

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026**

**Present:**

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

**In Attendance:**

Steve Cosier	(SCo)	District Councillor
7 Members of the public		

MIN REF	ITEM
<b>26/016</b>	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>Geoff Webster (GW) Vice-Chair            Trudi Gasser (TG) Parish Clerk            Dan Levy (DL) County Councillor</p>
<b>26/017</b>	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>No interests were declared by the councillors present</p>
<b>26/018</b>	<p><b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b></p> <p>Minutes Parish Council Meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 were reviewed, no changes raised and approved by the chair.</p>
<b>26/019</b>	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>No matters arising were raised that are not already included on the agenda</p>
<b>26/020</b>	<p><b>COUNTY &amp; DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS</b></p> <p>Steve C provided a report as district councillor (summary follows)</p> <p>It was noted the lack of reliable mobile network in the village and residents were encouraged to feed back to the district councillors on this to provide evidence to lobby for improvements with the current audit ongoing.</p> <p>It was noted the district councillors had contacted Thames Water and the Environment Agency to pursue resolution of the current flooding and sewage flooding issues.</p> <p>It was noted that the initial responses were ‘stock emails’ and not helpful, however some of the subsequent correspondence noted sewer capacity and the issues with the extant sewer system and all of these examples provide clear evidence to use to object to further development in the village until the sewer infrastructure is improved to an appropriate standard.</p> <p>It was also noted the district councillor will look to take samples with support from WASP and analyse privately to provide further evidence of sewerage contamination in the steams and ditches that were dismissed by the TW/EA.</p> <p>It was also noted that Charlie Maynard our MP had also visited the village to collect</p>

	<p>evidence to lobby at a government level and offer support to residents over the issues.</p> <p>See attached appendix for full report from Steve Cosier &amp; Sandra Cosier, District Councillors, WODC.</p>
26/021	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p><b>It was questioned if at a council level issues around sewage get fed back to planners?</b></p> <p>Steve C led a response noting that all evidence collected will be passed back to planners but on its own does not guarantee a valid objection to planning. It was noted the ‘mechanism’ to enforce this is the ‘Grampian Condition’ which only allows houses to be occupied once infrastructure is in place. However this is not policed well and is impossible to enforce at present as WODC have no mechanism to prevent residents moving in to a new property relative to the infrastructure (and there is no mechanism to enforce once they have moved in and the infrastructure is being relied upon).</p> <p><b>It was also noted that water pressure in the village is equally a problem with further development.</b></p> <p>It was suggested by Steve C that any Grampian conditions should be objected to unless clearly enforceable as a reason to permit development around lack of infrastructure.</p> <p><b>It was questioned if the pumping station issues (repeated tanker pumping of village hall and Sutton sewage pumping stations).</b> Noting that the pumping stations are causing some of the flooding by pushing more sewage down pipes that can’t conduct it.</p> <p>Steve C noted that Charlie Maynard (MP) is following up the current issues with Thames Water to ensure resolution wherever practical.</p> <p><b>It was questioned if the television show about sewage dumping will help?</b></p> <p>Steve C noted all evidence helps show there is a problem to the planners. In particular an Aston development led to a letter from the EA clearly noting an issue which provided particularly good evidence/leverage to object to planning with respect to sewage capacity and storm discharges.</p> <p><b>A question was raised regarding the bright lights at the industrial estate, this was raised a year ago but nothing has changed and appears to contravene planning policy (policy 04).</b></p> <p>It was noted that issues around environmental impact and planning should be raised with the WODC environment team. Steve C noted he could follow up with them also. It was also noted the parish council could raise this specifically with Burys agent as Burys own the industrial estate. <b>An Action was raised for PC to do this to help efforts to address the anti-social lighting that is on all night and extremely bright for nearby residents.</b></p> <p>Members of the group campaigning to reopen Dix Pit lake for pedestrian access reported back to the Council. It was noted a lot of work had been done by the group to facilitate discussions around access and the group also thanked the Council for the use of the Old Guardroom. It was looking promising that pedestrian access will be permitted again although this is not formally agreed yet.</p>

