

**Minutes of the Northmoor Parish Council Meeting  
Held on Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 7:00pm in the Village Hall**

**Attendees**

Cllr James Florey                      Chair  
Cllr Lindsey Brangwin  
Cllr Stacey Reed  
Cllr Henry Spielberg

Mr Chris Isaac              Clerk

OCC Cllr Dan Levy, WODC Cllr Steve Cosier and WODC Cllr Charlie Maynard

3 members of the public

1.    **Apologies for absence.** To receive apologies for absence.  
Cllr Juliet Druce

2.    **Requests for Dispensations, Declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality.** To receive any requests for Dispensations, Declarations of Interest from Councillors relating to items on the Agenda.  
Nothing was declared.

3.    **Public Participation.** To receive questions from members of the public relating to items on the Agenda.  
There were no questions from the members of the public present.

4.    **Minutes.** To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 3 Sep 24 previously circulated.  
It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

5.    **Reports.** To receive reports for information only from Councillors and Clerk.

a.    OCC Cllr Levy presented his report to the meeting, a copy of which is included at the end of these minutes.

b.    WODC Cllr Cosier presented his report to the meeting, a copy of which is included at the end of these minutes. He added that he had put information relating to the Winter Fuel Payment, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit onto all of the district's Facebook pages. If anyone has any questions or issues applying, they can contact Cllr Cosier directly. There are approximately 20,000 people in the WODC area who are eligible but not currently receiving these benefits.

*Clerk to post the information on the Parish Website and to send it via email to both village email distribution lists with a message to pass onto those in the community who may not have internet access.*

c.    WODC Cllr Maynard presented his report to the meeting, a copy of which is included at the end of these minutes.

d.    Cllr Brangwin thanked OCC Cllr Dan Levy for helping the playpark committee access the councillors' priority grant.

e.    Cllr Reed reported that many Thameside Court residents can't get flood cover as a lot of companies haven't signed up to the Flood Re Scheme. Cllr Cosier will ask others in WODC and potentially the EA for advice.

f.    The Clerk reported the following points:

- i. SSEN Resilience Grant. The Clerk requested a 2-week extension to the application deadline, but was informed this was not possible as the review process had already started.
- ii. Road Closures. The proposed works by Thames Water to connect Northmoor Park due 30 Sep to 2 Oct is underway.
- iii. Bank Mandate. The remaining Councillors should also be on the mandate, and one should be nominated as Internal Financial Controller as per the Internal Auditor's recommendation.
- iv. Playpark RoSPA Inspection. The invoice has been paid, and they also asked why the additional items were inspected and invoiced when they weren't requested. Suggested a credit note for next year's inspection would be acceptable if they agree that it shouldn't have been inspected.
- v. . Community Infrastructure Levy consultation (2 Aug – 27 Sep). No responses were received.

6. **Policy Review:** To review the following policies

- a. Financial Regulations. There were still some outstanding questions on the regulations so this item will be moved to the next meeting.

7. **Finance:** To consider the following items:

- a. The Clerk proposed that a blanket approval for regular payments such as grass cutting, allotment rental and bin emptying should be sought at the initial meeting of the year so that out of committee requests could be avoided in future years. Cllr Spilberg suggested that the Financial Regulations may already allow for that eventuality. It was agreed that pre-approval would ensure full visibility.

- b. Donation to First and Last Mile. First and Last mile had requested some funding to support the 471 Shopper Service to Witney on a Wednesday, which they claim was well used by the residents of the Parish. This highlights the need for a Grant awarding policy as recommended in the Internal Audit.

*Clerk to clarify that we want to know usage of the First & Last Mile service by Northmoor residents specifically and what level of support they are requesting.*

- c. To consider the following payments:

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following invoices for payment which Cllr Brangwin would authorise online.

- i. £24.55 to Castle Water for August allotment water.
  - ii. £39.50 to Emma Hare for March to September allotment rent.
  - iii. £522.29 to WODC for October 24 to March 25 bin emptying.
- d. The Clerk reported that the second Precept payment of £2,647.50 and £1000 OCC Councillors Grant for the Playpark had been received in September, and that £4000 had been transferred from the Community Account (Current) to the Business Premium account (Savings).

8. **Planning Applications.** To consider all recent Applications received from West Oxfordshire District Council detailed below and any other Planning Applications submitted between the circulation of this Agenda and the meeting:

- a. **APPLICATION NO: 24/02254/HHD 21** (Town and Country Planning Act)  
**PROPOSAL:** Conversion of garage to create additional living space. Alterations to fenestration along with erection of a wooden lean-to shed to north east elevation of dwelling 21 Griffiths Close Northmoor.  
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** to respond that there were no objections to the proposal.

