (most recently built) and demolish the other dilapidated buildings.
- Planning permission will be sought to develop the site as a vehicle depot for electric fleet, to include parking and charging for waste collection and road maintenance vehicles.

The Chair noted that Le Manoir will be moving their main entrance and asked about the implications for traffic flow and safety.

AW noted that employee numbers on site will be similar to Ariens (approx. 180 people) 6am-5pm operation in general. Traffic modelling will be conducted to assess the network and junction capacity and consider the impact of any development on traffic flow and safety.

The Chair asked whether a roundabout would be possible to combine Manoir entrance and Rectory Rd junction and asked the Council representatives if they would propose this idea at their forthcoming meetings. AW noted that the woodland is protected which would affect any expansion of the junction but agreed to raise this option.

It was noted that the current site is monitored from a security point of view but the DCs would be grateful for any information from local residents if there is concern. AW also noted that the social value of any future development of the site will be considered and initiatives like refuse crews litter-picking in the local area are likely.

There will be a **Public Engagement Event held on Monday 28th April at Little Milton Village Hall 3-7pm** with a team of consultants present (transport, noise etc.). DH to attend.

It was agreed that the Council will publish information on the meeting in the April Bulletin and GH noted she will also include in her monthly report.

192/24 Reports

South Oxfordshire District Council

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

Oxfordshire County Council

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

193/24 Litter

DH thanked GH for her responsiveness in coordinating the recent village litterpick on 8th March. All agreed litter is a clear problem across the parish and county. GH noted similar problems in Lewknor where there is a particular burden of hazardous waste and crews have agreed to check and clear regularly. A similar arrangement could potentially be agreed in Great Milton. She will discuss with Biffa and SODC waste team. It was noted that fly-tipping on The Forties is a particular problem and GH suggested that it may be possible to install cameras. GH agreed to arrange a meeting with the waste team and liaise with DH. It was agreed that Sworford Lane, The Forties and Thame Road are the worst areas.

194/24 Correspondence and Public Discussion

The list of correspondence was reviewed and consultation deadlines noted.

195/24 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the 17th February 2025 were approved and signed.

196/24 Actions from the previous meeting:

The action list from the February Meeting was reviewed.

197/24 Training:

The Clerk noted that two training courses have been booked, and she will let the Council know when there is further training which would be helpful.

198/24 Planning Applications:

The Council discussed the following applications;

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

- SM reported that she has spoken with the property's immediate neighbours, and following a meeting with the applicants, there are no concerns. The

Council resolved to submit their response that there are no concerns regarding this application.

P25/SO543/A

Brimpton Grange Access to Hotel From A40 Milton Common OX9 2JW
Replacement signage.

- The Council discussed the application and resolved to respond that there are no concerns regarding this application.

199/24 Finance

A The following payments were authorized:

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Element</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cheque number</u>	<u>Power to Spend</u>
Shield Maintenance Ltd.	Dog waste – December 2024	£92.82	27/12/24		
	Dog waste – January 2025	£92.82	31/01/25		
	Dog waste – February 2025	£92.82	28/02/25		
	TOTAL	£278.46	17/03/25	2474	Open Spaces Act 1906 s10
Bibby Financial Servies Ltd.	Tactical Facilities Management Ltd. Feb 25	£581.60	17/03/25	2475	Open Spaces Act 1906 s10
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC)	GMPC Membership 2025-2026	£240.00	17/03/25	2476	
Jacqueline Wren	Clerk's Expenses	£26.00	28/02/25	2477	Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 s111
SLCC	Clerk Membership	£150.00	17/03/25	2478	LGA 1972 s111
OALC	New Clerk's Finance Training 30 th April 2025	£42.00	17/03/25	2479	LGA 1972 s111
OALC	New Clerk's Training – 8 th May 2025	£138.00	17/03/25	2480	LGA 1972 s111
Staff	Staff costs	£411.06	31/03/25	2481	LGA 1972 s112
J M Dudley	Bulletin	£311.40	17/03/25	2482	LGA 1972 s142

Receipts – there were no receipts.

B The February bank reconciliation, statement of accounts and bank statements were approved and signed.

The Council resolved not to pre-authorise monthly payments unless this should cause a cashflow problem to suppliers.