	<p>It was requested that a member of the parish council sitting on the group would provided additional formality to discussions and this was agreed by Council. <b>Council to agree who will attend Dix Pit group meetings.</b></p> <p>It was noted some effort is needed to police/ensure good behaviour by pedestrians to ensure access isn't removed due to poor behaviour. This had been noted as difficult with discussions with Lower Windrush Valley Project.</p> <p>It was also noted there is a proposal to not restore the original footpath that was diverted to allow gravel digging and landfill use. The path in questions is labelled path 10 and 11 on the footpath map and goes across the middle of the landfill. There was also an early proposal noted that the landfill may be used for a solar farm in the future and any planning discussions should ensure footpath access should be retained as it was originally designed as far as practicable and this could be used as a bargaining chip in any related planning applications that could impact foot path access around the village.</p> <p>Sandra formally thanked the Dix Pit group on behalf of the Council for all their hard work.</p>
<p><b>26/022</b></p>	<p><b>PLANNING</b></p> <p>It was noted that no new planning applications had been submitted for comment but several (6) road closures were planned near the village.</p> <p>It was assumed the bulk of closures would be overnight but it appears they are daytime closures and could cause significant disruptions to villagers using the routes and emphasising when the closures are would be beneficial to the public.</p> <p>With regard the Local Plan, Steve C noted regulations 18 has been raised for debate and will be returned to approve as part of wider plan revisions.</p> <p>Keith noted the desire to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the village.</p>
<p><b>26/023</b></p>	<p><b>ROADS</b></p> <p>a) Speed signs</p> <p>The speedwatch group shared mock ups of speed restriction measures for the Standlake road side of the village, as any consultation should get the best value from the cost and Sutton mock ups had already been produced. These will be used to expedite consultation with OCC to progress measures.</p> <p>It was questioned if we had found the Key/Code to the VAS's installed recently to allow modification of settings and download of data. <b>Keith to follow up on if these were provided/available form the installer team contact.</b></p> <p>It was also queried if speed measures should included Blackditch. It was noted that OCC would see the cars parked in the road as a natural speed reduction measure but this cannot be relied upon to ensure traffic safety.</p> <p>b) Speed Watch</p> <p>There was no update on Speed Watch, although it was noted they could check speeds in Blackditch as part of this programme.</p> <p>c) Weight Restriction (Sutton main road)</p>

	<p>It was noted that this is considered a last resort by OCC so we'll need to jump through any other hoops to get there, so the aim is to pursue all other potential measures first like the speed management aspects above.</p> <p>It was queried how long 'Routing Agreements' last and when they are reviewed by the traffic commissioner as part of planning conditions. It was noted that this is every 5 years after checking. <b>Council to find out what routing agreements are in place and when they get reviewed to allow villagers/PC to have input.</b></p> <p>d) Pot Holes</p> <p>Keith reported he's been out to mark up pot holes now that they are drying out enough to allow marking with paint. 18 done so far and he'll return to lower Sutton to complete marking once the road is dry.</p> <p>Steve C noted OCC are overwhelmed with catching up with pot hole repairs but he has requested a visit from OCC to the large pot hole near Beard Mill (on road to witney) to escalate repair as far as possible.</p> <p>It was noted there are severe pot holes on the haul road to the tip. It was further confirmed the bulk of these are now fixed and it is a private road, although it was questioned if WODC has any responsibility to ensure this road is in good condition given the recycling and disposal centre they operate for public use is there. Action to ask/check?</p>
<p><b>26/024</b></p>	<p><b>MAINTENANCE</b></p> <p>It was noted Robin has agreed to do the maintenance on the trees at the front of the green as previously requested by residents, to be confirmed complete at next meeting.</p> <p>It was noted the notice board lock at the cemetery has seized over the winter. This has now been resolved by Richard.</p> <p>The fence the Old Guardroom boundary to address concerns from nearby residents is still to be done but is planned and funded.</p> <p>It was noted 60 trees have been make available for planting around the village and a working party could be set up to ensure these get planted while the weather is clement to bareroot planting.</p> <p>It was queried if the probation service could provide community support to litter picking or ditch clearance.</p>
<p><b>26/025</b></p>	<p><b>S106</b></p> <p><b>Art Fund</b></p> <p>It was noted there is £8k in the art fund, ideas were requested on its use but no further progress was noted at the meeting.</p> <p><b>Leisure</b></p>