9. **Correspondence.** To note correspondence received not otherwise on the agenda where decisions are not required.  
The Clerk noted that a member of public had contact him via the previous Clerk regarding an issue with a footpath. They were advised to contact OCC who are responsible for Public Rights of Way. Cllr Levy requested that the Clerk forward the email to him.

10. **Items for information or next Agenda only.** All items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by Mon 28 Oct 24.

11. **Date of Next Meeting.** To confirm the date of the next meeting.  
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree that the next meeting of the Parish Council would take place in the Northmoor Village Hall on Tue 5 Nov 24 commencing at 7:00pm.

12. There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:45pm.

Signed.....Date.....

## **OCC Councillor Report Dan Levy Oct 24**

### **ROADS**

#### **Oxford**

You will I am sure have read that Network Rail have failed to meet the timetable they committed to as Oxford Station is rebuilt. That is, to put it mildly, extremely disappointing. Botley Road remains closed to motor vehicles at the railway bridge, and we await NR telling us the new expected opening date. In the meantime, the current bus arrangements, which work well, are continuing to be in operation.

#### **A40**

Discussions with Homes England continue relating to the A40 improvement project. Once Homes England release the money promised, the Park and Ride junctions and bus lanes can be completed.

You may recall that the P&R itself is financed by a different government agency, as part of the Science Corridor project which is largely paying for the junctions at Oxford North and at Shores Green. The new government has promised a more joined-up way of funding projects, and that is to be welcomed. It is worth stressing that the P&R was built prior to the other funding being released in order to ensure that it wasn't affected by inflation, and to ensure that no Oxfordshire Council Taxpayer money has been used on the project. That includes the current maintenance costs, which are bundled into the government funding.

The fundamental issue has been that the project used two unconnected pots of money, and neither government pot was inflation indexed. That is what was inherited by the current administration, and although the situation is frustrating, it is the best that could be done with what we were left.

As well as quicker bus services there will be an improved bike lane, and significant improvements to the Eynsham roundabout and the lights at Cassington.

#### **Flooding**

We need to make sure that all the gulleys on roads are cleared, and that ditches are maintained by their owners. However, no drainage system could cope with a month's rain in one day, and some of the places that have seen flooding have also got new drains or recently cleared ones.

### **BUSES**

#### **Reliability measures**

As Botley Road is one of the key routes into Oxford, the knock-on effect of the closure is that the bus improvement schemes which were due to commence have had to be postponed. It is vital that bus movement in Oxford is prioritised, along with active travel, and it is a shame that there will be a delay in being able to put the filter scheme in place. The filters will permit people to drive to anywhere that they currently can drive to, but will create cleared key routes for buses.

#### **New capped multi-company fares**

With support from the County Council, the bus companies in Oxfordshire have agreed to combined ticketing, with a maximum daily or weekly fare. The daily cap is £6.50 for adults and £3.50 for under 18s. A weekly ticket is £25.00 and £14.50.

That includes local buses from more rural areas, as well as routes in the city, and between the major towns. The First and Last Bus services from Standlake to Eynsham via Northmoor and to Hanborough Station.

Find out about MyBus Oxfordshire tickets at [mybusoxfordshire.org.uk](https://mybusoxfordshire.org.uk)

The government will be announcing that local authorities will be able to franchise buses services in their areas. They are unlikely to provide funding that would enable this to make a substantive difference to local services, but we will keep the situation under review.

### **Democracy**

The Electoral Commission has completed its final report on Electoral arrangements for the County Council, which Parliament will approve in time for the May 2025 elections.

This has redrawn the county divisions, to reflect population movements since the last review. There will be a new Carterton South and Bampton division, which will contain Aston, Yelford and Standlake, while Northmoor and Stanton Harcourt will be part of the new Eynsham Division. This of course follows closely after the first parliamentary election under the new boundaries, and will be followed by an Electoral Commission review of the district boundaries in the next year or so.

As ever, please do contact me at [dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## WODC Councillor Report Steve Cosier Oct 24

### FULL COUNCIL:

Considering the Government's resolution to end the Winter-fuel allowance, the alliance resolved to expedite a solution and quickly identify those in this district who are eligible for the Winter Fuel Allowance pension credit but do not claim it.

A motion was put to the council and subsequently passed in relation to the Government's decision to remove the Winter Fuel Allowance. The council has resolved to try and maximise the take-up of pension credit and bring forward the administration and sign up of housing benefit and pension credit to help and reassure susceptible pensioners that they will be able to afford to heat their homes in winter.

