

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025**

**Present:**

Keith Hickson	(KH)	Chair
Jim Coleman	(JC)	Councillor
Joe Deane	(JD)	Councillor
Robin Morley	(RM)	Councillor
Sandra Cosier	(SC)	Councillor & District Councillor
Trudi Gasser	(TG)	Parish Clerk

**In Attendance:**

Dan Levy	(DL)	County Councillor
Steve Cosier	(SCo)	District Councillor
9 Members of the public		

MIN REF	ITEM
25/134	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Geoff Webster (GW) Vice-Chair</p>
25/135	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> No Declarations made.</p>
25/136	<p><b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b> Minutes Parish Council Meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025 approved for publication.</p>
25/137	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b> 25/105: SC had contacted Methodist Church regarding an additional Defibrillator being installed there - waiting for reply.</p>
25/138	<p><b>COUNTY &amp; DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS</b> See attached appendix for full reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dan Levy, County Councillor, OCC.</li> <li>• Steve Cosier &amp; Sandra Cosier, District Councillors, WODC.</li> </ul>
25/139	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p><b><i>Q. Is there any update on the closed footpath on Dix Pit? A group has been formed who will be meeting with Savills (All Soul's agents) and the tenants to find a solution.</i></b></p> <p>The PC confirmed they would support the group and offered representation at the meeting, which was declined at this stage, as it was just a preliminary meeting.</p> <p>TG to check whether the bin located inside the barbed wire is owned by the PC.</p> <p><b><i>Q. It was reported that the Brook on Blackditch needs clearing.</i></b> It was confirmed that the PC are currently trying to determine who owns the various sections of the brook and is responsible for the clearing.</p> <p>JC to progress and provide a map of the brook with the owners detailed.</p>

	<p><b><i>Q. People of taking the wrong turning and driving into the entrance to the Old Guardroom and rather than turning around, they are driving over the footpath and grass to join the road. Would the PC consider placing a bollard or an object to prevent this happening?</i></b></p> <p>KH confirmed that the PC does not own the land beyond the path outside the Guardroom, however, maybe an object could be placed there to prevent access. SC volunteer to look into this.</p>
<b>25/140</b>	<p><b>PLANNING: Applications</b> No applications were received.</p> <p><b>PLANNING: Neighbourhood Plan</b> KH had a meeting with the WODC contact (Julie Rowlands) to discuss the possibilities of a Neighbourhood Plan. To produce a plan would cost around £15-20k, with 2 year's of work. The PC would consider this when preparing their budget and start to ringfence funds. In the meantime, they would gather other Parish Council's plans for examples and ideas.</p>
<b>25/141</b>	<p><b>ROADS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speed Signs</b> As the decommissioning of the existing defunct sign is holding up installation of the new sign, KH proposed installation of the new sign is progressed and the old sign is dealt with at a later date. SC seconded, all were in favour. TG to confirm to RJS and agree an installation date.</li> <li>• <b>Speedwatch</b> Nothing to report.</li> <li>• <b>Weight Restriction</b> Nothing to report.</li> <li>• <b>Pot Holes</b> Some Potholes had been repaired. KH to request a supply of spray paint and continue marking and reporting.</li> </ul>
<b>25/142</b>	<p><b>MAINTENANCE</b> Nothing to report.</p>
<b>25/143</b>	<p><b>VILLAGE VOICE</b> The PC welcomed the New Editor, Angela Coleby, who will be taking over the role in mid-January.</p> <p>JC to provide copy for the next issue in February.</p>
<b>25/144</b>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBILITIES</b> The list of responsibilities was discussed and agreed. TG to circulate a final copy and post of the PC Website.</p>
<b>25/145</b>	<p><b>ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR</b> The PC received a report of children alighting from the school bus (assumed to be</p>

