

PARISH COUNCIL OF STANDLAKE
Minutes of 21st July 2026 7.30pm

Present:

Mr J. Clements- Chairman
Mr. D. Jeffcoat – Vice Chairman
Mr. B. Smith.
Mrs. A. Knipe.
Ms. F. Smith
Mrs. J. Macdonald.
Mrs. C. Swan - Clerk

1. Apologies: Cllr Steve Cosier, Cllr Sandra Cosier, Mr Robert Maxwell
2. Declarations of interest: none
3. Co-option for Parish Council Casual Vacancy: A vote was held on the co-option of Mr Robert Maxwell to the casual vacancy. Five voted in favor and one abstention.
4. Public Items:

Vivian Walker spoke about plans for the 800th Anniversary 2028 of the village. Vivian has approached various businesses for donations, and they have requested that the Parish Council help with a bank account. Secondly, she requests that the PC consider a financial contribution or something like funding the use of the village hall during the year celebration. Lastly, the village should have a permanent reminder of the 800th year of Standlake such as a village sign, or an outdoor activity such as table tennis etc.

Linda Watson spoke regarding community land trusts. They own and develop land for the benefit of the community. They provide affordable housing, nature and outdoor space. Could we set up a community land trust to consider purchasing the land at Chapel Lane for wider community use. She requested that the Parish Council consider being the lead on this and or become a community land trust themselves. It could bring benefits to the Parish Council involving the community in a new way. Cllr Jeffcoat asked where the funding would come from, and at present it is not known, but could come from grant funds that could be tapped into. Cllr Knipe explained that the land is currently going through probate and that the potential new owners have no intention of selling the land, and that it would make a good resource for the wider village. The chairman agreed to contact the probate solicitors and seek assurances in writing regarding the future of the land.

John Spencer came to raise objections to the 4th proposal for the chapel lane development. The District Council's Flood Risk Management Officer continues to object to the fourth version of the application, stating that the applicant has still not demonstrated that the development would avoid increasing flood risk to adjacent properties, including Woodlands. He identifies unresolved issues including drainage testing carried out during dry conditions rather than high-groundwater periods, ongoing errors in the plans, missing key drainage information, unproven safety of the proposed earth bund, and a continued failure to show that flood risk would not increase. On this basis, the Parish Council was asked to recommend refusal of the application.

Gemma Taylor raised concerns regarding emergency access and public safety in relation to the same planning application. During the arson incident on 16 May 2026, a fire engine was unable to access Chapel Lane and had to operate from the road, causing an estimated 20-minute delay. Fire Service guidance in Document B states that equipment should not normally be carried more than 40 metres from a fire appliance, yet the proposed development

lies approximately 85 metres beyond the point reached during the incident. Residents highlighted that access is already inadequate for existing properties, including Woodlands and two thatched cottages, and that additional development could increase risks for future occupants and place further pressure on emergency responders. The speaker asked the Parish Council to consider whether emergency vehicles can reach the site in a timely manner, whether current access meets safety standards, whether additional homes would worsen the constrained route, and whether an independent assessment should be sought. They requested that these concerns be raised with the planning authority and that reassurance be sought that emergency access has been fully assessed before any decision is made.

Paula Gaffney also raised objection to the planning application for Chapel Lane, regarding the height of the building during the various applications, and that floor levels have been raised for the flooding risks thereby raising the roof level out of character with the other homes. The development would have a 1 in 12 slope. She asked the Parish Council to request that highways look at the road safety again and support the previous refusals.

Antony Gaffney came to speak on project ground water and explained how he became a flood warden. He approached the County Council for some funding to rebuild the sand store, purchase a drone to manage flooding, and add a data receiver to the boreholes along with signage and tools. They have agreed to fund a data logger and Mr Gaffney has asked permission from the allotments to use the bore hole. They are now awaiting funds agreed at £3,800. There will be funding for three years of operation and a portal to provide the data to the community.

5. County & District Councillor's Reports: Appendix 1

Jenny Macdonald raised the issue of the vulnerable people in the village when they turn off the analogue lines.

Andy Couper mentioned he raised a formal complaint with Vodaphone about the lack of signals. There are two masts and the one close to the village is being serviced and possibly upgraded in August this year. He noted that when he made a formal complaint, he was advised that there were no other complaints recorded and suggested that people could place complaints to their network providers. Cllr Jeffcoat read extracts from the District Councillors report and the Clerk confirmed that the report is uploaded onto the Parish Council website.

