

STANDLAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Standlake Parish Council, held in the Youth Club, Church End, on 9th December 2023 at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr. B. Parnham	Chairman
Mr. J. Rippin	Vice Chairman
Mrs. A. Knipe	
Mrs. J. Macdonald	
Mr. D. Jeffcoat	
Mr. J. Clements	
Mr. B. Smith	

Mr. D. Bevan	Clerk
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WODC Cllr. Ms. L. Nicholls, Mr. M. Lee.

1. APOLOGIES – OCC Cllr Mr. D. Levy, WODC Cllr. Mr. C. Maynard.
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest.
3. PUBLIC ITEMS – Mr. Lee said that, as a new resident, he was attending mainly to observe but did have questions regarding Thames Water (TW) and what works had been recently carried out. Mr. Parnham explained what had been done, the current situation, and future plans.
4. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS – see Cllr. Levy's reports attached to these minutes.

Cllr. Nicholls said that WODC was very concerned about the increasing number of serious accidents at Barnard Gate and that they were engaging with OCC to examine solutions. Cllr. Nicholls said that a scheme has been set up to distribute fruit trees free of charge, to suitable organisations who have access to public land on which they could be planted. There was some discussion as to what land might be available and Mrs. Macdonald will investigate. Finally, she said people should be extra aware of scammers during the holiday season.

5. PLANNING –

23/02928/CLP Certificate of Lawfulness (Construction of an additional storey and erection of side and rear extensions to existing property along with construction of three ancillary outbuildings and the addition of hardstanding (all of which previously detailed in applications 22/02421/CLP and 22/01898/PN56)) | Manor Field House 41B High Street Standlake Witney Oxfordshire OX29 7RH. After much discussion it was not clear exactly what councillors were being asked as it appears that this application has been approved under 'permitted development' rules. The clerk will ask the planning officer for clarification.

6. MINUTES - Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 14th November 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated to all members, were agreed as a true record, and were signed by the chairman.

7. MATTERS ARISING

Sewage/Flooding - Mr. Parnham said that he had just received from TW information on the sewage network in Standlake but had not had time to review it and will do so for the January meeting.

Roads/Speedwatch/20mph - Mrs. Knipe reported (by email) the following: 104 offenders were reported to TVP during November with a maximum speed of 51mph. 17 sessions were held and typically we are now seeing only a 1% offending rate per session. The 20mph limits are now in place and Speedwatch are arranging sessions in these areas. I am also pleased to report 2 new volunteers have come forward and the intention is to get these volunteers trained in January. Traffic calming/crossing points/SIDS: discussion continues with OCC and updates to follow in due course.

Playground/Recreation Ground – There is a damaged section on the carousel in the Rack End playground. The damaged section has been taped off and contractors have been asked to repair/replace as required.

Environment/Nature Recovery Network - There was nothing urgent to report.

8. CORRESPONDENCE – letter of thanks from First and Last Mile Bus Company for the council's support of their application to OCC for grant to maintain the bus service: the application was successful.

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9. ACCOUNTS – The clerk reported that the accounts remained in a satisfactory state and were within budget.

The following accounts received were approved: (paid*)

D C Bevan - clerk salary & expenses	£1648.70*
HMRC - clerk PAYE	£393.8

10. BUDGET 2024/25 – The clerk said that there were no significant changes needed to the Budget agreed on 14th November. Mr. Parnham proposed that the Precept be set at £30,000 This was agreed unanimously.

11. CAR PARK ENTRANCE – Mr. Jeffcoat had reported that there is a deep pothole at the entrance to the car park. The clerk has received an estimate of £120 from Absolute Solutions to fill this and roll flat and proposed this be accepted: passed unanimously.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Mr. Parnham said that the next meeting will be held in the Youth Club on Tuesday 9th January 2024 at 7.30 pm. He thanked the councillors and clerk for their hard work throughout the year and wished them and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

13. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.55pm.

Chairman Date

Dan Levy - County Councillor Report, December 2023

Budget

The budget at County Hall is currently being created. The headline figures are that there are £36m of pressures, caused by underfunding, by demographic changes and by inflation, including a higher than expected rise in the National Living Wage by 9.8% with no additional money from the government that announced it. We spend over half the budget on adult and children's services, including social care. The County Council is making savings, and becoming more efficient. For instance we are building new childrens' homes, including one in Aston, to enable us to look after Oxfordshire children in the county.

The headline gap between expected income and expected spending for 24-25 currently stands at £9m, which we will have to fill to create a balanced budget. Despite this we are in a better position than most other County Councils of all political persuasions.

There is a consultation open, which can be found on the County Council website. We do want to hear from as many residents as possible.

Roads

There was a planned closure of the road between Standlake and Stanton Harcourt/Northmoor between 6th and 8th December between 9-30 and 3-30 each day. This was for bridge work. Timings were set to permit school traffic. The work finished early, and I hope wasn't too disruptive.

Unfortunately, there have also been a set of road closures for urgent water mains work on the roads through Northmoor.. Thames Water has requested these with no notice. Some of the signage put up hasn't made it clear that through traffic is disrupted but access to the village centres of Northmoor and Bablockhythe is retained, and TW have been asked to improve this.

There is also a closure planned for Tar Lane, between Stanton Harcourt and Witney, in January, to replace the bridge parapets on the A40 crossing. That will last several weeks.

There was another serious crash at the Barnard Gate junction a few weeks ago. Officers are investigating how to make this crossing safe. It was going to be part of the reworking of the A40 using money from Homes England, but this phase of the project has had to be deferred as the costs of the whole project have exceeded what government made available – this was predictable from the point at which the P&R/A40 scheme was first sketched out. So we do need to do something. This might include shutting the junction to right turns, which will be very inconvenient mainly for people living north of the A40 in places like Freeland, who use the junction to get onto the A40 going westbound.

The National Highways work on the A420/A34 junction continues to cause long delays. The County Council is powerless to get NH to manage this better, nor to coordinate its work on the A34 with other works organised by the County Council.

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It is good to see Standlake's 20 mph zone in operation. My experience elsewhere is that, even if there are some people who ignore the law, most drivers will drive at significantly lower speeds than they did before.

Botley West Solar Farm

The next phase of consultation is now open. Residents can and should have their say on the scheme proposed by PVDP and mainly using land owned by Blenheim. Councillors like me who sit in cabinets are taking the view that we are best commenting through the councils, which will have an obligation formally to report their concerns to the secretary of state, who will be making the decision. Those councillors who are not so bound are free to stand with those residents who are making their voices heard.

As ever, please contact me with queries, comments or requests.

dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk

And finally, can I wish all residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

DRAFT