	<p>from Bartholomew School) behaving in an anti-social manner towards a resident.</p> <p>Steve Cosier, who teaches at the school, agreed to discuss the issue with the School Head.</p>
<b>25/146</b>	<p><b>GUARDROOM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions are required for the Smart Plugs which control the heating to enable members of the PC to ensure the settings are correct. RM to contact GW.</li> <li>• The blinds had been installed, the curtain poles were in place and the curtains would be hung once adjusted accordingly.</li> <li>• SC to dispose of the CCTV equipment currently stored in the kitchen.</li> <li>• RM to purchase a wall clock for the OGR.</li> </ul>
<b>25/147</b>	<p><b>VILLAGE HALL</b></p> <p>A new Treasurer was now set up and running.</p>
<b>25/148</b>	<p><b>S106 FUNDS</b></p> <p><b>S106 Art Fund</b> Nothing to report</p> <p><b>Leisure</b> Nothing to report</p>
<b>25/149</b>	<p><b>FINANCE UPDATE/BUDGET 2026/7</b></p> <p>The draft budget was discussed and approved, with a couple of amendments. TG to circulate final Budget.</p> <p>KH proposed the precept be set at £42k – SC seconded, all voted in favour. It was resolved to set the Precept at £42k.</p>
<b>25/150</b>	<p><b>CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <p>The PC had been contacted by WODC to see if the PC would be interested in taking ownership of The Green, for which they currently pay rent on an annual basis. It was confirmed that they would indeed be interested. TG to progress with WODC and report back to the PC with the details.</p>
<b>25/151</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TG to chase the installation date of the Litter Bin on New Road</li> <li>• The PC to review the Cemetery Fees</li> <li>• The PC .gov email addresses are to be moved back to gmail, as the current 'Spacemail' system is not working very well.</li> </ul>
<b>25/152</b>	<p><b>NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>7.30pm on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 in the Old Guardroom</p>

Signed .....

Date .....

## County Councillor Report Stanton Harcourt Parish Council, December 2025

### Fire Service

You may have seen that a consultation is open to comment on possible changes to fire service provision in Oxfordshire.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrs-consultation>

This proposed change is driven by significant changes in the demand for their services and in the availability of staff. There are many fewer fires than there used to be (for lots of reasons including the reduction in smoking and safer electrical goods) so most work now is related to fire prevention and to Road Traffic collisions. It is also harder to get on-call fire staff, which means that the on-call stations like Henley and Woodstock are sometimes not crewed.

That means that there is a plan to focus more on the fulltime stations, like Witney, and ensure that they are in the right place to cover the demands on their time. For instance the proposal is to build a new fire centre north of Kidlington. Call out times will be quicker in most of the county, and only a few seconds slower in the city. There will always be sufficient fire crews and equipment to cover the whole area.

It is obviously emotive to close some fire stations, including Eynsham, but already if there was a fire or traffic incident in the Eynsham area, including Stanton Harcourt, the first tender to arrive would frequently be from Witney.

I will be interested to hear the views of residents. Our fire station has been part of the community for a long time, crewed by local firefighters.

### Roads

Alongside the regular road repair work, in which the County Council has invested record sums, we have set up a special Highways Asset Response Team to look at specific areas and undertake minor repairs.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hart-of-the-community-new-teams-target-areas-most-in-need-of-highway-work/>

We listened to residents saying that the FixmyStreet process needed to be augmented by a team looking at whole areas rather than individual defects. Please keep reporting issues you find.

**The Oxford Congestion charge** has now been in place since 29 October. As mentioned lots of times, with the exception of a small area in the centre of Oxford, everywhere will be reachable by car without going past a camera. That includes the JR, which will still be reachable by the same routes people now use, ie either Marsh Road or London Road.

Stanton Harcourt residents will get 25 free passes. You need to apply for these at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/oxfords-temporary-congestion-charge-cars-cars/apply-permit>

Blue Badge holders are exempt, as are van drivers.

Most people have been able to register easily, but there is a helpline for those who need assistance.

So far it seems to be working with bus usership up, key congestion hotspots like St Aldates free moving, buses being able to stick to timetable, and as promised by them, Stagecoach and Oxford Bus increasing the number and frequency of services. And visitor and shopper numbers in the city appear as buoyant as before. A reminder both that buses are free from the Park and Rides and that Stagecoach and

Oxford Bus have introduced an increased frequency of services as a result of the Congestion Charge, with a new timetable for many services commencing 30 November. We will of course share proper data after the scheme has been in place for longer.