The motion reads as follows:

**This Council notes the government's decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments (WFPs). Age UK estimates that the government's changes to WFPs could hit 2 million people across the country, some of whom badly need the money to stay warm this winter. This Council also notes the parlous state of the Public Finances that the new Government has inherited.**

**This Council resolves to:**

- 1. Request that the Executive considers a report from officers with proposals for promoting a District awareness campaign working with our local NHS partners, Parish Councils and charitable, civic and religious groups, to encourage elderly residents who are eligible for means- tested benefits such as Pension Credit to register and claim them to ensure that they continue to receive WFPs this Winter and to ensure that those in need are sign-posted to the continuing Household Support Fund;**
- 2. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging an impact assessment of the government's decision to means test WFPs and asking HM Treasury to examine transitional measures to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who are eligible for, but who do not – or cannot – claim, other benefits under current thresholds are protected from fuel poverty.**

### **NOTICE OF REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

West Oxfordshire District Council is conducting a review of polling district and polling places within West Oxfordshire. Written comments and representations are invited from any electors and other interested persons and bodies, including elected representatives and those with expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for disabled people.

Although the review is of polling districts and polling places it is accepted that polling stations are linked to the review and representations and comments are invited regarding those polling stations currently used. The council has asked that persons or bodies making representations should, if possible, give alternative buildings/venues that may be used as polling places. In conducting the review, the Council is requesting submissions from the (Acting) Returning Officer for the parliamentary constituency of Witney and the part of the Banbury, Bicester and Woodstock Constituencies within the West Oxfordshire District Council authority area. **The deadline for submissions is Monday 4 November 2024.**

## **INFORMATION:**

**Comments and representations may be submitted as follows:**

### **By post:**

Electoral Services, West Oxfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon OX28 1NB

### **By email: Online:**

[elections@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:elections@westoxon.gov.uk)

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council/elections-and-voting/polling-districts-and-places/>

## **FLOODING**

Following the recent rainfall many rivers remain at a high level. There are several flood alerts in place in the district. I have included a link to the areas with alerts in place:

[https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and warnings](https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and-warnings)

Who can help and who do you need to contact in a flood:

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/flooding/>

WODC have supplied as list of useful telephone for residents. I have attached them to this report and a leaflet which the parish council might want to add post.

Roads, blocked gullies, gratings and drains	Oxfordshire County Council	0845 3101111 (24 hrs) Website: <a href="#">Oxfordshire County Council</a>
Main rivers	Environment Agency	General enquiries: 08708 506 506 Incident hotline: 0800 807 060 Website: <a href="#">Environment Agency</a>
Other watercourses such as a stream or ditches	Land owner	Contact the riparian owner Website: <a href="#">West Oxfordshire District Council - Watercourses and ditches</a> Call 01993 861000

Thank you

Steve

Please do get in touch with any queries, comments and, or requests. The best way is via email at: [steve.cosier@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:steve.cosier@westoxon.gov.uk) or mobile: 07584356301

## **WODC Councillor Report Charlie Maynard Oct 24**

**Winter Fuel Allowance** – my 71 Liberal Democrat MP colleagues and I all voted against Labour's plans to cut the Winter Fuel Allowance. We believe that their plan to cut the means test back to only those who receive pension credit represents a very mean means test. West Oxfordshire District Council unanimously passed a motion last week asking the national government to reconsider and mitigate its approach. The council has been allocated £131,730 to support residents, as part of the recently launched Household Support Fund, in which Oxfordshire County Council has been allocated £3.4m.

In West Oxfordshire the funding will be available through a number of different services to make sure the right support reaches those who need it:

- Individual support through Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire who will provide emergency vouchers and financial help towards food, fuel and other essential household costs.
- Support for those in temporary accommodation and housing need through housing services.
- Support for community food projects and voluntary sector groups where they are working directly with residents in need

Please do get in touch if you have need or know others who need helping.

**Thames Water** – it's hard to see any good news here. As I write this, both Stanton Harcourt and Standlake Sewage Treatment Works are dumping sewage, with Standlake's works about to reach 200 hours of non-stop discharge. The new Labour government is deferring taking material action, allowing Thames Water to continue to operate despite the company being in breach of its operating licence, given it now lacks two investment grade credit ratings. The company is headed for bankruptcy, also known as Special Administration. My colleagues and I are pushing hard for a wholesale reworking of the regulations governing the water sector. I believe it is unlikely that we are going to see material improvements in our local treatment works and networks until the government properly addresses the problem.

**Housing and the Local Plan** – the new government has ramped house building targets, with West Oxfordshire's slated to be increased by 62%. Given the absolutely dire state of the A40 this is a huge mistake. Our district cannot take this level of housing without greatly improved transport and social infrastructure. To date, there has been minimal information regarding this and we will have to wait and see to learn more information. I am meeting with the head of Strategic Planning and the Councillor responsible for Planning tomorrow to discuss this in more detail. Importantly the Local Plan finalisation date has been pushed from June 2025 to December 2026.