The Clerk noted that Unity have requested a call from an authorised person to process the mandate change form which was submitted. The Vice Chair agreed to resolve this.

200/24 Security in the village:

The Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator was not in attendance.

201/24 Items for next agenda or information only

- An insurance pre-renewal questionnaire has been received from the Council's insurers. The current policy is due to renew on 1st June. It was agreed that Insurance should be added to next month's agenda to review the level of cover needed and obtain comparative quotes.
- Following the Tree Survey last year there are works that are due to be completed on 24th March. The Vice Chair has reviewed the survey report and the Council agreed to proceed with the works at a cost of £1220.
- The Council discussed the recent news that the Village Shop and Post Office is to close. It was noted that there are potential options which may make it viable to keep a shop in the village but none are possible without the support of local residents. It was agreed that a **Public Meeting will be held on Monday 31st March at 7pm in the Pavilion to discuss the future of a Village Shop.**

The meeting closed at 20.35

The next meeting of Great Milton Parish Council will be held on Monday 14th April starting at 7.30pm in The Pavilion.

Agenda items for the April meeting are due to the Clerk by Wednesday, 2nd April 2025

Attachment 1

District Councillor Report
Haseley Brook ward
03 March 2025

CLLr Georgina Heritage



Meetings and Council Activity

- ❖ The district council met on Thursday 13 February and approved its 2025-2026 Budget.

Diligent financial management has ensured that South Oxfordshire District Council can deliver a balanced budget for 2025-26 and marks the first time in nine years that the council has not needed to transfer funds from reserves.

Major funding will be made available to support the purchase of more affordable housing across South Oxfordshire. Having already committed £10 million to provide more safe, secure and compliant housing, purchased under the Local Authority Housing Funding (LAHF) schemes, the district council has now committed to make a further £10 million available to support the council's long-term ambitions to meet local housing need.

The budget also includes funding to secure the future of the council's Community Hub on an ongoing basis. This valued service provides practical support and advice for those with cost-of-living concerns or who are finding life difficult.

Since launching in 2020, the Community Hub has supported thousands of residents across the district and provided more than £800,000 in vouchers and grants to households experiencing financial hardship. This has ensured people were able to pay vital energy bills and afford household essentials and food. A further £200,000 has been awarded to local voluntary and community organisations, helping them continue their invaluable support provided to residents.

The councillor grant budget will increase by 50%, to £7,500 per councillor, while the Capital and Revenue grant schemes for voluntary organisations will continue.

The council will continue to fund an ongoing programme to improve leisure centres, including major decarbonisation & refurbishment projects at Thame Leisure Centre, such as solar panels, a sauna and gym equipment replacement. TLC opening hours will be maintained despite the high cost of energy, which renewables will help with.

Council tax for services provided by South Oxfordshire District Council will be set at £151.24 for a Band D property. This means just £2.91 per week for a wide range of services including waste and recycling collections, community support, leisure services, parks and play areas, housing and planning services, environmental health and licensing.

- ❖ Other key items considered at the busy meeting included the council's new council plan. Councillors reviewed *The Way Ahead: Council Plan 2025-2029* and will adopt it going forward.

The Council also formally adopted four neighbourhood plans, marking a significant step forward for local placemaking. A new neighbourhood plan for Berinsfield was welcomed alongside updated plans for Thame, Wallingford, and Crowmarsh, ensuring they continue to carry full weight in planning decisions. The lack of clarity in Clifton Hampden's Neighbourhood Development Order meant this item was refused.

- ❖ An extraordinary district council meeting was then held on 20th February in order to discuss the government's white paper on local government reorganisation.

At the public meeting we discussed a wide range of matters related to the subject, including the two options for the creation of a new unitary authority, either incorporating the whole of Oxfordshire or combining South Oxfordshire with neighbouring Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire. The council has previously expressed the view that a unitary council which covers the whole of the county would be too large to respond to local need.

Earlier this month, councils across Oxfordshire were invited to submit initial proposals for unitary councils by 21 March, with final plans required by 28 November. As part of these discussions, SODC officers have been constructively and openly discussing potential unitary options alongside all councils in Oxfordshire. They have also been holding discussions with West Berkshire Council and the Vale about the possibility of a new unitary council combining the three areas.

