

# Great Milton Parish Council

Clerk: Jacqueline Wren

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## **DRAFT Minutes of the Great Milton Parish Council (GMPC) Parish Council Meeting held at the Pavilion on Monday 16th June 2025, at 7.30pm**

Present: Stephen Harrod (Chair), Councillors David Harms (DH), Andrew Noble (AN) and Malcolm Horsley (MH).

In attendance: Jacqueline Wren (Clerk), Judith Edwards (JE, County Councillor) and one Member of the Public.

### **36/25 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Vice Chair Bill Fox and Councillor Sarah MacMahon.

### **37/25 Variation of order of business**

The Council agreed to bring the discussion regarding the planning application for the Haseley Trading Estate forward on the agenda so the County Councillor could participate in this discussion and move on to her next Parish Council.

### **38/25 Signing of Declaration of Acceptance Forms**

Stephen Harrod signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chair and it was noted that Bill Fox had signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chair prior to the meeting.

### **39/25 Declarations of members' interests**

There were no declarations of interest in matters on the agenda.

### **40/25 Reports**

#### **Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)**

The County Councillor's Monthly Report was noted – See Attachment 1.

County Councillor Judith Edwards noted that she is still new to the position but navigating new connections in order to raise issues with the relevant people. She is on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee as well as the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee but her first priority is representing the community in Chalgrove and Thame West. JE noted that she received correspondence from constituents on Thame Road and The Forties regarding the state of the road and this has been forwarded to Highways and she will report back with their response. There is a good budget for maintenance but such a lot of issues after the winter and significant back-log.

The Chair noted that the Forties pothole in particular is damaging vehicles and posing a danger to cyclists – MH and a Member agreed that the safety issue is really important and it is only a matter of time before a cyclist is seriously injured. DH noted that Fixmystreet can work efficiently in other cases, as another problem in the centre of the village was raised and fixed very quickly.

JE raised the proposed Oxford Congestion Charge as this was announced after her report. The intention of the scheme is to reduce traffic going in and out of Oxford, reduce congestion and primarily ensuring buses can run to time better. It

is proposed as a short term fix while Botley Road still closed. Another benefit may also be additional funds to reduce the costs of Park & Ride and other public transport. The Chair noted Oxford traffic congestion is a very longstanding issue. The proposal includes a £3 or £5 charge – theoretically enough to change behaviour but not be a significant financial penalty. All agreed that the capacity at the Park&Ride will need to be enough to cope with increased custom if people not driving in which it currently does not have.

### **South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)**

The District Councillor's Monthly Report was noted – See Attachment 2.

## **46/25 Planning**

### **P25/S1653/FUL**

#### **Haseley Trading Estate**

Redevelopment of the site as a Vehicle Depot retaining one of the buildings as a workshop to contain offices and welfare. Works to include all associated external works.

#### **Consultation ends 10<sup>th</sup> July**

The Chair noted a very well formulated response from a member of the public leading a local action group objecting to the plans. Upcoming meeting with Great Haseley, Little Milton and Stadhampton PCs on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss. A member of the public asked has whether a cost benefit analysis and environmental impact assessment been carried out, also will they be using the Forties as not suitable for HGVs.

The Chair noted that the Highways response is key and we hope to hear soon. JE noted that Highways is OCC. There was discussion about HGVs entering and exiting site, the risk to pedestrians crossing the road. Le Manoir will be changing their main entrance onto the A329 within a few yards of the Rectory Rd junction with the resulting combination being particularly dangerous. The Chair mentioned that he suggested a roundabout in this location some time ago but the idea was rejected and asked whether this could this be reconsidered? Looks to be enough space there to do it. Already been fatalities on that bit of road – slowing traffic down would help. JE said she would raise this question with Highways.

The Clerk noted at previous meeting significant concern regarding traffic through Little Milton which is narrow and sections of road where lorry and car cannot pass. Residents also worried about damage to buildings as well as noise and disturbance.

MH noted that no contingency plan from SODC. AN noted enforcement of weight limits needs to be considered as buses coming through village the other day so currently weight limit not enforced.

