DRAFT Full Parish Council Meeting Minutes
Monday 5th October 2026, 7.30pm

Present: Alison Sercombe (Chair), Toby Newman (Vice Chair), Councillors Richard Barrett, Andrew Cooper, Fay Fox, Paul Gregory, Lucy Thomas, John Wolstenholme and Paul Wilmott

In attendance: Locum Clerk, Assistant Clerk, County Councillor Tim Bearder. One member of the public was present.

#91/26-27 Apologies for absence: The Council accepted apologies from Councillors Peter Ramsdale, Richard Street and Ashley Buttress.

#92/26-27 To co-opt to fill two vacancies: There is an applicant who was unable to attend this meeting, but plans to attend the November meeting.

#93/26-27 Declarations of interest/Dispensations:

- Cllr Newman – The Merry Bells; Wheatley Park School
- Cllr Thomas - Wheatley Park School
- Cllr Barratt – The Merry Bells
- Cllr Fay Fox – The Merry Bells
- Cllr Wilmott – Wheatley Rugby Club; Wheatley Playing Fields Trust
- Cllr Sercombe -- Wheatley Windmill

#94/26-27 The minutes from the Parish Council meeting of 07.09.2026 were agreed and signed.

#95/26-27 Public participation & questions (maximum of 30 minutes in total 5 minutes per person): There were no representations.

#96/26-27 To receive a report from the County Councillor

i. The County Councillor reported the following:
   a. Traffic filters have launched. There has been congestion on Botley Road, but Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) will see how this settles.
   b. The Oxford Greenways project has launched but is not funded as of yet. There are several areas proposed, some of which are local.

ii. Update on Kelham Hall Drive alley blocked pipework: OCC has found that there is an easement showing an agreement with the developer.

This needs to be checked with legal. Once completed and if OCC is responsible, OCC will obtain quotations to complete the work.

iii. Cllr Bearder left at this stage in the meeting.

#97/26-27 To receive a report from the District Councillor: The District Councillor sent a report. See Attachment 1.

#98/26-27 Committees

i. **The Council received minutes/recommendations from the following committee meetings:**

- Planning Committee meeting of 09.09.2026
- Open Spaces Committee meeting of 21.09.2026

#99/26-27 Membership to the National Allotment Society: The Council resolved not to proceed with membership to the National Allotment Society at a cost of £70/year (+VAT).

#100/26-27 Clerk Report:

i. Solar Lights at the Memorial Ground: The Locum Clerk reported the solar lights are in place and working well.

ii. Saturday surgery update: The Locum Clerk reported that she and the Assistant Clerk have had not requests for a Saturday surgery. It was confirmed not to proceed with Saturday surgery.

iii. Newsletter deadline – 05.11.2026

iv. Wheatley Artisan Market: The Artisan Market held in September was successful, but footfall was lower. Stall holders were happy to come back to the next one in April.

v. Wheatley Christmas Fair – 27.11.2026, 2pm – 8pm.

vi. Church Road Recreation Ground: The Assistant Clerk has had an online meeting with Homefront, and is working through the snagging issues. Their installing team are coming on the 26th October to complete fixes.

vii. Tree survey/works update: The removal of the ash tree at Farm Close Rec is being scheduled. The alley will close while this happens. The tree surveys at Church Road Rec have been carried out and there is work to be done.

viii. Update on Storage Container planning application: The Planning Application was rejected as proper drawings are needed. Cllr Newman will assist in obtaining these.

ix. Update on weeding in the village: ODS has completed spraying on London Road and the weeds have died down. The grounds team will clear those. There has been a request from the Merry Bells Committee to clear weeds in their car park. WPC resolved for WPC's grounds team to carry out this task.

x. SODC Deep Cleanse: 03.11.2026 – 09.11.2026: If councillors have any areas of concern, they will inform the Assistant Clerk.

xi. Newsletter editor advert is out. The Council will look to hold a meeting of the Staffing Committee to look at the final candidates and schedule interviews.