## **Budget**

The County Council is in the process of setting budgets for the year from April 26. The budget will be set at the council meeting on February 10th. There is a complete review of local government finance going on, with details being released in dribs and drabs. We are now sure that Oxfordshire will lose substantial amounts of funding from central government through “council tax equalisation” and from a business rate reset. That means even more of the council’s funding will have to come from Council Tax payers.

## **Local Government Reorganisation.**

Three proposals have been delivered to government.

One from the County Council proposes a single unitary authority for Oxfordshire, with key decisions delegated to area committees. The rural districts have proposed a two unitary model which would encompass West Berkshire, with a northern unitary comprising West Oxfordshire, Cherwell and the City. And the City Council has proposed a three unitary model which would leave a much reduced West and Cherwell as a very small stand alone.

Opinions differ as to what will work best.

I have many concerns about both the two and three unitary models, which would involve dismantling and then restructuring key services for children and adults and reduce financial resilience.

The decision is one for government, and we expect to hear in the spring.

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

As ever, I can be contacted at [dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **West Oxford District Councillors Report - December 2025 – Stanton Harcourt and Sutton**

### **Traffic Calming: Sutton**

To support the residents of Sutton and the Speed Watch Team; we have written to James Wright the Senior Technician Oxfordshire County Council to arrange a meeting. We are continuing to work with the Speed Watch Team and the County to explore feasibility options for traffic calming in the village. The next step, after we have met Mr Wright, is to develop some initial proposals, which will allow us to assess potential costs. Once the Parish Council and the Speed Watch Team are ready for a walk-through of locations, we hope to arrange another site meeting to review the options and identify what can be done.

### **Preferred Spatial Options for the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 – Stanton Harcourt & Sutton**

As part of the Local Plan review, the Council consulted on a proposed settlement hierarchy to guide future development. Stanton Harcourt and Sutton were previously classified as Tier 3 Villages, which raised concerns during the summer 2025 consultation. Respondents highlighted that this categorisation could lead to disproportionate development in villages with limited infrastructure and amenities. Both Stanton Harcourt and Sutton have restricted public transport connectivity and limited local services, making them less sustainable for significant growth. Infrastructure constraints such as roads, schools, and sewage capacity were also noted as key risks.

Following further evidence gathering, the Council has refined the hierarchy to five tiers: Principal Towns, Service Centres, Large Villages, Medium Villages, and Small Villages/Hamlets. Under this revised approach, Stanton Harcourt and Sutton are now proposed to be classified as **Tier 4 – Medium Villages**, reflecting their smaller population and lower sustainability score. This change aligns with consultation feedback and aims to ensure that future development remains proportionate and protects rural character. Tier 4 status means only moderate development focused on local needs, with larger housing allocations directed to higher-tier settlements.

**There are only three weeks left to comment on these proposals.** We urge the Parish Council to note the revised classification and its implications for planning decisions and comment on (page 11 & 12):

**‘CONSULTATION QUESTION 2 – DO YOU SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF INTRODUCING AN ADDITIONAL TIER INTO THE LOCAL PLAN SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY TO 1 DISTINGUISH BETWEEN LARGE AND MEDIUM-SIZED VILLAGES? WHAT ARE YOUR REASONS?’**

**‘CONSULTATION QUESTION 3 – BASED ON THE PROPOSED FIVE-TIERED APPROACH, DO YOU THINK THAT THE SETTLEMENTS LISTED IN TABLE 2 ABOVE HAVE BEEN CLASSIFIED IN THE CORRECT TIER?’**

### **Submission of the 2 Unitary Authority Proposal**

We can confirm that the 2 Unitary Authority Proposal has been successfully submitted within the Government’s deadline. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has acknowledged receipt of the submission, marking an important milestone in this process.

The next stage involves a high-level review by the Government, during which all submitted proposals will be assessed against the established criteria. Following this review, the Government will determine which proposals will progress to the consultation phase, which we anticipate will begin at the end of January 2026.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the parish council and all residents for their continued engagement throughout the year with Parish and District matters. We wish you all a peaceful Christmas.

Best wishes

Sandra and Steve

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