

Parish Council Meeting

Monday, 1st June 2026, 7.30pm

Minutes

Present: Alison Sercombe (Chair), Toby Newman (Vice Chair), Councillors Richard Barrett, Andrew Cooper, Fay Fox, Paul Gregory, Peter Ramsdale, Anthony Shepherd, Richard Street, Lucy Thomas, John Wolstenholme

In attendance: Locum Clerk, Assistant Clerk, County Councillor Tim Bearder, District Councillor Peter Ramsdale, 2 Members of the Public

- #28/26-27 Apologies for absence:** The Council accepted apologies from Councillor Paul Wilmott. Councillor Aaron Brooks was not in attendance.
- #29/26-27 To co-opt to fill two vacancies:** There have been no applications.
- #30/26-27 Declarations of interest/Dispensations:** The following declarations of interest were received:
- Vice Chair – Merry Bells, Wheatley Park School
 - Cllr Thomas - Wheatley Park School
 - Cllr Barratt – Merry Bells
 - Cllr Ramsdale – Rugby Club; Wheatley Playing Fields Trust
 - Cllr Fay Fox – Merry Bells
- #31/26-27 Minutes of the meeting of 11.05.2026:** The Council agreed the minutes from the Parish Council meeting of 11.05.2026 and they were duly signed.
- #32/26-27 Public participation & questions (maximum of 30 minutes in total 5 minutes per person):** Two members of the public but did not have any representations.
- #33/26-27 To receive a report from the County Councillor (see Attachment 1):**
- In addition to his report, the County Councillor noted that there is information about the quiet lanes scheme on the County Council website. A letter will be sent to parish councils with expressions of interest for potential sites.
 - He noted that traffic filters are due to come in in September. Botley Road is due to be open in August.
 - The Council offered their congratulations on his appointment as Oxfordshire County Council Leader.
 - The County Councillor will chase the issue of Kelham Hall drains.
- #34/26-27 To receive a report from the District Councillor:**
The District Councillor reported the following:

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1. Littleworth Apron – The District Councillor is asking South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to take more responsibility. They agreed to a meeting chaired by Wheatley Parish Council (WPC), TBC.
2. Flooding – SODC is working on designs and an artist impression of what the attenuation ponds by Shotover Estate/Wheatley Primary Playing Field will look like in the next 2 months. These will be sent to WPC to consider. It was noted that it would be useful to have this for the July meeting.
3. SODC's capital grant scheme has just opened. The Chair is aware of this.

#35/26-27 Committees

- i. The Council received the minutes/recommendations from the following committee meetings:
 1. Open Spaces Committee meeting minutes of 18.05.2026
 2. Any recommendations from the Open Spaces Committee
 - a. Update on the roof at St Mary's Close Alley: The Assistant Clerk noted that she will be obtaining quotes and approach Taylor Wimpey about costs. If Taylor Wimpey are not agreeable, this will be brought to the Full Council for consideration of next steps.
 - b. The Chair noted that Cllr Wolstenholme has been researching containers for storage for grounds maintenance tools. One possible area is a corner of the Merry Bells car park where there is not room for a parking space.

#36/26-27 Scheme of Delegation: The Council noted the following decisions made under delegated power:

- i. Insurance: The Chair, Locum Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance Committee have proceeded with Clear Councils for the insurance from 1/6/26 – 31/5/27 at a cost of £1647.12.
- ii. Dog bin price increase: The cost of the waste collections carried out by Shield has increased to £3.00 per dog waste bin per collection and £3.50 per standard general waste bin per collection.
- iii. Table tennis net: Purchase of replacement net at a cost of £217 (including VAT). WPC will consider signage informing people bats and balls are available in the Parish Office once the new net arrives.

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#37/26-27 Sports and Leisure Proposal:

- i. The Council resolved to adopt the proposal.
- ii. The Council resolved to establish a Working Group; the Working Group will choose a date for its first meeting. Council members will include Cllr Ramsdale and Cllr Wilmott. The Vice Chair will liaise from a school standpoint. In addition, there are volunteer residents. The Council would like to ask Cllr Brooks to be involved.
- iii. The working group will look at the Terms of Reference for the Sports and Leisure Working Group at its first meeting.
- iv. Comments on the survey included:
 - o Adding information about dance
 - o Ensuring the Group liaises with the health centre about preventative medicine.
 - o It was noted that leisure activities don't always include sport. Items such as this could include horticulture and walking.
 - o Activities for disabled people must be included.
 - o The Merry Bells should be added to the list of locations.
 - o The Council resolved to adopt survey with changes.
- v. Next steps: The Working Group will draw up a strategy and is hoping to get first draft out by August.