DH noted that the District Councillor's Report implies that this development is very likely to go ahead and highlights mitigating strategies. AN noted past legal case between SODC and Grundon who were based at their own premises not at Council Depot therefore raising the question of whether the Council need to own the premises at all.

Council resolved to continue discussion at the meeting with other local Parish Councils on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> and formulate a coordinated objection to the application.

## **41/25 Correspondence and Public Discussion**

The list of correspondence was noted with some discussion about an email from a village resident regarding the possibility of placing bird spikes on the swings, this was passed on to the Mike Block on the Rec Committee. Clerk to follow up.

**42/25 Pavements, verges and mowing**

There was discussion about the current mowing contractor and although there has been general improvement since the meeting with them last Autumn the service is still inconsistent. There was discussion about retendering the contract and the Council resolved that the Clerk will clarify the terms of the existing contract and further discussion will be deferred until the July PC Meeting.

The Chair noted that in the past SODC has carried out deep cleans on particularly dirty areas of pavements or verges and asked the Clerk to contact the District Councillor to request this in Oxen Piece to clear the moss from the pavements.

With regard to littering and fly-tipping DH noted that a sign has been put up on Forties to say that cameras in action. It was noted that ANPR technology is expensive but may be an option if the problem continues to be bad.

**43/25 Minutes of the previous meeting**

To minutes of the meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 must be signed by the Vice Chair who presided at this meeting – Clerk to action.

**44/25 Actions from the previous meeting**

MH to move speed indicator from Thame Road to Church Rd.

The Clerk explained that after contacting HugoFox it seems there would be no additional cost to combine the content from the new and old sites and for HugoFox to continue to host the site on the new domain. The contract with ParishOnline is due to finish at the end of June. The Council resolved to stay with HugoFox and terminate the contract with ParishOnline since they can host the new domain and emails and provide a better user interface and functionality. Clerk to action.

**45/25 To consider the following new or amended policies:**

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Freedom of Information procedure and publication scheme

The Clerk noted that she has started preparing these updated policies from the model documents and will distribute them for consideration at the July meeting.

**46/25 Planning Applications**

The following applications were discussed:

**P25/S1522/O**

**Land adjacent to The Old Stable Yard, Thame Road, Great Milton**

Outline planning application for the erection of detached self build dwelling with access parking and amenity space.

The Council were not aware of any concerns regarding this application but resolved to consult the Vice Chair since this falls within his ward. Clerk to contact Vice Chair and ensure timely response.

**P25/S1441/S73**

**Brimpton Grange, Access to Hotel from A40, Milton Common OX9 2JW**

Variation of condition 3 (Schedule of Materials) on planning application P17/S1067/FUL – changes to windows materials. (Erection of six detached and two semi-detached dwellings).

No concerns

The following planning decisions were noted:

**P25/S0998/HH**

**Lych Gate Cottage, Church Road, Great Milton OX44 7PB**

Single storey rear extension & reduction of rear garden to provide extended patio.

- PERMISSION GRANTED

**P25/S1268/LB**

**Le Manoir Aux Quat Saisons, Church Road, Great Milton OX44 7PD**

Reroofing of the Flower House building with associated repair works.

- PERMISSION GRANTED

**47/25 Finance**

**A** The Council agreed to authorise the following payments:

Payee	Element	Amount	Date	Minute Ref Order Agreed	Power to Spend
Shield Maintenance Ltd.	Dog waste – June 2025	£92.82	18/06/25		OSA s10
Bibby Financial Servies Ltd.	Tactical Facilities Management Ltd. May 25	£581.80	18/06/25	150/24	OSA s10
Castle Water	Allotments Water	£6.10	18/06/25		Small Holding & Allotments Act 1908 s23
Community Heartbeat Trust	Annual Support	£162.00	18/06/25		Public Health Act 1936 s234
Home Start Oxfordshire	Donation	£100	18/06/25	26/25D	LGA s137
OALC	Finance for Councillors	£42.00	18/06/25	10/25	LGA s112
Jonathan Dudley	Bulletin - June	£335.20	18/06/25		

**B** The **Bank Reconciliation** was received and signed. The Statement of Accounts and Bank Statements up to 31st May 2025 were noted.

