

STANDLAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Standlake Parish Council, held in the Youth Club, Church End, on 12th July 2022 at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr. B. Parnham	Chairman
Mr. J. Rippin	Vice Chairman
Mrs. J Macdonald	
Mrs. A. Knipe	
Mr. D. Jeffcoat	
Mr. D. Bevan	Clerk

WODC Cllr Mr. C. Maynard, Mr. J. Bond-Smith, Mr. J. Clements

1. APOLOGIES - WODC Cllr Ms. L. Nicholls, OCC Cllr Mr. D. Levy
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - There were no declarations of interest.
3. PUBLIC ITEMS - On behalf of two residents with mobility issues, Mr. Bond-Smith asked if the drop off point for the Pulham's buses could be moved from its existing stop near the Post Office back towards Rack End. The existing stop does not allow for the adjustable entrance step to be lowered sufficiently for those with mobility issues to alight. Mr. Jeffcoat, the Parish Transport Representative will take this up with OCC.
4. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS - see reports attached to these minutes.

The clerk drew Cllr. Maynard's attention that the ditches and drainage channels were the responsibility of the riparian owners and did not require permission from the Environment Agency. The clerk said that, if an approach by the Parish Council did not result in action, this could be, and has been in the past, enforced by WODC Environment.

5. PLANNING -

22/01682/HHD: Erection of side extension to form porch and single storey rear extension: 9 Church Mill Close Standlake Witney: Mr. Darren Bowler. No objection.

22/01700/HHD: Demolition of existing store and erection of two storey extensions to side and rear of existing dwelling (amendment to previously approved application 22/00864/HHD): 20 Heyford Close Standlake Witney: Mr. Dan Cannon. No objection.

22/01667/FUL: Demolition of two redundant farm buildings: Change of use of the site of application from agricultural to residential use: the erection of a one and a half storey detached single dwelling with integral garage: modification to existing access gate: Former Magdalen Farmyard Abingdon Road Standlake: Mr. Andrew Townsend. Object: back building; precedent for further back building; no requirement for a further dwelling in this area.

6. MINUTES - Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 14th June 2022, 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 reminded the meeting that the High St. would be closed between 18th and 29th of July for the sewage inspection chambers outside Woodlands to be rebuilt. Mr. Parnham said that he was still awaiting a response from Thames Water regarding the groundwork at the High St. pumping station.

Mrs. Macdonald said that a stench was coming from the manhole near the bus shelter on The Downs which had been leaking recently; Mr. Parnham will notify TW.

Roads/Traffic/Speedwatch - Mrs. Knipe reported the following. In June, 17 sessions were held at various approved locations in the village. 145 offending vehicles were reported, top speed being 54mph which is totally unacceptable in a 30mph zone.

Since operations commenced in February, a total of 425 offenders have been reported. Evening sessions are now underway. Some of the volunteer teams have been subject to abuse; these offenders have also been reported to Thames Valley Police who will take appropriate action. Of the reported offenders, 12 had no MOT, 11 no TAX and 2 vehicles were under SORN. This information has been sent to DVLA.

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A positive meeting was held with Oxfordshire County Council on the 21st June following an incident at the 'Golden Balls/ Bighthampton Green junction where a car heading from Witney crashed over the green and caused damage to the cottages. A number of actions were discussed to improve [short term] the road markings and chevrons and then in future plans, a traffic island, kerbing, and barrier on the green. The Parish Council will continue to monitor this. Other discussions regarding traffic calming, 20mph zones and crossings continue.

All residents share the view speeding is a major problem and it is not a case of 'if' but 'when' there will be a fatality. If more volunteers can join Speedwatch then it allow more sessions to take place and help support the works underway with OCC and TVP. A call for action has been sent out but anyone interested should drop an email to speedwatch@standlakepc.org.uk with contact details. The Parish Council has committed to provide additional equipment as required.

Playground/Recreation Ground & Maintenance - The clerk reported that the damaged tree adjacent to tennis court 1 has been removed and disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner. Mr. Parnham said that the damaged tyre swing has been repaired and had nothing further to report. The clerk said that the RoSPA/Playsafety annual inspection was expected this month.

Environment - Mrs. Burton had little to report except to say that the new trees in the High St. were being kept hydrated. Mrs. Macdonald said a bee friendly garden was to be installed at the Village Hall thanks to a grant from ToE (Trust for Oxfordshire Environment).

Jubilee 22 - The clerk said that the 30 mugs purchased for sale had raised £150 and it was agreed that, after deducting the ex-VAT cost of production, the sum of £63.30 be sent to FOSS (Friends of Standlake School). The clerk asked Mr. Rippin to confirm with the Jubilee committee that there were no outstanding accounts payable from the fund; Mr. Rippin will do this.

Co-option of new councillor - Mr. Parnham said that after interviewing two candidates the councillors have agreed to offer the position to Mr. James Clements who has accepted. The clerk will now initiate the paperwork with WODC.

