

WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held in Village Hall on Wednesday 2nd October 2024

Meeting Number 24.414

Note for information: Cherwell District Council – CDC, Oxfordshire County Council - OCC

Public Participation

For Discussion and Resolution To Approve: Co-option of a Parish Councillor to fill casual vacancy (DB)

Resident Michael Aldridge was in attendance as a potential candidate for co-option as a Councillor onto the Parish Council. The candidate provided an introduction to himself and the Councillors had the opportunity to ask questions.

There are currently three vacancies for Councillors which have previously been advertised.

The resolution to approve the co-option of Michael Aldridge as Councillor on Weston on the Green Parish Council was proposed by DB and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Clerk provided the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form for Michael Aldridge to sign. The form was completed and the Council welcomed Michael as a Councillor.

Action: Clerk to provide Register of Members' Interests form for Michael Aldridge to complete and return along with introductory information.

All other queries raised by residents are to be covered in the agenda already.

24.414.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

Councillors Bohm (DB), Lanham (BL), Davis (SD), Miller (JM) and Aldridge (MA) were in attendance. Councillor Rowan (TR) sent her apologies, which were accepted.

Councillor Coton (Cherwell District Council) was in attendance and Councillor Nigel Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) joined the meeting part way through due to attending an alternative meeting first.

3 members of the public were in attendance.

24.414.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

JM declared an interest in relation to planning application 24/01572/AGN – OS Parcel 4658 North of Shell Filling Station and SW of the Chequers.

SD highlighted an application relating to Councillor Rowan (24/02413/F – Home Farm, Church Lane) however noted that TR was not in attendance.

24.414.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th September 2024 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th September 2024 were discussed with no changes required.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 4th September 2024 was proposed by DB and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to present minutes to Chair to sign, then file and upload to the web.

Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 2nd October 2024

Minutes Approved: Dated.....

24.414.4 For Information: Chairs Comment (DB)

The role of a parish councillor is increasingly demanding. DB is delighted that we get support from the Oxfordshire Alliance of Local Councils. (OALC). This includes a monthly newsletter which is full of excellent advice and offers great training opportunities by consultants and a training group called “Breakthrough Communication”; DB recommended Councillors to book on courses where relevant. One of the opportunities that has opened up in the past year is the monthly zoom meeting for one councillor per Parish Council where issues can be discussed and best practised recommended. DB has attended these and welcomed other Councillors to join too.

On October 12th, Weston on the Green are hosting a meeting of the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans Alliance (ONPA) live and via zoom. All parishes with Neighbourhood Plans either made or in the making have been invited to come. The agenda will be: 1) How will Labour’s planning strategy affect our neighbourhoods and (2) What are Healthy Places – how could this be reflected in Neighbourhood Plan policies? DB put out a request to see if anyone would be able to support with setting up and refreshments.

We had our first Saturday Meet & Greet with PSO Kevin Smith on September 14th. The main topics from villagers included managing speed on Church Road/Lane and reducing the speed limit on the B430 from 40mph to 30mph. He has agreed to support via an increased presence on those routes.

DB has agreed to work with the Village Hall committee to apply for a Sycamore Tree Sapling, which is free if our name is drawn and is being offered following the felling of the sycamore tree near Hadrian’s Wall in Northumberland. It is thought that it might be an idea to remember those who died/were left ill during the Covid lockdowns.

24.414.5 For Information: Clerk report (Clerk)

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed payments from the Parish Council bank account including the usual monthly clerk salary payment and payments received including the second instalment of the precept from CDC (£12,974.50) on 13/09/24 and bank interest (£148.95) on 02/09/24.

The clerk requested Councillors to consider what items they may wish to include in the budget for FY 2025/26. Potential projects/items will be discussed at the November Parish Council meeting.

Action: Clerk to add budget FY 2025/26 discussions to 6th November 2024 PC meeting agenda.