#101/26-27 Reports from working groups and village organisations: To note any reports received from the following:

i. Communications Working Group: There is an upcoming meeting.
   a. The Council agreed the Terms of Reference.

ii. Cadet Hut Working Group: The Chair has been informed that OCC is interested in selling the Cadet Hut. The Chair and Vice Chair will have a call with OCC as to next steps.

iii. Community Events Working Group: There has not been a meeting, but events are being planned.

iv. Wheatley Pavilion Maintenance Working Group: There have been no recent meetings.

v. Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Working Group: There was no update.

vi. Littleworth Road Field Working Group: A few meetings have taken place with South Oxfordshire District Council and OxTrails. The Group is looking at a potential pump track/ jump track & off road track. The Chair will put in a grant application in January subject to the lease being signed.

vii. Traffic Working Group: See Attachment 2.

viii. Youth Council Working Group: There is no update as this is largely dependent on the outcome of conversations surrounding the Cadet Hut.

ix. Thames Valley Police Working Group: There is an upcoming meeting.

x. Flood Advisory Working Group: There was no update.

xi. Sports and Leisure Working Group: There was no update.

#102/26-27 Reports from community groups: The Council received the following reports:

i. Howe Trust (Wheatley): Attachment 3.

ii. Good Neighbourhood Scheme: Attachment 4.

iii. Maple Tree: See Attachment 5.

iv. The Merry Bells: The Chair of the Merry Bells Committee reported the following:
   a. They have rebranded the Coffee Room to the Meeting Room.
   b. They are looking for a new Secretary and a Trustee.

c. They have a new Treasurer.
d. They have agreed to purchase new chairs.
e. They have a vacant office which is available to rent.

v. Wheatley Playing Field Trust (WPFT): See Attachment 6. Cllr Shepard has visited the playing fields to review the wear on pitches. Footfall has been heavier with football. The decision was taken to put a full size pitch where rugby is .

vi. Wheatley Charities: The Chair will remind Wheatley Charities to send reports.

vii. Wheatley Windmill Preservation Society: There is no update. This coming Sunday is last open day of season.

#103/26-27 Future proposal papers: The Council resolved that all future items that come to the Council for consideration are accompanied by proposal papers which acknowledge the impact to the Council's 2027 – 2031 Strategic Objectives.

#104/26-27 Request for feedback on 20mph schemes - South Oxfordshire: The Council resolved to support the 20mph speed limit and ask if this could extend to Wheatley Bridge at the end of London Road.

#105/26-27 Items of information without decision

a. **Correspondence:** The Council noted the correspondence received.

#106/26-27 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 2nd November 2026, 19:30, The Merry Bells Hall. **The deadline for agenda items for the meeting is the 21st October.** The Assistant Clerk sends apologies for the November meeting.

#107/26-27 Confidential item: The Council resolved to remove members of the public from the following agenda item due to its confidential nature. Start 20:21

#108/26-27 Confidential item: Drainage quotes for the Pavilion: The Council would like to obtain new quotes based on a tender document. The Council resolved for the Locum Clerk to contact Sports Clubhouses about creating a tender document.

The Clerk will investigate the usage of the S106 provision for the maintenance of the cricket wicket with SODC.

The meeting closed at 20:40.

Attachment 1

District Councillor Update

Peter Ramsdale
October 2026

Flooding Update

Alleviation Ponds

This was fully reported on at the last meeting and Alison Sercombe can provide the latest updates if required.

I have now started to try and progress other flooding issues around the village including:

Flooding at the junction of Keydale and Old Road.

During the heavy rainfall about four weeks ago, there was significant flooding at the junction of Old Road and Keydale Road, with a considerable amount of debris and silt deposited across the junction.

There are four large drain gullies at the junction which appear to be clear. However, given that flooding still occurred and given the problems with escaping raw sewage in Keydale Road, OCC has agreed to send a team out to carry out further investigation, including checking that the drains themselves are clear and that water is flowing away as it should.