**C** **Scribe** – The Clerk noted that the accounts are now up and running on the new system.

**48/25 Training** – No new training opportunities were identified.

**49/25 Casual Vacancy**

MH noted that he has received some interest in the Councillor vacancy and will suggest they come to a PC meeting. DH noted that he is also continuing to discuss the position with people who may be interested.

**50/25 Security in the village:** The Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator was not in attendance. No other matters were reported.

**51/25 Items for next agenda or information only**

The Council discussed the Allotments with regard to maintenance of vacant or overgrown allotments. The Clerk noted that she has received concern from some Allotment holders about overgrown areas and young trees which could prove costly to remove if they are allowed to grow. It was noted that there are currently no vacant allotments and the Council agreed that while this is the case it is preferable to have the income. AN agreed to continue as Allotment Manager.

The Chair requested that the Clerk to invite the District Councillor to the next meeting.

The Council discussed press coverage of the Haseley Trading Estate and decided that raising awareness is important. Clerk to send Minutes of May meeting to Oxford Mail.

Meeting closed at 20.38

***The next meeting of Great Milton Parish Council will be held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July starting at 7.30pm in The Pavilion.***

***Agenda items for the July meeting are due to the Clerk by Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025***

## Attachment 1

County Councillor Report  
Chalgrove & Thame West Division  
8 June 2025

Cllr Judith Edwards



### My Meetings and Council Activity

I'm honoured to have been elected as County Councillor for the Chalgrove and Thame West division. Thank you to those who supported me, whether by voting, volunteering or sharing your hopes and concerns for our communities. Now that the election is over however, I'm very much everyone's councillor so am very happy to work with everyone, whatever their political persuasion!

I've been nominated on to the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny and the People Overview & Scrutiny Committees. They both have a strong health and care focus, with the former being mostly NHS and the latter being internal so public health and adult social care.

My first impressions of County Hall is of a big and complex organisation, with a lot of expertise amongst the councillors. The sheer size of the council means that it's hard to get your head around, but I'm doing my best on what's a very steep learning curve! Given that I've spent much of my career in and around local government, I'm constantly surprised by how much there is to learn. I'll try to share any bits and pieces that I come across that may be of interest to others as I go.

The diary so far has been mostly packed with training sessions of various sorts – so far I've gone to:

- A full day's introduction to the council
- A session on council procedures
- Highways and road safety briefing
- Training on the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Code of Conduct training

In terms of the formal meetings so far, I've been to Full Council and the Health Overview Committee & Scrutiny Committee. Full Council was the annual meeting of the council and mostly electing councillors to various positions and committees. More of that below.

The **Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee** was really interesting and will give me a really good opportunity to learn about and challenge the range of health services available in our part of Oxfordshire. The Committee also covers Public Health and I was excited to hear more about the work with Professor Marmot's team to research how Oxfordshire County Council could do more to tackle health inequalities. There's a particular focus on rural inequalities as part of this work, and I'll be taking a keen interest in this, with a view to understanding how services in rural areas make a difference to helping our residents and communities live healthier lives, whether through bringing

people together and strengthening communities or supporting mental or physical well-being. Look out for more on this as time goes on.

On a local level, I'm working hard to understand the priorities in the Chalgrove and Thame division and I'm very grateful to parish councils for their assistance with this and for getting me up-to-speed with local concerns and projects. These include ongoing flooding issues, highways problems and support for the family hub in Chalgrove.

In addition to attending meetings at Great Haseley, Tetsworth, Tiddington, Stadhampton, Great Milton and Chalgrove parishes this month, I also attended the AGM of the First Steps Chalgrove and Watlington Family Hub. I joined Freddie van Mierlo MP, Sir Ed Davey MP and Cllr Kate Gregory on 6 June with our bikes and the press to keep up the pressure for the Haddenham to Thame Greenway.

## **Council Information**

A **full council meeting was held on 20<sup>th</sup> May**, the first meeting of all 69 councillors since the election and the first of the new Liberal Democrat administration. As well as the new chairs of council and committees, the new cabinet was also presented at the meeting. Cllr Liz Leffman continues as Leader, with Cllr Neil Fawcett taking on the role of Deputy Leader (with cabinet responsibility for resources including cultural services and libraries).