6. Planning:

APP/U3100/W/18/3196658- Sheehan Recycled Aggregates Plant, Dix Pit, Stanton Harcourt, Witney, OX29 5AD - Section 73 application to continue the development permitted by Appeal Decision (Extension to aggregate recycling facility and revisions to the traffic routing system and alterations to the drainage system), to amend Conditions 2, 3 and 4 in order to extend the life of the site until the 31st of December 2050 and restoration by the 31st of December 2051, and to reconcile previously and subsequently approved documents with Condition 1.

No Objections

25/02583/FUL PROPOSAL: Land Southwest of Chapel Lane Standlake - Erection of a detached 4-bed dwelling with integral double garage and associated landscaping and vehicular access (Amended description).

The Parish Council agreed with residents that the fourth planning application did not address the previous objections and confirmed it shared concerns regarding raised by residents and will object to the application.

26/00255/FUL- 48 Abingdon Road Standlake Witney - Change of use of land to enlarge domestic garden and erection of detached 3 bay car port. Closure of existing vehicle access and replacement with new pedestrian access, creation of separate new vehicle access with dropped kerb, and associated works.

Objections were raised by Jenny MacDonald about the planned new drive, the change of use of the land to a garden and the potential future development. Previous application for a house to be built on the site was refused. The public view will be changed by the proposed car port and the loss of important open space from a paddock to a private garden.

7. Minutes: Agree and Sign Minutes of June 16th, 2026

8. Correspondence: Christmas Tree Festival. A request has been made for the return of the Christmas tree festival and would like to request that the Parish Council sponsor a tree at the cost of £40. The Parish Council congratulated organisers for the last years festival and agreed the support requested.

9. Matters arising from previous minutes:

Flood/sewage; Cllr Fiona is reviewing the data and will reach out to Wasp.

Speedwatch/Roads; The Chairman said he understood that we needed to arrange the installation of the new signage on the gates, which were soon to be refurbished. Every entry point to the village needs a sign, some have disappeared. Cllr Jeffcoat raised that some of the previous signed obscured the village names and requested that this was not the case with the new signs. The Chairman agreed that this would be communicated to the contractor. It was agreed that the signs would be erected and taken back down for the maintenance work.

James Wright the County Council highways officer has been asked to honour previous quote, and he is not able to. Cllr Cosier has confirmed this is not unique to Standlake. Stanton Harcourt paid the increase of the same amount (12%). Chairman supports paying new costs to get the consultation underway. The Clerk confirmed that the costs are for the consultation only and would cover the whole village area, once the favoured schemes are consulted on the sums would be considered that are available for any specific schemes. Cllr Jeffcoat raised that James Wright had agreed costs for each element of the possible projects and Mr Andy Couper confirmed that all the projects would cost approx. £100k, and that at present a commitment has been made by OCC to provide approx. £40k. A discussion took place agreeing that we have come so far and do not want to lose the funding we have in place now. The additional funding was unanimously agreed on the understanding the increase in costs did not to exceed £500. The Clerk was asked to create a poster for Facebook and send this to the Newsletter advertising for Speedwatch volunteers.

Recreation grounds: basketball hoops – unfortunately, we have not been able to conclude a refund or return of the incorrect hoops ordered. Therefore, the Chairman proposed the purchase of new hoops. Clerk/Chairman to investigate new hoops from an alternative supplier. It was agreed that purchase could go ahead not exceeding £550. Fiona Smith agreed to try and resell the incorrect hoops online.

The recently received ROSPA reports highlight various maintenance items to be addressed in all play areas. The Chairman suggested a Working Party be formed and the matter to be given urgent attention. Fiona Smith and Jenny Macdonald agreed to join the working party. It was agreed that a three or four-year program of improvements should be planned and tied in with the financial committee's work. The Chairman is investigating grants.

Urgent repairs to the rope bridge – It was agreed that the repair should be undertaken immediately to the rope bridge by Absolute solutions.

Environment: The Council received an update on Village Hall and parish environmental projects. There were no nesting swifts in the Hall's swift box this year, but advice is to keep it in place for next season. The wildflower bank was successfully scythed and cleared by Martyn Lane and volunteers from the Lower Windrush Valley Project, resulting in a good variety of wildflower species. The pollinator patch has been tidied and is thriving, attracting

insects. Work on the Village Hall patio planters will restart with a new supplier, aiming for installation next spring. At the New Burial Ground, the group met to discuss the required tree survey and planning matters; the wildflower area is developing well, the burial area is being closely mown, and the Jubilee tree is being regularly watered during the dry weather. Village planters across the parish are full of colourful plants but require frequent watering due to the unusually dry conditions.

New Website: The Chairman has looked at various options and agreed Parish Online most suited to our needs. He gave a brief update on the webpage design and the costs. £250 plus VAT first year and £350 plus VAT thereafter covering new email addresses, web hosting, and support on a rolling contract. The Lead time is approx. 6 weeks. Agreed unanimously.