We should also ask them to investigate the drains further up Old Road as It appears possible that the flooding is being caused, at least in part, by excess water running down the hill.

Holloway Road / High Street

The drains along the length of Holloway are blocked, and there is currently only one point where water is able to enter the drainage system, with water then immediately escaping through the next drain down the run!

As a result, during heavy rainfall a significant amount of water runs along the surface of Holloway Road, from the top of the road all the way down to the High Street. This is a significant contributor to the flooding that occurs at the junction of Holloway Road and the High Street.

OCC has agreed to arrange for a team to investigate this, hopefully during November. However, before this can happen, they need to establish more clearly where the existing drains run and where they discharge.

They have therefore agreed to arrange a time when they can meet either myself or a parish representative on site.

The work on the culvert is considered less urgent as the culvert is clear but there are plans to improve access at the 'New Club' end of the High Street,

Kimber Close / Kelmhall Drive

Oxfordshire County Council sent a team to investigate this problem in July. They identified blockages in the drains in both Kimber Close and behind the flats in Kelmhall Drive caused by tree roots and silt. Although some debris was cleared in Kimber Close, there are blockages further down the drainage system. This work has potentially increased the risk of water escaping from the manhole on the footpath and flooding properties in Beech Road**.**

Work has now stopped and the County Council's current position is that responsibility for carrying out the necessary repair's rests with the landowners rather than the County Council.

OCC is going to send us the report of the work that has already been undertaken, together with confirmation that we need to approach the relevant landowners regarding any further remedial work.

Lucy Collinson has carried out significant investigations into this matter, including talking the Managing Agent for the land, but without any legal power the Parish Council cannot take

matters further and Tim and I are picking up this difficult situation up with the County Council as a matter of urgency.

Littleworth Business Park

The Parish Council is struggling to get peoples commitment to holding regular multi-agency meetings involving South Oxfordshire District Council Environmental Health and Planning Oxfordshire County Council Highways, Trading Standards, and Thames Valley Police. Alison and I will pick this up when I return from holiday.
SODC now has powers to take action against untaxed vehicles. The first notices have been issued on vehicles in Littleworth. However, some cars are just being moved onto the apron and Parish Council land, which is now full of damaged and untaxed cars again.

Planning Decisions

Major national changes to the way planning applications are decided are due to come into force on 31 October 2026 through the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions. These changes will mean more applications are determined by planning officers and will significantly reduce the circumstances in which ward councillors or Town and Parish Councils can secure consideration by Planning Committee.
I would strongly encourage the Parish Planning Committee to make me aware of any objections the committee has to a planning application so I can feed this into the SODC planning application process.

£270,000 Councillor Community Grant Fund Opens

The latest round of South Oxfordshire's Councillor Community Grant is now open, with £270,000 available across the district to support projects that benefit residents and help create healthy, thriving communities. This is a useful opportunity for local voluntary and community organisations to secure funding for practical projects in their area.
The deadline for applications is midday on 4 December. If you know of a local organisation or project that could benefit, please encourage them to look at the criteria and apply. I am also happy to hear from groups in the ward that are considering an application.
Read more: South Oxfordshire grants

Performing Arts Grant Fund

South Oxfordshire District Council's Performing Arts Grant Fund is open, with £60,000 available to support local theatre, music and dance projects. Community and voluntary organisations, Town and Parish Councils and other eligible not-for-profit groups can apply for grants of between £500 and £5,000, with applications open until midday on Wednesday 30 September.
The fund can support new or expanded performing arts activities, workshops, performances and partnership projects. The aim is to help more residents take part in the arts, develop local talent and reach people who might not otherwise have access to these opportunities. If you know a local group with an idea, please encourage them to take a look at the scheme.
Read more: Performing Arts Grant Fund

Attachment 2

Traffic working Group Report
29th Sept 2026

OCC is looking for feedback on the 20MPH scheme, and I'd like to provide my view on how we respond**.**

The 20mph speed limit was introduced in Wheatley almost two years ago and residents were quite vocal about it and, as with any change, some people did not welcome it. However, as time has gone on, I believe that the vast majority of Wheatley residents now support the 20mph speed limit and almost everyone I speak to around the village welcomes it.