24.414.6 For Discussion: Discuss recommendations from the Planning Group on planning applications (SD)

Key planning applications on the planning report were discussed by the Council.

Building Applications

Decisions Received - Permitted

24/01969/F - Westfield Farm Barn, Shepherds Close - Proposed replacement porch & alterations to the converted barn and the re-building of a former outbuilding.

Decisions Received – Refused

None

Withdrawn

None

Awaiting Decision

23/03383/F – 2 Church Close

Two storey side and rear extensions (re-submission of 23/01872/F)

Commented

24/01136/F - The Old Vicarage, Mill Lane - Renovation of existing detached garage to incorporate first floor home office space.

Commented

New Applications

24/02337/NMA - Erlinstoun, Shepherds Close

Replacement of front porch with oak frame open porch (retrospective - already completed).

24/02413/F - Home Farm, Church Lane

Replacement of existing timber garage with triple stone garage.

Tree Applications:

24/00722/TCA – Manor Hotel - T1 x Multi stem Sycamore - (BLUE) overhanging power station/room, to fell; T2 x Poplar - (PINK) damaging wall of moat, to fell.

Pending

24/02094/TCA – Milestone Cottage, North Lane

Permitted

Action: SD/Clerk to send appropriate planning replies to Cherwell District Council.

24.414.7 For Information: Update on village works (JM)

JM provided an update to the Council on various issues in the parish.

Flooding: an update on known concerns within the parish was provided.

JM suggested the Parish Council should write to Lagan Homes regarding the Schoolfield to advise them that it is their obligation to keep the ditches on their land clear to try and address the concerns of flooding in areas of the village.

Action: Parish Council to contact Lagan Homes to advise of their landowner ditch duties.

Greater water flow through the main channels will also help when Thames Water discharge sewage into the ditch by the pumping station.

It was also suggested that residential properties in the village should be advised about the requirement to clear ditches in the parish.

Action: Parish Council to advise residential properties of their landowner ditch duties.

Sink hole: JM has investigated a collapsed culvert in the ditch adjacent to the footpath bridge to the rear of The Manor, which has created a hole in the ground. The area has been fenced off and it will be reported to Thames Water and the Environment Agency as the assets responsibility is unknown.

Action: Clerk to report hole in ditch/culvert broken to Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

Weston Fen: this is a 14 hectare site of special scientific interest located to the north of the village. Extensive work has been undertaken with trees coppiced and vegetation cut back to the north of the SSSI site.

The SSSI exact area has been checked with Natural England and the Parish Council has enquired if a permit had been granted to undertake the works. Natural England are to investigate and report back.

JM has been in contact with Mr Calcutt and when he is available they will meet to discuss any weir options.

Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 2nd October 2024

Minutes Approved: Dated.....

JM requested that the Council contact Natural England to see if they will hold a meeting to discuss if consent is possible to re-build the weir on the site to aid water flow through the village.

Action: Clerk to contact Natural England to see if they will hold a meeting to discuss the weir.

North Lane Pond: JM has obtained an estimate for an ecologist to undertake a survey of the pond and provide a report and plan on the works required. The cost for this would be £175.00+VAT. The Council agreed this was a good next step and agreed for JM to proceed (the cost would come from the 'Village Works/General Village Maintenance' budget line.

Action: JM to request the ecologist undertake a survey and produce a plan/report on the North Lane pond.

Saint Hill Copse: the OCC enforcement team visited the site recently and were encouraged that he is tidying the site up and it was reported they will take no further action at present. The operator requires a permit to be able to remove some of the waste from the site and OCC are investigating the option to obtain a permit. The Parish Council have not been notified of an update from their environmental concerns and Councillor Simpson will be asked to follow this up.

Action: Councillor Simpson to be asked to follow up Saint Hill Copse environmental enquiry concerns.

JM highlighted there is to be a large bonfire on his land on 5th November 2024, the fire service is to be notified.