Other cabinet member appointments were as follows:

- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care: **Cllr Tim Bearder**
- Cabinet Member for Highways and Mobility: **Cllr Andrew Gant**
- Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services: **Cllr Sean Gaul**
- Cabinet Member for Public health and Inequalities: **Cllr Kate Gregory**
- Cabinet Member for Community Safety: **Cllr Jenny Hannaby**
- Cabinet Member for Future Economy and Innovation: (Covering Enterprise Oxfordshire, Innovate Oxfordshire, community wealth building) **Cllr Ben Higgins**
- Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation: **Cllr Dan Levy**
- Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy and Climate Action: **Cllr Judy Roberts**

Cllr Liz Leffman made the following statement regarding the council's goals and priorities for the coming year:

*"As we embark on a new administration, we will build on the work of the past four years to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier place for all our residents.*

*"We will work with partners across the county to combat flooding, we will tackle the potholes that have resulted from years of cuts to funding for our highways, and we will continue to develop sustainable transport and active travel in all our communities.*

*"We will seek to create innovative financial solutions while ensuring that we are run as efficiently and cost effectively as possible, so that we can pay for the crucial services we need to deliver for the*

*Oxfordshire public, and for the benefit of future generations. We want to work hard to help create the conditions for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.*

*“Our focus on special educational needs (SEND) remains strong. Recent feedback from inspectors has been that we are very much on the right track.*

*“As such we believe it is now the right moment to have the cabinet member for children’s services focusing on SEND directly alongside all of the other hugely important services provided for children and young people by the county council.”*

## **Resurfacing Plans 2025/26**

There are temporary traffic regulation notices for the A418 Thame Bypass and Oxford Road in Thame **in June 2025**, to facilitate carriageway surface dressing works which I’m sure will be good news for residents. OCC is in the process of a £7.4 million road resurfacing programme this spring, aiming to improve nearly 100 roads across the county. The initiative involves surface dressing treatments to over one million square metres of carriageway. This preventive maintenance approach is designed to extend the lifespan of roads and enhance driving conditions. The council emphasises the importance of this work in maintaining road quality and urges motorists to stay informed about upcoming works and to drive cautiously in treated areas.

The resurfacing method offers many advantages, including:

- Sealing the road surface to keep out water, one of the major causes of deterioration and potholes.
- Reducing the deterioration of the road surface.
- Restoring the necessary level of skid resistance to reduce skid-related traffic collisions.
- Enabling worn out road surfaces to last longer, increasing the time before structural maintenance is required.
- Maximising the cost effectiveness of limited highway maintenance budgets.
- Minimising traffic disruption and congestion as large areas of roads – up to 100,000 square metres – can be treated in a single day.
- The work is highly weather dependent and cannot be completed in wet conditions.

Updated details about the programme, including a map showing where and when the work will be taking place, is available on Oxfordshire County Council’s [website](#).

Other areas on the programme for this financial year include:

- Structural works to the roadway in **Milton Common** in August
- Surface dressing on the road through **Stoke Talmage on 9 June**.

## **Every roadside drainage gully to be cleaned this year**

Work to clean and empty every highway drainage gully in Oxfordshire this year - and every year going forward - is now under way.

***For the Chalgrove and Thame West division, the scheduled dates this year are 1<sup>st</sup> June – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025***

The enhanced programme began in Wheatley last month, and contractors working on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council are planning to clean nearly 145,000 highway drains, gullies, manholes and catchpits by the end of March 2026.

The £2.6 million programme is taking place after an additional £1.5m investment to improve highway drainage was approved in the council's 2025/26 budget.

Drain cleaning was previously carried out on a four-year cycle, although high priority drains – such as those in areas most at risk of flooding and on high-speed roads – were cleaned more regularly. The additional investment will be used to empty gullies, carry out improved drainage management, and repair the infrastructure connecting the gullies to the outlets. Improving drainage also helps protect roads by getting water off the surfaces, reducing the risk of potholes forming during freezing weather.

Waste is removed from the drains using suction pipes and then they are cleaned with jets of water. Some may require digging out by hand if a lot of silt has accumulated.