We reviewed the 20mph speed limit at the last Traffic Working Group meeting, and it was unanimously supported by the group.

Research by the UK Transport Research Laboratory has shown that every 1mph reduction in average urban speeds can result in a six percent fall in the number of casualties. It's also been shown that you are seven times more likely to survive if you are hit by a car driving at 20mph, than if you are hit at 30mph. If a child suddenly steps in front of a car, you are much less likely to seriously injure or kill them if you keep to a 20mph limit.

Whenever I travel around Wheatley, including along Ladder Hill and London Road, I try to judge the speed of vehicles. My impression is that speeds have reduced significantly. I would estimate that the average speed along London Road is now nearer 25mph, compared with perhaps 35mph previously. There will always be drivers who exceed the limit, but again, I believe the numbers are reducing. This is supported by OCC research that shows speeds in Oxfordshire have reduced by @ 4 mph in built up areas, accompanied by an 18% fall in deaths and serious injury on our roads,
Before the 20mph limit was introduced, two surveys were carried out, and on both occasions, residents were more supportive of a 20mph limit than opposed to it. The proposal was subsequently reviewed by the Traffic Working Group before being recommended for implementation and ultimately voted on by the Parish Council.
I therefore do not believe that another survey on the 20mph speed limit would serve much useful purpose. My view is that, if another survey were undertaken, the residents who are most directly affected by traffic speeds would be particularly likely to support retaining the 20mph limit. These include residents of Ladder Hill, Littleworth, Westfield Road, Farm Close Road, Old London Road and Park Hill. I think this would also include parents whose children walk from Wheatley Park School into Wheatley and drivers who need to pull out safely from Church Road onto London Road by the King's Arms.

My proposal is that the 20mph speed limit is debated by the Parish Council, considering the evidence and the experience of the past two years and reach a view on whether the 20mph limit is working. If the consensus of the Parish Council is that the 20mph speed limit is beneficial to the village, then I believe that this should be formally communicated to Oxfordshire County Council and I'd be happy to do that.

Attachment 3

UPDATE FOR WHEATLEY PARISH COUNCIL
28th September 2026

1. **Grassland and Ponds**

The grassland is recovering well from the drought though very little rain has meant the pond levels are still extremely low.

2. **Trees and hedges**

Weeding the hedges is the main focus for winter 2026/7. Likewise, our volunteers are removing tree guards from more mature trees who no longer require protection from deer. The long drought has had an impact on many of the larger, more mature trees on The Howe. We are continuing to monitor these affects and are awaiting Tim O'Connor's advice re remedial work required on Ash and other trees.

3. **Grant Applications**

Dry conditions delayed the start of work on the new steps and handrail path, but this commenced on 28th September.

4. **Benefaction/Gifts**

A request for funding was received and approved from a local mother in financial need.
A commemorative bench has been installed in Daltons Wildlife Field. We hope to encourage more requests of this nature to help provide more seating for visitors.

5. **Outreach, Communications and Information Gathering**

The Walkers' Guide is now complete and will be published and posted on the website by end October.
The trust has researched the health and environmental risks associated with amateur pesticide and weedkiller usage and has therefore developed proposals for guidelines for volunteers and allotment holders which will be discussed at the next allotment association meeting.

6. **Trustees**

There remain 2 nominative vacancies.

7. **Other**

Work is about to start on The 2026 Christmas Hamper Campaign.
Remedial work continues on the water troughs across the Howe paddocks and allotments. This work is being carried out as a preventative measure and includes elements such as installing new isolation valves, replace corroded ballcocks, make replacement lids etc.
Likewise, the trust is in the process of talking to contractors regarding repairing the surface on the main track going through the allotments to see what the best solution is to address some of the larger potholes and level issues.