Litter Picking - Mrs. Macdonald had nothing further to report at this meeting and it was agreed this item be removed from Matters Arising until she had more reports.

Dog/Litter Bins - Nothing further to report at this meeting but Cllr. Maynard was asked to add his weight to solving this problem, which he agreed to do.

Bike Rack in Car Park - It was agreed that the clerk will order the rack and Mr. Cleland install it in the car park. As to location, it was decided that either side of the existing hardstanding. Mrs. Macdonald will contact Mr. Cleland to ascertain if he will accept delivery of the rack.

Defibrillator at School - Mrs. Macdonald will send the clerk full details of the box for purchase.

8. CORRESPONDENCE - no significant correspondence.

9. ACCOUNTS - The clerk said the council's financial position continued to be healthy and in line with the 22/23 budget. The clerk noted that after the payment for the 30 mugs, receiving the £150 raised by their sales and sending £63.30 to FOSS, the Jubilee fund had a surplus of £354.46.

For payment/approved

UK2 - domain renewal	£16.80*
UK2 - domain renewal	£11.99*
Abs Sols - mowing, rec ground tree	£420.00*
V Hall - annual grant	£600.00*
Abs Sols - green bench, playground repair	£130.00*
C Cleland - churchyard mowing	£352.50*
AGM - 30 Jubilee mugs	£104.04*
HMRC - Clerk PAYE	£367.80*

10. REPORT ON OCC TRANSPORT MEETING - Mr. Jeffcoat reported: I attended my first meeting of the Parish Transport representatives' group last week. It was an interesting meeting with discussions about parking regulations, community bus services and the regular commercial bus services across the County. The key points were: The Eynsham representative commented that WODC have a lax approach to enforcing the parking regulations in the village, causing undesirable congestion at busy times. Dave Harrison of OCC commented on the current status of bus utilisation across the County, as follows:

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Overall rate is only 80-85% of pre-Covid levels and just 65-70% for concessionary fares. Special Covid-related funding from Central Government will end in October.

Some cuts may be necessary although a further increase in passenger levels and efficiency improvements will help to reduce the impact.

Child fares will be extended to 16-18 year olds.

A flat youth fare of £1 will be introduced for City services.

A national campaign to encourage people to return to the buses will be launched in November, involving radio, social media, and potentially further Government subsidies.

11. ADOPTION OF NEW CODE OF CONDUCT - The clerk said he had circulated the new Code of Conduct for councillors and recommended that it be adopted. Mr. Parnham proposed that the new code be adopted, seconded by Mr. Jeffcoat and passed unanimously.

12. SCOUTS' FIREWORKS 5th NOV 2022 - The Standlake and Cokethorpe Sea Scouts have requested use of the recreation ground for their annual fireworks on 5th November 2022. This was agreed unanimously subject to the usual conditions of removing and replacing the grass area used for the bonfire, etc.

13. JUBILEE BENCH BY NOTICE BOARD - The clerk said that he had proposed refurbishing the bench near the Post Office, which was installed to commemorate HM's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, when the council initially discussed funding for the current Jubilee. The clerk now suggested that the balance available in the Jubilee Fund be used to carry this out at a cost of £215. This was agreed.

14. YOUTH CLUB RENT - Mr. Rippin, speaking on behalf of Standlake Youth Club, noted that no rent had been paid by the Parish Council since FY 2019, this being due to meetings being held on Zoom during the Covid restrictions in force at the time. Now that meetings were being held in person once more, it was time for the rent payments to recommence; the last rental paid being £150pa. Mr. Rippin said that costs, particularly for energy, had spiralled and asked if the council would consider a rental of £200pa for the current year. Mr. Parnham asked if this would include the normal 11 meetings per year and any short ad-hoc meetings that may occur. Mr. Rippin agreed, in principle but he would confirm this with the club committee. Mr. Rippin withdrew from further discussion, and it was agreed that the rent should increase to £200 to apply for the current financial year.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Mr. Parnham noted that, normally, there would not be a meeting in August but as there was a likelihood of a contentious planning application being made shortly, the next meeting would be on 9th August 2022 in the Youth Club, Rack End at 7.30pm. Mr. Rippin offered his apologies for that meeting. Mr. Parnham further suggested that, due to holiday commitments, the September meeting be delayed until 21st September; this was agreed. Mr. Jeffcoat gave his apologies for the meeting to be held on 11th October.

16. There being no further business, the meeting closed at. 8.45 pm.

Chairman Date

Dan Levy County Councillor Report, July 2022

We are in, as you will have noticed, challenging times.

Covid advice

I had hoped not to have to mention Covid again, but numbers are rising rapidly. Can I pass on the advice from Ansaf Azhar, Oxfordshire County Council's Director for Public Health:

"It's been great for everyone to relax after the difficult last couple of years we've had with rules of varying kinds meaning restrictions on our lives.

"Currently there are no restrictions but there is still good, solid guidance that people are advised to observe to protect themselves and their families, particularly vulnerable and elderly people.