It is expected that the work will cause minimal disruption, although there might be temporary traffic lights or manually operated stop-go signs in operation if lane or road closures are necessary. Motorists will be asked to make sure their vehicles are not blocking access to drains when the work is due to take place, and to take care when driving past gully emptying operations.

The cleaning programme is being carried out by specialist operator Drainline on behalf of the council's principal highway maintenance contractor M Group.

## **Budget**

For those who haven't seen this previously, the OCC budget for 2025/26 was approved in April and some of the highlights are as follows:

- An additional £58.8 million fixing potholes
- An additional £17.2 million for children's services
- An additional £1.14 million for SEND
- An additional £10.8 million for Adult Social Care
- An additional £11.8 million for greener schools and public buildings
- Unlocking £22.5 million of developer contributions
- An additional £1.8 million for rural active travel including £200k for the Haddenham and Thame Greenway
- £3.6 million to increase the frequency of gully clearing from every 4 years to annually
- Park & Ride prices frozen for 2025/26

## **Young people review Oxfordshire's targeted youth support service**

Young people have provided positive feedback about OCC's targeted youth support service as part of a peer review, published on 27th May 2025.

The service works with children and young people at times of difficulty with the aim of preventing problems escalating to the point where police, social services or other authorities need to become involved.

OCC initiated a peer review – involving the National Youth Agency, representatives from the youth sector, as well as trained young reviewers – to ensure the service continues to meet the needs and aspirations of the young people it serves and supports. It was originally launched in 2021. The peer review found that the targeted youth support service has a clear sense of purpose that is widely understood throughout the council and by most of its partners, and valued by young people.

The targeted youth support service team is highly regarded by other practitioners and is delivering some high quality youth work. It was noted that the service has been purposefully developed through good recruitment, with a clear remit and a flexible approach to need. It was evident there is a person centred, strength based approach to supporting individual young people's needs and circumstances.

The reviewers observed that quality detached youth work is being delivered in some areas of the county, with youth workers clearly knowing their communities well and engaging with diverse and underrepresented groups.

Cabinet member for Children, Education and Young People's Services Sean Gaul stated that the review's findings are encouraging, however he will ensure the council will never become complacent, particularly in any initiative designed to help and support at a time of greatest need.

## **Grants and Cost of Living**

**Hardship fund:** OCC's hardship fund (Resident Support Scheme) is launched in June. Phone: 01865 804171

**Home Upgrade Grants:** OCC & its partner AgilityEco is reaching out directly to households who will qualify to benefit from Home Upgrade Grants (to improve energy efficiency for 'off-grid' homes)

**Councillors' grants launching soon:** OCC allocates a small pot of funding to each county councillor to spend on important projects in their division. The criteria and timetable for these grants will be launched soon so watch this space.

## Attachment 2

District Councillor Report  
Haseley Brook ward  
29 May 2025

Cllr Georgina Heritage



### My Meetings and Council Activity

May has been a busy month with the new council year beginning, and lots of activity within my portfolio such as working on SODC's developing arts and culture strategy, and attending the opening of Thame's fabulous new art trail. For the Haseley Brook ward specifically, further into this report I will focus on Haseley Trading Estate since, understandably, this is the subject I've received the most correspondence and meeting requests about over recent weeks.

Our first **full council meeting** of the year was the annual meeting of council on 15<sup>th</sup> May. With new members joining the Lib Dem administration following district byelections, it was an appropriate time for the Liberal Democrat group to make a friendly and respectful break from our formal partnership with the Green party. We have greatly enjoyed working with the Green group and will continue to do so, albeit from a different perspective... being the second largest party, they will now form the opposition at SODC!

Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan was elected as chair of the council, taking over from Cllr Kellie Hinton. The Green Party's Cllr Andrea Powell was appointed as vice chair, in recognition of her hard work and excellent input when part of the administration.

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With two vacancies resulting from the dissolution of the Lib Dem-Green partnership, Leader Cllr David Rouane also confirmed his new cabinet. Cllr Tony Worgan joins the Cabinet as the member responsible for Economic Development and Regeneration. He previously served on several of the council's committees, including Scrutiny, Joint Audit and Governance and Planning. Cllr Leigh Rawlins returned as Cabinet Member for Corporate Services having previously had Cabinet roles as the member responsible for Planning and Finance. Alongside Corporate Services, Cllr Rawlins will be responsible for most of the Policy and Programmes service area, with Planning Policy remaining with Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson.