24.414.8 For Information: Update on Schoolfield (DB)

DB reported last time on the meeting held with James Painter regarding the purchase of the section of the Schoolfield behind Westlands Avenue. DB is hoping to have a follow up meeting in the next couple of weeks.

Action: Clerk to add Schoolfield update to the 6th November 2024 PC meeting agenda.

Councillor Simpson was welcomed to the meeting.

24.414.9 For Information: Neighbourhood Plan Review - reforms and response to questionnaire, response to Cherwell District Council's request for housing, timetable of Neighbourhood Plan Review (DB/SD)

SD provided an update on the suggested possibility of including a ransom strip on Julia White's former house in Westlands Avenue. The house has been sold without the inclusion of a ransom strip as it was considered this was no longer needed following the purchase of the Schoolfield plot of land by some Westlands Avenue residents.

SD and DB have been meeting on Tuesday afternoons to discuss the response to the planning consultation (response submitted on 23rd September 2024) and the Neighbourhood Plan review.

It has now been confirmed with the CDC Planning Policy team that we will be reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan so there is now a mandate to complete that.

In the past the Council has seen the call for sites sent out to landowners and these have been discussed at a village meeting but nothing is visible this time round and therefore the Council feel unable to provide any clarity to CDC around potential sites.

SD suggested the review target would be by the end 2025 but this timeframe depends on receiving the information from CDC on village categorisation and the housing need allocated to the parish. The village will also need to be re-surveyed to establish how demographics have changed.

The whole Neighbourhood Plan doesn't need to be reviewed, only the aspects on future development and some policy work. Depending on what is reviewed a referendum may not be required.

<i>Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 2nd October 2024</i>	
Minutes Approved:	Dated.....

24.414.10 For Information: Playing field and playground update (BL)

BL has inspected the playground and is not aware of any new issues with the equipment.

BL has spoken to Playdale to confirm the Council's decision to proceed with the repairs, he is waiting to hear on a date to carry out the repairs.

Regarding the left over rubber discussed at the October Council meeting, JM has dropped this off at BL's house and it can be used but the company requires additional items and therefore there is no change to the overall cost.

Playdale are not able to fix the wooden edging but advised to place topsoil around the edges to fill holes in, this will allow natural grass to cover the edges to prevent a hazard.

Action: Council to arrange for topsoil to be placed around the play equipment to prevent gapping.

JM confirmed he had fixed the gate.

24.414.11 For Information: Update from Traffic Calming Action Group (Graham Barnett, GB)

GB confirmed they are progressing slowly with OCC on the B430 speed limit reduction. They are waiting on final estimated costings from OCC so figures can be sent across to Tritax Symmetry for discussion.

The group are also waiting for dates to be sent across for a site visit to the village. The time delays are frustrating as it appears that schemes are progressing elsewhere in villages.

Speedwatch is continuing with sessions, last week there was a new record holder reported on the B430 heading south in the morning at 71mph. Any abusive behaviour witnessed by the team is also passed on to the Police to be followed up.

The scheme was discussed at the recent PCSO visit to the village and a new team is being created to support this work so extra support may be available from 26th November 2024. This will be followed up at the next police liaison meeting to be held in December 2024.

Transport update: the community bus is being used regularly but they are still desperately short of an additional driver.

24.414.12 Resolution: To Approve the following invoices for payment (BL)

BL requested approval of the following invoices detailed in the table below.

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2024-25 Budget
454	Clerk (J Mullane)	Printer ink (Amazon)	£51.72	Sundries/Administration & printing costs	£227.75
455	Moore	External auditors limited assurance review 2023/24	£252.00	Insurance & Auditing/Audit Fees	£535.00
456	Oxford Edens	Grass cutting 25/09/24 (playground, stocks/Ben Jonson)	£286.65	Village Works/Village Contractor Grass Cutting	£806.86
457	Oxford Edens	Grass cutting 25/09/24 (Church Close/Lane)	£54.00	Village Works/Village Contractor Grass Cutting	£520.21
458	Graham Barnett	Fuel for community van (Sainsburys)	£69.95	Village Works/Community Bus Scheme	£1,738.44

Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 2nd October 2024

Minutes Approved: Dated.....