"The main bit of advice is to stay at home if you feel unwell - but it's also worth reminding people of all those things that we learned during the height of the pandemic to reduce the risk of COVID spreading.

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“This includes ventilating indoor spaces and washing your hands. During periods of good weather being outdoors rather than indoors also helps reduce risks.

“We expect to see fluctuations in cases and it remains the case we need to learn to live with COVID, but we need to strike a sensible balance and I would ask people to take precautions while cases are on the rise. Let's enjoy the summer and our regained freedoms but keep in mind that COVID-19 hasn't gone away and we all need to play our part to live safely.”

Cost of Living Crisis

We are in a period of rapidly rising prices. This affects everyone, but has a higher impact on people in many rural locations, if they have a reliance on motor vehicles or are not connected to the gas network. Although gas and electricity prices are rising quickly, there is at least a cap, unlike with bottled gas or tanked oil. The County Council is lobbying government to enable us to offer some support and we are bringing a motion to the Council meeting on 12 July to add force to this effort, I hope with cross-party support.

Vision Zero

Following the tragic deaths of cyclists in Oxfordshire, the county has adopted 'Vision Zero', a vision to eliminate road deaths and serious injuries in the county. The decision adds weight to efforts to improve cycle and walking infrastructure and reduce speeds. I was pleased to speak on behalf of this motion as County Active Travel Champion. Of course, it is easier to have a vision than to put it into practice - we must promote safe walking and cycling infrastructure especially at road junctions, and we have to apply our vision in the countryside as well as the city.

Some good news is that Oxfordshire has been granted extra powers to enforce traffic violations using ANPR cameras. This permission is for specific places, but we can apply for additional locations in the future. Up to now, only Cardiff and London councils have had these powers. Among other things, these powers will make delivering “school streets”, where motor vehicles are restricted in school entry and exit times, much easier.

I accompanied a highways officer and Parish Councillors to the scene of a recent collision at “Briighthampton corner” and the infrastructure will be improved to try to make such incidents less likely.

Bus Improvements

The cabinet approved a plan to improve bus services and use the £12.7 million Oxfordshire secured from national government. The plan includes cheaper fares for under-19s, 2 new rural services (around Didcot and Bicester), and bus priority improvements and traffic filters (in Oxford). Improvements to bus stops, real time information, and the quality of buses are also planned. The plan will be consulted on with the bus companies and needs government sign off.

I appreciate that such improvements might feel a bit remote for people off the main bus routes - but we are constrained by government policy and the availability of grants from central government. I and others will keep banging the drum for rural services.

HIF1 and HIF2

The cabinet of OCC have agreed to proceed with Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 ('HIF1'), consisting of 4 road / bridge projects around Didcot. While it is an inherited Conservative project, the Lib-Dem led administration worked to improve provision for active travel and public transport, as well as better mitigate cost risks to the council

HIF2 is the A40 project. The cabinet approved merging the project with the P&R project to give more flexibility in the finances and more control over timescales. There are still lots of areas that need improvement in the A40 plans, particularly to make crossing between Eynsham and Salt Cross safe and convenient.

In addition, the Shores Green project, to deliver westbound access to and eastbound access from the A40 at Cogges looks like coming for approval in the next few months. It may change traffic patterns to the south of the A40, and I would expect some new A40 avoidance routes and “preferred” ways between the A40 and A420.

Cllr. Charlie Maynard District Councillor update, July 2022

Flooding - efforts are afoot to bring more clarity and action to flood preparation. I chaired a meeting of the Climate & Environment Scrutiny Committee on Jun 23rd. Two key points are as follows:

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1. While the County Council is officially designated as the “Lead Local Flood Authority” it has historically delegated unspecified powers to the district council, which has been a bit of a fudge. This situation is now going to stop with the county and district agreeing and making public who has what responsibilities.

2. A permit is required from the Environment Agency before any landowner can carry out any work to “Main Rivers”. In practice, there are tens of miles of ditches in the ward that are designated as Main Rivers and the application for being granted a permit is confusing and convoluted. This has resulted in very little maintenance work being done to ditches and drainage channels, which is clearly bad news. This system isn’t going to be fixed overnight but is something we are working on.

Potholes – the county council is developing a volunteer network of FixMyStreet “SuperUsers”. A SuperUser is a volunteer, typically one in each ward, who after a couple of hours of training, has extra access to the Highways’ database so that he or she can upload pothole locations and receive some spraycans of paint to mark potholes for repair. Once a pothole is marked and entered into the system, the contractor’s commitment is to deal with it in 28 days. I found out about this network through the fantastic Trevor Jackson, who is the SuperUser in Aston. My near-term goal is to find a SuperUser in each parish in our ward, with a medium term goal to work with colleagues to encourage SuperUsers all across the district’s parishes. Are you going to be the SuperUser that solves Standlake’s potholes?! If so, please get in touch.

I’m available via charlie.maynard@westoxon.gov.uk and on 07487 708 681.

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