The new cabinet has been confirmed as:

- Councillor David Rouane– Leader, plus legal and democratic services and communications
- Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers – Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Hub
- Councillor Tony Worgan– Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration
- Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker – Cabinet Member for Finance and Property Assets
- Councillor Georgina Heritage – Cabinet Member for Communities
- Councillor Sam James-Lawrie – Cabinet Member for Environment

- Councillor Leigh Rawlins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Policy and Programmes
- Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson – Cabinet Member for Planning

Cllr David Rouane delivered his Leader's Report and said: "As we work towards delivering Local Government Reorganisation that will provide the best outcomes for our communities, this Cabinet will bring significant experience to help us continue to focus on priorities like getting our innovative Joint Local Plan adopted, and delivering more council-owned social housing."

In terms of my own activity within the ward over the past few weeks, as previously mentioned the Haseley Trading Estate proposal has generated the most work, activity and correspondence. I've recently received emails citing my "support for the change of use" of this site, and questioning the wisdom of the proposal in light of local government reorganisation. I always try to answer questions as comprehensively as possible in emails and meetings, particularly at parish councils' annual meetings with members of the public present, but I feel the above queries should be clarified for the benefit of parish councillors and residents reading this report.

To address support of the plan... I am fiercely protective of my ward and I always strive to do the best for residents, so I'd like to mention some of the areas of this proposal that make it nuanced rather than a black and white situation.

One of the most misunderstood factors seems to be about existing use and permissions. To clarify, there is no change of use involved in this proposal. Although named "Haseley Trading Estate", this is an industrial estate with all the uses and permissions this status entails. It would be very difficult to completely oppose permissions and uses that have existed here for many years.

One of the factors which made the site attractive to South and Vale councils was this very fact – it is a registered industrial site in terms of permissions - it requires no change of use. As a further example, another factor was electricity supply – there is a substation on the site. Some sites viewed by the councils would have required highly costly additional supply and connection. The councils also took on board that the adjoining woodland plus additional screening mean the site can be discreet and out of public view, which is preferable for most residents in any area.

The one main disadvantage of this site is of course that it sits on the edge of the South district which isn't ideal. However the councils considered over 400 possible sites and if a more centrally located estate with relevant permissions and accessibility had been available, they would have bought or leased it. This didn't happen; Haseley Trading Estate was unfortunately the only site that fitted the bill almost entirely, except for the location being further out than preferred.

Haseley Trading Estate was on the market anyway, and any industrial or logistics operator could have purchased it. Alternatively, a landlord could have purchased it who was looking to lease out individual units to different industrial trades, each with their own vehicles, operating times and environmental considerations. I have personal experience of a site like this in which the majority landlord has no interest whatsoever in the surrounding village or the noise, pollution and traffic activity generated from his industrial estate, as long as his tenants pay their rent. It's an ongoing battle for those who live near the site and, according to my own experience at least, it might be preferable to have the buck stop with a council rather than an uncaring landlord with multiple industrial businesses as tenants.

I remain particularly keen that concerns regarding traffic on the A329 will be addressed, particularly for the village of Little Milton. I've been having discussions about this with officers at every level at SODC, though it will evidently be OCC Highways which will lead on this. To this end, I will work with County Councillor Judith Edwards (Chalgrove & Thame West) to promote all possible mitigations to any traffic plan.

With regard to questions about the wisdom of the plan bearing in mind local government reorganisation, it is a statutory requirement to collect waste from households and, since the current Culham site lease will expire in 2026 and there is no opportunity to renew (the site is due to be developed), there was absolutely no alternative but to look for a new site for vehicles at this time.

No-one knows when LGR will happen in Oxfordshire. It is up to the government to advise, and we don't expect to know the direction the government wants us to take for some months, after which there will likely be a minimum of two years before the councils are migrated to a unitary authority. Neither do we know which proposal the government will prefer... there are three on the table for Oxfordshire. Our own leaning may be towards a smaller unitary, like the Ridgeway proposal of South, Vale and West Berks for example. However, Government may take a very different view and could opt for the county-wide proposal or the Greater Oxford proposal instead. It's all up in the air at the moment and it's in the hands of the government.