	<p>It was noted of WODC desire to spend leisure money on astroturf for the cricket club, however it was clarified as previously that the PC do not own the cricket club land and therefore S106 money cant be used to modify the land.</p> <p>Efforts to get funding via S106 for solar panels at the guardroom are still being pursued and will be repeated until progress is made.</p> <p>The 'Bump' track (bike track) was raised and it was reported that we are awaiting a quote from the specialist contractor to consider pursuing this via S106.</p> <p>It was noted there is £64k in the leisure fund to be spent by 2031.</p>
<b>26/026</b>	<p><b>VILLAGE VOICE</b></p> <p>The PC contribution to Village Voice was discussed. Sandra provided this last time and Keith offered to do it for next month.</p> <p>The deadline for VV content is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.</p>
<b>26/027</b>	<p><b>GUARDROOM</b></p> <p>Baby changing facilities at the guardroom were noted given new use of the room by juniors/toddlers. Portable vs installed units were discussed with acknowledgement the wall structure is not conducive to structural support (hollow plasterboard spaced from single blockwork). More detail will be provided on options for discussion next time.</p> <p>The heating was discussed, again, with various efforts ongoing to automate the heating ahead of bookings.</p> <p>It was noted the main issue causing this to fail at present is people unplugging heaters on timers or switching off the installed heaters. It was suggested the switched spurs for the installed heating could be replaced by unswitched, fused spurs to prevent them being turned off and losing their programming.</p>
<b>26/028</b>	<p><b>VILLAGE HALL</b></p> <p>It was noted the claim for the damage to a residents wall from a traffic impact is estimated at £700. It was suggested this is split 50:50 with the village hall committee to avoid the insurance excess (£250?) and potential future premiums rising.</p> <p>Sandra agreed to take the proposal to the Village Hall committee and will feedback their decision when available.</p> <p>It was noted the sandbox and sandbags were not in place.</p> <p>The continual use of sewage tankers to pump the sewage pumping station sump since 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 26, has caused disruption to the village hall car park and events. In particular there has been damage done to the kerb by the HGV tanker. Keith offered to raise this on 'fix my street' to request repair by the highways team.</p>
<b>26/029</b>	<p><b>CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <p>Joe passed on correspondence from the traffic commissioner in response to the objection to the Standlake logistics centre planning application. It was noted that while we were not technically permitted to object, doing so provided feedback on the application status.</p> <p>The application has been approved.</p>
<b>26/030</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>Recent flooding was discussed and if the PC could do more. It was suggested another sand/bag bin be procured and sited in Sutton on the phone box plinth at the top of Sutton.</p>

	Cost £199 Proposed by Robin Seconded by Sandra All in favour – passed, to be ordered Keith can take delivery as closest to the site.
<b>26/031</b>	<b>NEXT MEETING</b> The next PC meeting will be on Monday 13th April at the Old Guardroom. (as the first Monday (6th) is Easter Monday Bank Holiday.

Signed .....

Date .....

## **District Councillor's Report - Cllr Steve Cosier**

### **Thames Water - Letter to CEO:**

This issue's report begins with the continuing sorry saga of Thames Water. As your District Councillors Sandra and myself have written to the CEO of Thames Water on behalf of residents following another season of sewer failures and groundwater infiltration. The letter (posted on the village's Facebook pages) highlights ongoing problems that leave households without essential facilities and place pressure on the local environment.

In the letter, we reminded Thames Water of their legal duties to maintain effective drainage, reduce infiltration and publish transparent, time-bound improvement plans. We reminded TW of national policy which now requires full monitoring of storm overflows, and that Thames Water's current "poor performing" rating from the Environment Agency strengthens the need for decisive action in SASH.

We have requested detailed data on tankering, overflow events and CCTV surveys, alongside a village-level infiltration-reduction programme. We are endeavouring to arrange a meeting with Thames Water. Watch this space...

### **Improving Mobile Coverage:**

At a recent WODC Council meeting, a motion I seconded was passed addressing the "patchy" mobile phone reception that continues to plague our rural communities. Sandra and I recognise that our rural communities suffer from "total not spots" which are more than just an inconvenience; they are a significant barrier to safety and economic growth.

We are both currently working with WODC Officers and OCC to provide specific evidence in a formal letter to the Rt Hon Ian Murray, the Minister of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Sandra and I want to ensure that the specific experiences of residents are represented in the letter.

Please can you contact Sandra or me with any specific areas in or around Sutton and Stanton Harcourt where you experience significant concerns regarding mobile coverage. Your feedback will be included in our conversations with OCC and our representation to the Minister.

### **Sewage Issues in Stanton Harcourt and Sutton Lane:**

Residents in Stanton Harcourt and along Sutton Lane have been reporting fresh incidents of sewage seeping from manhole covers, running down footpaths, across the highway and into the Black Ditch watercourse. Despite this, some residents were told by Thames Water that their complaints were "closed" and that no further action was needed. The evidence clearly shows otherwise.

We contacted Thames Water who acknowledged that several homes are experiencing external sewer flooding, and that contractors have attempted to divert the flow. However, Thames Water has admitted that all tankers are currently unavailable due to wider flooding pressures and cannot give any timeframe for assistance.

We are extremely angered by this response. Sewage is escaping into public areas and a watercourse, yet residents are left without clear information, a plan, or a realistic timescale for action. Thames Water is closing complaints while sewage continues to flow is simply unacceptable.

Given the seriousness of the situation, we have contacted the Environment Agency to ensure they are fully aware of the pollution risk and the potential health and safety

implications for our community.

We will continue pressing Thames Water and the relevant authorities until residents receive the urgent support and long-term solutions they deserve. Watch this space...

Best wishes

Steve and Sandra COSIER

West Oxfordshire District Councillors - SASH