#38/26-27 Clerk Report:

- i. The Locum Clerk noted that RoSPA will be attending for annual inspection of the Cullum Road and Farm Road recreation areas in July 2026.
- ii. VAS installation: The Locum Clerk noted that she has been chasing Westcotec Ltd with regards to a date for the installation.
- iii. Cadet Hut Consultation: The Locum Clerk noted that there have been 16 responses thus far and the deadline is the 3rd July. This is also on the Facebook page and in the newsletter.
- iv. The Assistant Clerk noted the newsletter deadline for August/September: 16.07.2026.
- v. The Assistant Clerk noted the Play and Activity Day will take place on 04.07.2026: 11am-3pm at Wheatley Playing Fields. WPC discussed the possibility of a stall at the day as well as the possibility of extending the Cadet Hut survey deadline so residents can complete on this day.
- vi. The Assistant Clerk noted the Wheatley Artisan Market will take place on 19.09.2026, 9am-1pm

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- vii. The Assistant Clerk noted the Wheatley Christmas Fair will take place on 27.11.2026, 2pm-8pm. She will be contacting stall holders before the summer.

#39/26-27 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR Supporting Documents

- i. **Final Internal Audit Report 2025/2026:** The Council received and noted the Final Internal Audit Report 2025/2026.
- ii. **Bank Reconciliation as of 31.03.2026:** The Council agreed the bank reconciliation for the 2025/2026 financial year.
- iii. **Explanation of Variances between 2024/2025 and 2025/2026:** The Council agreed the explanation of variances for the 2025/2026 audit.
- iv. **Reserves:** The Council agreed the reserves as of 31.03.2026.
- v. **Balance sheet as of 31.03.2026:** The Council agreed the balance sheet for the 2025/2026 financial year.
- vi. **Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/2026:** The Council received and noted the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/2026.
- vii. **Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026:** The Council considered and responded to the statements and the Locum Clerk and Chair signed the Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026.
- viii. **Annual Accounting Statements 2025/2026:** The Council agreed the Annual Accounting Statements 2025/2026 signed by Locum Clerk. The Chair signed them.
- ix. **Notice of Public Rights:** The Council agreed the dates of the Notice of Public Rights as:
 - a. Date of announcement: 2nd June 2026
 - b. Commencement date: 3rd June 2026
 - c. Ending date: 14th July 2026

#40/26-27 Expenses Policy: The Council agreed the updates to the expenses policy to include the new mileage increase from HMRC as of 06.04.2026 and resolved to backdate any mileage claims to 06.04.2026.

#41/26-27 Reports from working groups and village organisations: The Council received the following reports: - i. Communications Working Group: The Chair will do some work on communication at the WPC Development Day in September.

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- ii. Cade Hut Working Group: The Group will have its first meeting once the lease is signed.
- iii. Community Events Working Group: The Group hasn't met yet.
- iv. Wheatley Pavilion Maintenance Working Group: The Group hasn't met yet.
- v. Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Working Group: The Vice Chair will work to set a date.
- vi. Littleworth Field Working Group: The Group will have its first meeting once the lease is signed.
- vii. Traffic Working Group: Cllr Ramsdale will set up a meeting.
- viii. Youth Council Working Group: The Group has not met.
- ix. Thames Valley Police (TVP) Working Group: The Group has regular meetings with TVP.
- x. Flood Advisory Working Group: The Chair reported the flood booklet has been distributed and has been brilliantly done by the Group. The following update from SODC was received:
 - a. We are currently undertaking topographical surveys on the two fields to enable detailed level design.
 - b. Ecological tree and watercourse surveys are due early June.
 - c. The EA outline business case has been finalised for submission and an internal report to enable submission has been submitted to our senior management team for approval.

#42/26-27 Reports from community groups: The Council received the following reports:

- i. Howe Trust (Wheatley): See Attachment 2.
- ii. Good Neighbourhood Scheme: No report.
- iii. Maple Tree: No report.
- iv. The Merry Bells: No report.
- v. Wheatley Playing Field Trust: See Attachment 3.
- vi. Wheatley Charities: See Attachment 4.
- vii. Wheatley Windmill Preservation Society: See Attachment 5.
- viii. The Vice Chair noted that the Oxford Brooks Development will be meeting with Holton PC, Savills and Crest Nicholson in next couple of weeks.

#43/26-27 Items of information without decision:

- a. **Correspondence:** The Council noted the correspondence since the last meeting.

#44/26-27 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 6th July 2026, 19:30, The Merry



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Bells Hall. Apologies were sent from the Vice Chair and Cllr Fox.

The deadline for agenda item for the July meeting to be sent to the Locum Clerk is Wednesday the 24th June 2026.

The meeting closed at 20:15.

Attachment 1

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Spring Update for Parish Councils

REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR TIM BEARDER

Oxfordshire County Councillor (Wheatley Division) | South Oxfordshire District Councillor (Forest Hill & Holton Ward) | May 2026

County Council Leadership Election

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL I am incredibly proud and honoured to share the news that I have recently been elected as the new Leader of Oxfordshire County Council. Stepping into this role is a significant responsibility, and I am fully committed to steering our county towards a sustainable, fairer, and more prosperous future.