Whatever happens with local government reorganisation, bins will still need to be emptied and the vehicles will need to be parked somewhere. If the vehicle depot location turns out to be unsuitable for the new unitary authority, there will at least be an asset to sell.

So ultimately, this is not about me being in favour of the proposal; it's about me having to take on board the realities of the situation. Of course I would prefer it not to be in Haseley Brook... I can't think of any councillor who would choose to be in this position with residents.

What I do hope to do is remain engaged with the process and encourage all possible mitigations for the benefit of residents.

It's important to remember that the estate will not be used as a waste transfer site, just a vehicle depot, so my interest is in minimum disruption for surrounding villages in terms of traffic, and of course highways and pedestrian safety. As I mentioned previously, this is something I'm actively engaged in. I will continue to attend meetings with SODC officers and I will also engage with OCC Highways and the relevant county councillor.

Although all vehicles would be cleaned to mitigate environmental impact, I have also been requested by some residents to ask about extensive air quality surveys to safeguard against potential odours, which I did in a meeting with officers just this week.

I will strive for every mitigation and condition possible for the benefit of the surrounding villages, especially where Highways and traffic plans are involved. I do hope that in return residents can appreciate the position we're in, bearing in mind the councils' need to provide a vehicle depot for statutory operations when the Culham lease expires, plus of course the existing industrial permissions for this particular estate. This is not about me being supportive of the plan, it's about

trying to be as pragmatic as possible and finding ways to be genuinely effective. Any councillor would be up against the same difficulties in this position.

If I were to state I'm just outright against the proposal before the planning consultation process has even begun, or without considering the realities of the situation, I would just be grandstanding for the sake of popularity. That wouldn't be fair on anyone. It would also put me in a position of predetermination which could affect any subsequent voting influence I might have. I'm in this for the long haul and hope to be able to represent residents' interests throughout the process, so I need to approach the situation in a fair, honest and pragmatic way. I genuinely recognise the emotion that some people are feeling.

For the residents of Haseley Brook, I have and will continue to focus on material considerations and explore the art of the possible for residents. I am always willing to try and answer residents' questions, or else direct questions to the appropriate officers.

### Planned IT Downtime

From Saturday 24 May, for at least a week, many of the Council's IT systems are unavailable to the public (and internally to services) as they are transferred to inhouse hosting.

This is a major piece of planned essential maintenance work on the council's IT systems and a crucial part of the move from Capita to inhouse IT. This approach is the only one that will work and maintain the integrity of the systems and data.

This work impacts a significant proportion of the council's services – for example, it won't be possible for people to view the planning registers and applications (or comment on applications) or submit land searches.

Where relevant, planning consultations will be extended by 14 days to accommodate the downtime.

The garden waste permit payment system is unaffected, as are council tax payments and the general customer enquiries form.

### Capital Grant Scheme

The popular Capital Grant Scheme opens again on 2<sup>nd</sup> June (closes 25<sup>th</sup> July).

There's a total budget available of £320,000 to award for capital projects that take place in the district or within a three-mile radius of the district boundary. You can request a minimum of £5,000 and a maximum of £75,000 but no more than 50 per cent of your total project cost. Your total project cost must be at least £10,000 but no set maximum cost.

Town and parish councils, community groups and not-for-profit organisations are all eligible to apply. More information can be found here:

[Capital Grant Scheme 2025/26 - opening 2 June 2025 - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

### What do you think of our waste services?

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are inviting residents to have their say on how rubbish and recycling are handled across the districts.

A new waste services survey is now live, giving people the chance to share their experiences and opinions on everything from household waste and recycling collections to street cleaning and waste reduction initiatives. By taking part, residents can help shape the future of local waste services, highlighting what's working well and where improvements can be made.

Please take the survey by visiting [southandvale.gov.uk/2025WasteSurvey](https://southandvale.gov.uk/2025WasteSurvey)

Comments are open until 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

This waste survey focuses on services provided by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. It does not cover any questions relating to Household Waste Recycling Centres as these services are owned and managed separately by Oxfordshire County Council.