- ❖ Back in Haseley Brook, I'm delighted that the second Capital Grants panel meeting resulted in a successful outcome for Little Milton's application towards solar panels; this is the second application for solar panel funding in the Haseley Brook ward and I look forward to seeing the completed work to both Lewknor's and Little Milton's halls. SODC's grants programmes are hugely popular and, as I've recently learned, becoming a rarer offering from many councils. There will be a useful SODC grants advice session on 20th May, and I'll list details of this below.
 - ❖ I was really delighted to attend the opening of Stadhampton's fabulous new playground equipment on Friday 28th March. The ribbon was cut by our MP Freddie van Mierlo, but the hard work of getting to this stage was thanks to the parish council and in particular Cllr Jess Edwards, who sourced the funding and managed this exciting project. It was a pleasure to witness the children's excitement and a great example of a community pulling together to achieve something special. The old playground was very well loved but had reached the end of its life. The exciting new design is accessible, inclusive, and will no doubt be enjoyed by local families for many more years to come.
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Over £1.4 million grants to be available

SODC confirmed that its budget for 2025/2026 includes continued financial support of organisations in the district that help residents, businesses and the environment, meaning South Oxfordshire will benefit from £1,450,000 over the next year through a range of grant schemes to support community projects.

To help organisations plan their applications the council is hosting an event at Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot on Thursday 20 March, with appointments available to book from 12.30-4pm.

Voluntary and community organisations will have the opportunity to discuss projects, ask questions about the application process including eligibility for any of the upcoming grant schemes. Places are limited, and you can book a time slot by emailing grants@southoxfordshire.gov.uk or phone 01235 422405.

The following schemes will be launching over the next year:

- Everyone Active Grant: 1 April - 26 May
- Capital Grant: 2 June - July
- Performing Arts Grant: 28 July - 5 September
- Councillor Community Grants: 18 August - 5 December
- Community Infrastructure Levy Grant: January 2026

As Cabinet member for Communities, I'm so pleased we can continue this vital support for voluntary and community organisations and local businesses over the next financial year. We know how hard it is financially for organisations to do the work they do to help others in our communities and improve the environment that we all cherish so much.

SODC is also hoping to announce further support for businesses and communities through the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) in the coming months.

For more information on the eligibility requirements and the previous projects that SODC has funded, have a look at the [grants pages](#) on their website.

Bringing empty homes back into use

Property owners are being offered support to bring empty homes back into use, to help meet local housing needs. Financial assistance towards refurbishing properties where eligible, rent in advance and help with finding a tenant are some of the support options available to empty homeowners from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils. Property owners could also benefit from reduced VAT for works on empty homes - if the owner is paying the Long-Term Empty Property Premium tax (payable if a property has been empty for more than two years). The council's team can talk property owners through the various benefits and options available for preparing a property for renting out or selling.

An estimated 1,092 properties (549 in South Oxfordshire, 543 in the Vale) are currently empty, but could once more become a home for those who need it most.

Some of these homes are unoccupied for a good reason – such as undergoing major refurbishment or awaiting sale. This initiative will target those properties that may need some extra help in being brought back into use.

Members of the public can also play a part in bringing empty homes back into use by reporting empty properties to the councils. Local residents have already reported 59 empty homes (19 in South Oxfordshire, 40 in the Vale) and 29 are now back in use.

Every empty property has the potential to become a home for someone who really needs it, and demand for affordable housing in our district is very high. It's hoped that the extra help SODC is offering offering property owners will be a real incentive to work with us on turning properties around so they can be a home once more.

Public consultation on charity collection policy

Residents, charities and businesses in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are encouraged to comment on a new policy for charity collections across the two districts. Aimed at safeguarding donors and beneficiaries, ensuring fair access to collection opportunities and preventing unlicensed fundraising, the proposed policy introduces key measures, including:

- A requirement for applicants to provide detailed supporting material about their charity.
- Restrictions on where collections can take place to prevent blanket district-wide collections.
- A minimum of 80 per cent of money donated during house-to-house collections to go to the charitable cause.
- A fairer allocation of street collection opportunities.
- Clear grounds for refusing applications and licence revocations.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are keen to hear from local people and organisations to help shape the final version of the policy before it is implemented.