The resolution to approve the invoices detailed in the table was proposed by BL and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to update invoice log with approvals.

Action: Clerk to initiative request for payments from Councillors and ensure payments authorised.

24.414.13 For Information: Update on oak tree footpath (OCC/CDC Councillors)

CDC are reportedly happy with the method statement received from Milestone and the CDC Arboricultural leader is now waiting for dates of the proposed works to ensure he can be in attendance when the path is removed.

24.414.14 For Information: Oxfordshire County & Cherwell District Councillor updates (OCC/CDC Councillors)

Councillor Coton commented:

- Residents have until the end of October to apply for a home upgrade grant
- Indicated CDC Planning are looking into developing a parish planning toolkit to provide information on how to respond to planning applications the right way and how to navigate the system.

Councillor Simpson commented:

- The new director of OCC Highways was not available for a parish site visit, information has been passed down the line to officers
- Meeting to be held between OCC Highways, Environment Agency and Thames Water to review the effects and response to Storm Henk.

DB highlighted that the promised 'Who's Who at OCC' is still outstanding, Councillor Simpson will enquire.

24.414.15 For Information: Update on commercial parachute business at the Weston on the Green airfield (DB)

DB has received a reply from RAF Squadron Leader Bristow regarding the letter which had been sent via email on 1st September 2024.

DB covered the main points identified in the reply back from the RAF.

- The trial period has been delayed whilst Skydive Centre finalise safety documentation with both the MOD and the CAA. The RAF engaged with their Director to amend his website until confirmed dates are available.
- The skydiving operation is exempt from the UK Emissions Trading Scheme for aviation and therefore an emissions / environmental assessment is not required. Skydive Centre have however committed to carbon offsetting projects through the purchase of carbon credits. This will assist them in initially aiming towards Carbon Neutral, and eventually Net Zero.
- The loudest element of the civilian aircraft sortie (take-off and landing) are not expected to exceed 70db, which is the equivalent noise to normal road traffic. Unlike military aircraft, the civilian parachuting aircraft will not be constrained to a 2 mile radius around RAF WotG and will be dropping parachutists from a much higher altitude, significantly reducing the noise. After any trial period, consultation with local communities, ensuring any noise mitigation procedures are appropriate, will be carried out.
- Acknowledged concerns regarding traffic and these will be raised with Skydive Centre with a view to exploring whether alternative routes to RAF WotG can be considered and advertised. It was also commented that with c40 customers a day spread out over four booking times this will significantly reduce the concentration of traffic moving along the local roads.

- There is significant importance to utilise Defence real estate to its full capacity, and to generate income from the large swathes of land the MOD owns, hence the exploration to re-commence commercial skydiving activity at RAF WotG. They do acknowledge our concerns, however they also reinforced that as RAF WotG is RAF owned, the RAF ultimately retains authority to authorise civilian use of its real estate as it sees fit.
- Confirmed that as the proposed Skydiving operation does not meet the statutory definition of 'development', nor a 'change of use' as set out in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act, planning permission is not required.

The letter concluded by hoping they had provided some level of reassurance that the RAF do have environmental, noise and traffic concerns in any future plans and that, where possible and appropriate, they will ensure any disruption is kept to an absolute minimum.

24.414.16 To Note: External Auditor report received & confirmation of end of financial audit FY 2023-2024 (DB)

DB informed the council that the external auditors report for FY 2023-24 had been received by the council with a trivial comment on rounding figures (unavoidable) to be noted. It was confirmed that the notice of the conclusion of the audit had been placed on the Parish Council website and noticeboards.

24.414.17 Next Parish Council Meeting Date: Wednesday 6th November 2024, 7.30pm (DB)

Meeting Closed: 21.36

<i>Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 2nd October 2024</i>	
Minutes Approved:	Dated.....