Car park security: The chairman thanks Fiona Smith for the suggestion of a Farm CCTV system, which has now been costed at £200 including VAT plus installation. There would be additional costs for a pole to mount it. The monthly cost associated with a 4g sim, which could be added to our EE business plan. The Chairman will update on installation costs. The Chairman will also discuss the parking with the school's head teacher to express that the Parish Council has done everything possible to provide a parking provision and that this is used.

Car park repairs: Cllr Jeffcoat proposed the purchase of 4 Bags of stone chippings at a cost of £195 plus VAT are purchase together for the improvement of the footpaths and carpark, the final cost to the PC will be £45 to fill the pothole left the rear of the car park with the remained repaid by the Church for the footpaths. Agreed unanimously. Clerk to raise an invoice to the PCC.

Council Phone: A new mobile phone has been purchased, the new phone number needs to be updated on signage to the play areas, sign design, and wording to be created by the play area Working party.

Standlake 800th Anniversary – The Parish Council will support the anniversary, and consideration will be given to the requests.

Bus Shelters, David Jeffcoat had received a quote for replacement panels for both bus shelters in a durable polycarbonate at a cost of £470.82 plus VAT – Agreed unanimously.

Quiet lanes: Cllr Fenton has been contacted and a meeting is planned. Cllr Jeffcoat attended a meeting online recently hosted by Daniel McCrory and he suggested Martins' Lane is privately owned by Standlake Drainage and therefore not suitable for designation as a quiet lane. He will send an email as there was mention that there may be other ways to protect it. Cllr Fiona Smith will also investigate protection relating to bridleways.

Infrastructure maintenance – no progress

Village gate repairs – David Jeffcoat posted on the Facebook group for quotes and has received three from professional painters. Absolute Solutions quoted £885. He proposed to agree the works unless there is a more attractive offer by 31st July, with a maximum £1000 budget agreed to include the erecting of the Speedwatch signs. Agreed unanimously.

10. Recommendations of the Finance Working Party / accounting software proposal

David Jeffcoat has been looking at alternative banks – he has three possible options and will update Councillors on these.

It was agreed that September to November meetings focus on setting projects and financial priorities in readiness for November budget agreement.

Software – The Chairman and Clerk have considered options for this and discounted Xero after a demonstration online from Scribe. The Software designed and run by Parish Clerks. It provides reporting, assists with VAT reclaim, Offers live access to users, and will assist in the AGAR. The costs were as follows £448 plus Vat initial set up and support. £37 per month

thereafter on a monthly rolling contract. £49 approx. for a pre-AGAR audit. Proposed by Chairman. Agreed unanimously.

11.Accounts: *already paid for approval:

Payments up to 13th July		
Bank Balance 13 July		35,229.79
UK2 domain (.com)	16.52	
Uk2 domain (.uk)	11.39	
Uk2 Website hosting annual	85.49	
Jakes Gardening June mowing	372.00	
Amazon clerk phone & stationery items	179.31	
absolute solutions - play car removal & disposal	110.00	
Claire Swan salary	585.93	
HMRC	146.40	
Duncan Wileman - bus shelter clean	50.00	
EE direct debit	15.60	
Absolute Solutions Mowing & Strim	370.00	
Jakes gardening July invoice mowing	372.00	
Payments Pending		
		G Admin
Total	0.00	
Expected balance after above total paid		35,229.79
Balances in budgets		Budget FY 26/27
	Available	Spent
General Admin GA	13,762.36	5,378.64
Grants & Donations' hall/Misc. GD/VH/M	900.00	900.00
The Butts, Horns way cutting/Car park weed control TB CP	315.00	315.00
Mowing M	3,615.00	1,110.00
Tree/Ditch maintenance TM DM	1,200.00	0
Rec Ground, Playground Maintenance, RG	2,345.00	4,725.00
General Maintenance GM	500.00	1,200.00
Village Xmas tree XT	200.00	155.00
Churchyard mowing CU	1,492.00	500.00
PWLB Loan repayment (Oct 25 Mar 26) PW	4,285.92	200.00
Standlake Nature Recovery Network SN	0.00	1,488.00
Community fund reserve CF	21,809.58	0
	0.00	2,980.00
	50,424.86	4,285.92
Total	6	9
		60,131.85
Expected/Received Income to end of FY (31 March 2027)		
Precept -	20000.00	40000.00
Tennis Club rent	0.00	750.00
Refund from OPFA £30 - reduced general admin spend		

VAT	245.07
	20,245.0
Total	7

Expected Balance on 31 March 27 (assuming whole of budget is spent)

5,050.00*

Required Reserve

5,000.00

- **£50 additional income from Tennis Club rental review**

Date of next meeting 15th September 2026