The consultation is open until 11.59pm on Wednesday 26 March 2025. For more information and to take part, visit southandvale.gov.uk/CharityCollectionsConsultation

As I was quoted in the recent press release on this policy, charity collections play a vital role in supporting good causes, but it's essential to ensure they are well-regulated and fair for everyone. This policy will help protect donors, ensure transparency and create a level playing field for all charities.

Attachment 2



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

February 2025

OCC NEWS

Budget: OCC has set its [budget](#) for the period for 2025/8. The Council had greater flexibility to invest in services this year with an improved settlement from the new government. However, this was conditional on setting council tax at the maximum 4.99%. Additional funding is being put towards our highway network with £50m for maintenance, including on pothole prevention work like reducing flooding and earlier resurfacing. The administration also delivered another year-on-year increase for SEND and children's services, as well as £1 million for early years support. Funding was also secured for the delivery of the Watlington Relief Road. The budget was supported by the Liberal Democrat/Green Group and Labour Group, with the Conservatives abstaining.

Devolution and local government reorganisation: Oxfordshire was not selected by the government to be in the 'fast lane' for reorganisation and devolution. This means the changes will likely take place in 2027/8, rather than 2026. Councils are preparing to put forward proposals for local government reorganisation, with options including a whole Oxfordshire unitary authority, or multiple smaller unitary authorities. These drafts will be submitted by 21 March 2025 with final proposals due in November.

Local elections 2025: The government confirmed that elections to Oxfordshire County Council will take place in 2025. This will take place on the previously agreed new boundaries that include divisions for Chalgrove & Thame West, Watlington & Rotherfield and Benson & Crowmarsh.

Rural inequalities: The county would like to here from residents their experiences of rural inequalities, including difficulties in rural areas in accessing health and social care, housing, employment, and infrastructure. This is part of the 'Oxfordshire [Marmot Place](#)' initiative (after Sir Michael Marmot). Please send your insights to marmot@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Bus services: Changes are being made to some of the subsidised services for rural areas following a retendering:

122/123	Red Rose Travel	Watlington – Reading via Sonning Common/ Kidmore End	Will be operated by Carousel Buses instead of Red Rose Travel Services renumbered 112/113 No timetable changes
126/127	Red Rose Travel	Watlington – Thame via Chalgrove/Postcombe	Will be operated by Carousel Buses instead of Red Rose Travel Services renumbered 116/117 Minor timetable changes, service 117 now serves Moreton

620	Carousel Buses	Princes Risborough – Henley College via Chinnor & Watlington	New service for Henley College students on college days only
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Blue badge abuse crackdown: [Magistrates](#) fine 23 year old man found to be abusing blue badges
OCC now on Bluesky: Follow the council on the social media channel [here](#)

CONSULTATIONS

- Pharmacies: [Input](#) to an assessment of the need for community pharmacies in Oxfordshire (deadline 9 March)
- Home to school transport and post 16 transport policy: [Input](#) to survey by 2nd March
- Free period products: [Input](#) to survey on providing menstruation products in all council buildings
- SEND Conversations: OCC is hosting further information sessions on improvements to SEND services on 18 and 25 March. Sign up [here](#)

GRANTS

Green grants: [Grants](#) are available to support activities for Big Green Week (Deadline 14 March)

PARISH ROUND-UP

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

Brightwell Baldwin:

- Potholes: Reported to OCC for actioning

Ewelme:

- CLEUD: The applicant has submitted further evidence, available on OCC's website. The issue will come before another planning and regulation committee meeting for a decision.
- Drains: Jetting has been scheduled for Parsons Lane
- 136/139 bus: Contract for services 136/139 expires in August 2025, and the tender process for reprocurring these services will start in March. Changes to might be possible to services 33/33A at the same time.

Swyncombe:

- Potholes and drainage: Issues have been reported to OCC Highways

Watlington

- Relief Road: Funding was secured at OCC's budget meeting. The next step will be for the planning application to be determined by the planning committee. If this happens, the road will be able to be progressed to construction
- Charlotte Coxe Trust: The independent report into the future governance options of the trust was provided by Geldards. A meeting has been scheduled for March 13th for the Charlotte Coxe Trust committee to consider its findings and agree on a way forward.
- Red Kite View to Cuxham Road path: SEE have committed to fixing the severed cables which will allow the contractor to finish the work on behalf of Bloor Homes.