I want to thank all the local parishes and residents whose continued feedback drives my work at County Hall. You can watch the full announcement video, acceptance remarks, and outline of the administration's vision on the official county council news portal:

Watch the Video: <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/tim-bearder-becomes-leader/>

Council Annual General Meetings & Governance

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL **SODC AGM Update:** Following our recent Annual General Meeting, there are no changes to the Cabinet lineup at the District Council, ensuring consistency in our strategic directions. However, we have successfully elected a new Chair of the Council: **Andrea Powell**, the Green Party Councillor for Benson and Crowmarsh. I encourage all local parish councils to invite Andrea to your upcoming community events and initiatives. For her municipal year, she has chosen to champion and raise funds for two fantastic causes: *Style Acre* and *Cycling without Age*.

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL **Key Council Motions:** Two significant motions were debated and passed at the full council meeting:

- **Opposing the Abolition of HealthWatch:** The council voted to formally oppose any moves to abolish HealthWatch, firmly standing up for its crucial role as the independent voice of patients in our healthcare system.
- **Socio-Economic Duty Adoption:** We have voluntarily adopted the Socio-economic duty (under Section 1 of the Equalities Act 2010). This effectively gives a statutory footing for SODC to proactively consider socio-economic disadvantage alongside the nine other legally protected characteristics during strategic decision-making and equality impact assessments.

Residents can now stay closely informed as all full SODC council meetings are being live-streamed and archived for public viewing both during and after the sessions via the council's website.



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UPDATE FOR WHEATLEY PARISH COUNCIL 26th May 2026

1. Grassland and Ponds

The ponds in Tombs continue to develop vegetation and have plenty of life inc frogs, and newts. An egret and a family of ducks with ducklings have also been enjoying the habitat. In Dalton the new pond has been partially planted up, but most of the vegetation will come naturally. Local scouts and brownies have planted wildflowers they grew over the winter, and a domed willow structure for children to enjoy has built by volunteers. Ragwort will be assessed, and in Cripps, Shepherds and Sheldon and creeping thistle control will be carried out via a hired brushcutter at end June.

2. Trees and hedges

Weeding (removing sticky willy and bindweed) continues in the newly laid Windmill Lane hedges, where an encouraging range of native hedgerow wildflowers are also flourishing – including Red Campion, White Campion, Honesty, Comfrey and Green Alkanet.

3. Grant Applications

We have been successful in our grant application to Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) to improve the design for accessibility and replace the Howe Close steps as well as creating a new compacted gravel path with a handrail between the top and bottom stages. The work is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

4. Benefaction/Gifts

A gift of £5,000 (plus gift aid) has been received from a local donor. This is to help the trust purchase a replacement mower in 2027.

5. Outreach, Communications and Information Gathering

The guided walk in April was very well attended with ore than 20 people coming along. More dates for June and September are in the diary and on our website for 2026 and will be promoted via the village newsletter and Facebook. A guide to the Howe and additional informative boards which will be available digitally via QR codes and in a printed form by end of 2026. The visitor number system has now been installed.

6. Trustees

There remain 2 nominative vacancies. An email was sent to WPC on 20th January regarding the suggestion of considering appointing a 'Young Trustee' who could be supported by an additional councillor as a trustee.

7. Other

Charles (John) Parry (retired chief fire officer for Oxfordshire) carried out a fire risk assessment and his advice this has been circulated to the AA committee.

Maggie Fyffe, Chair - The Howe Trust
May 26th 2026



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Attachment 3

Wheatley Playing Field Trust

Report to Wheatley Parish Council

May 26th 2026

Last month brought about the close of a busy winter sports period, with over 200 football matches played by all ages between 7 and adult, plus 5 nights a week training session for footballers, including women's over 30's and rugby.

Owing to a decline in numbers, only one rugby match was played last season, but numbers for training and the gym are still strong. There is a lack of players in key positions needed for league participation.

The annual Wheatley FC football tournament took place over the weekend of 16/17 May and attracted some 800 young players from across the county.

Despite the heavy early spring rains, which forced many cancelled fixtures, the fields have stood up well to heavy use thanks to the extended remediation work programme including decompaction over the Easter holidays.

Off the field Wheatley FC have been trialling use of the clubhouse at weekends for teas and refreshments, but take up from spectators has been low.

Oxfordshire Fire Service have used the buildings over several late evenings to carry out search and rescue training in unfamiliar properties.

Having reached agreement with Wheatley Park School to use the clubhouse during the school day, the social area has successfully been used by the NHS for an away day seminar.

Paul Willmott
Chairman, Wheatley Playing Field Trust



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Attachment 4

There were 7 successful applications for education grants lodged with Wheatley Charities in 2025, each worth £200.

The application posters for 2026 have been distributed to Wheatley Park School and are also on village notice boards as well as the WPC Facebook page. Application forms are available from myself or the school and must be returned by the end of August.

Attachment 5

This year, the society is celebrating 50 years since the start of the plan to restore Wheatley Windmill to working order. To mark the occasion there are displays in Wheatley Library and the window of the Centre of English Studies in High Street. There is also an exhibition in the church which will be there until 15th June. Part of the exhibition shows the history of the restoration summarised in 39 photographs. The other part is a the result of a competition in our local schools to produce an art work featuring the windmill, with the winning pictures mounted on display panels and all the other pictures or collages mounted around the church. We are grateful to the parish council for giving us money to pass on as prizes in this competition