Maggie Fyffe, Chair - The Howe Trust: September 28th, 2026

Attachment 4

Wheatley Good Neighbour Scheme
Report for the Parish Council 29.09.26

WGNS has continued to meet the needs of lonely adults living in Wheatley, Littleworth and Holton.
We have volunteers who visit people in their homes, currently about 10 clients. We transport to the URC Sunday teas, the URC monthly lunch club and the new Bingo club at Wellford Gardens.
We have a number of volunteers who regularly help at the Lunch Club serving, clearing and providing cakes.
We also provide one off assistance such as mending a curtain rail, getting shopping and recently 5 volunteers helped Sarah Rudd at the surgery to clear out a flat and fill 2 skips.
We had a very successful AGM in June where volunteers were given the opportunity to feedback to the committee. The consensus was that everything was running smoothly. We discussed getting involved Garsington and Great Milton outings and agreed to promote these to our clients and volunteers.
We have a new dedicated WGNS phone (07983 119925) which is being monitored by committee members.
Our Summer Tea Party, held at Jane Fanning's garden this year, catered for some 35 clients and volunteers and was a very jolly event.
We are currently planning our Christmas party for early in December. We currently have enough funds to cover this but will need to look at funding next year.

Deborah Bale
Chair and Co-ordinator of WGNS

Attachment 5

Maple Tree update

Summary report to Wheatley Parish Council: September 2026

Our autumn programme of sessions continues and we will be open for families (including school age children) during the half term break.

We are extremely sorry to have to report that, during the summer a group of young people broke into the Maple Tree garden and took, and subsequently vandalised, a set of brand new trikes. We had received grant funding to purchase the trikes. We did obtain some CCTV still from Wheatley Nursery showing the perpetrators and we reported the matter to the police. Disappointingly, the police have advised that they did not have enough evidence to pursue the case. It is shocking and upsetting to think that a small number oof young people in our village would behave in this way. We are now looking at the cost of installing some kind of surveillance equipment.

We are maintaining our excellent relationship with local health visitors, who are running clinic from our premises.

We still have vacancies for 2 or 3 new trustees on our board and are particularly interested in talking to anyone who is interested in fundraising.

Finance and fundraising

Our annual Family Fete on Friday was a lovely community event. Whilst not a large fundraiser, it was enjoyed by families and we raised over £500.

The Maple Tree – 28 September 2026. If you would like any further information, please contact Jane Lightfoot at jane@mapletree.org.uk

Attachment 6

Wheatley Playing Field Trust

Summary of Annual Report

The Wheatley Playing Field Trust Annual Report 2025-2026 highlights a successful year in which the Trust continued to provide and enhance sporting and community facilities at Holton for local residents, sports clubs and Wheatley Park School. Demand for the site remained strong, with over 200 football matches hosted and regular football and rugby training sessions taking place throughout the year. A major highlight was the youth football tournament in May, which attracted around 800 young players from across Oxfordshire and reinforced the site's importance as a centre for grassroots sport.

A significant focus of the year was the maintenance and improvement of the ageing pavilion buildings. Structural surveys identified essential repairs, particularly to the lower pavilion, and a programme of works was developed in partnership with Wheatley Parish Council and Wheatley Park School. Further investment was also directed towards plumbing, heating and drainage improvements to improve reliability, reduce costs and support the long-term sustainability of the facilities.

The Trust continued to manage challenges affecting the playing fields, including periods of extreme wet and dry weather, while maintaining safe and playable pitches. A successful grant from the Football Foundation enabled the purchase of new portable football goals, helping to improve pitch management and playing conditions.

Beyond sport, the facilities were used for community events, training activities and educational purposes, including NHS seminars, Fire Service training and Wheatley Play Day 2026. Looking ahead, the Trust's priorities include completing pavilion repairs, improving drainage and infrastructure, supporting participation in sport and implementing a long-term strategy to ensure the facilities continue to serve the community for future generations.

Paul Willmott
29th September 2026