

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

Attendees	
Mike Groves (MG)	Yarnton Parish Councillor – Chair
Fiona Mawson (FM)	Yarnton Parish Councillor – Vice Chair
Joe McEneaney (JM)	Yarnton Parish Councillor
Ian Middleton (IM)	Yarnton Parish Councillor
Damian Mizzi (DM)	Yarnton Parish Councillor
Sam Smith (SaS)	Yarnton Parish Councillor
David Thornhill (DT)	Yarnton Parish Council Clerk

1. Apologies	Lesley McLean (LM), Steve Smith (StS), Dorothy Walker (DW) and Debbie Behan (DB) sent their apologies.
---------------------	---

2. Co-options to the Parish Council	None.
--	-------

3. Declaration of interests	Members were asked to declare any personal interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the agenda items under discussion at this meeting. No declaration of interests were made.
------------------------------------	---

4. Minutes	The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 14.5.25 having been previously circulated were accepted as a true record by all.
-------------------	---

5 Matters arising from the minutes without decision	None.
--	-------

6. Public participation	2 members of public attended the meeting. Issues were raised with 25/00417/F, which the Council has previously raised objections to which have been lodged with CDC Planning. The Council continues to object to this development.
--------------------------------	---

7. Police liaison	124/2024.18.11 – Community Service Team update The Clerk has forwarded information to DM concerning Police and Probationary Service liaison contacts, and these will be circulated to the Clerk at Kidlington Parish Council. DM is awaiting a reply from the Probation Service and will provide an update at the next meeting. DM has had no response to date to emails sent to the Police to facilitate relationships between the Police and YPC. Update 14/5/25: DM gave an update to the Council following his recent meeting with the Police, and they requested regular reports of any incidents. He has not received any
--------------------------	--

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	<p>response from the Community Service Team to date and will continue to chase a response.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: Antisocial behaviour, and a recent fatality at Littlemarsh rail crossing has been discussed. The neighbourhood team have updated the Council regarding issues in Hayday and Cresswell Close. Highways disturbances were mentioned concerning youths gathering on the roundabout outside the Turnpike on the A44, as well as related theft from residential properties.</p>
--	---

8. Schools	<p>JM is in communication with William Fletcher School and will provide an update for the Council concerning parking issues at the next meeting, as the School is currently closed for half-term.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: JM updated the Council concerning communications with the School which have not proved fruitful in terms of their policing the area during school drop off and pick up times. SS will join with JM as WFS liaison and will continue to pursue the issue.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: SaS has met with the new school Head, and will engage regarding the upcoming village litter pick scheduled for 20th September. Highways issues were mentioned concerning safety at school dropoff. SaS will be attending the WFS governors meeting and will update the Council concerning new initiatives.</p>
-------------------	---

9 Planning	
9a. The Parish Council considered the following planning applications:	
Planning ref:	Description:
25/01101/F	RETROSPECTIVE - single storey rear extension and box dormer to roof 17 Aysgarth Road, Yarnton, OX5 IND Update 11/6/25: The Council raised no objection to this development.
MW.0048/25	– Planning Application for the proposed erection of lightning protection equipment, including sixteen large modified HVI masts and four telescopic air rods mounted on existing structures, as well as reuse and minor modification to the existing mast at the anaerobic digestion facility at Cassington Anaerobic Digestion Facility, Worton Farm, Worton, Witney, Yarnton, OX29 4FL. Update 11/6/25: The Council raised no objection to this development.
	Land to the Rear of 14-16 Woodstock Road, Yarnton, OX5 1PJ Update 11/6/25: The Council raised objection to this development on the premise of over-development in the area, and further removal of green space. Flooding concerns and traffic issues were noted.
11b. The Parish Council noted the following planning decisions:	
25/00921/F	- Oxford Pioneer Park Mead Road Yarnton OX5 1QU. Application Permitted Update from DW re planning enforcement issues at Woodstock Road, Merton Way and Cassington Road

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

9c. Planning issues	
1	<p>3/2025.14.3 – extension of property boundary into an ordinary watercourse on Cassington Rd.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: An update was provided by DW, and this is included in the District Councilors report. See 11c.4.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: DW was not present at the meeting, an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: DW was not present at the meeting, an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p>
2	<p>45 Merton Way planning enforcement issue</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: An update was provided by DW – see the District Councillor's report for further information. Noise and environmental pollution complaints were recommended to be made by members of the public to Cherwell District Council concerning the breach of planning consent. The planning enforcement case reference number is 25/00103/ENF.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: As DW was not present at the meeting, an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: DW was not present at the meeting, an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: DW was not present at the meeting, an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p>

10. Emergency management plan	
1	<p>Council to review and minute the effectiveness of internal controls (including risk assessment) for the following areas: Village Hall, Playing Fields.</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: The Council raised concerns about the safety of open hinges on public access doors, which could be added to increase to public safety in the hall, particularly for children. The Clerk will contact the Village Hall about this for their consideration.</p> <p>The Clerk will contact Zurich to clarify the insurance separation and the necessary PFC / YPC risk assessments for buildings insurance going forward.</p> <p>The Clerk has requested the PFC risk assessments for RLP and LM several times and these have not been forthcoming. The Council has requested the PFC Risk Assessments by the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: The PFC have not provided the risk assessments for RLP or LM so this issue will carry over to the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: The Council have received the draft Risk Assessments from the PFC which will be reviewed fully in due course.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Council considered the PFC risk assessments, but found they were not fit for purpose as there was insufficient detail and specificity concerning risks and control measures at each site.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The PFC has not yet returned their risk assessments for further consideration.</p>
2	<p>Council to consider donation of defibs</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Council RESOLVED to donate the Spencer Avenue defib to the Westlake Pharmacy, and to donate the Yarnton Nurseries defib to Yarnton Nurseries.</p>

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	Update 11/6/25: The Council noted that Westlake Pharmacy has agreed to the donation of the defib attached to their property. The Clerk will confirm this donation and the maintenance/public availability responsibility in writing.
3	Council to note defib 10 year expected lifespan and manufacturer's warranty Update 14/5/25: The Council noted the 10 year expected lifespan and manufacturer's warranty, and objected to the inappropriate sales messages from the seller, as the Ambulance Service has informed the Council that the defibs are able to self-test and do not need to be replaced when the warranty expires. Issue closed.
4	Council to consider safe spaces Update 11/6/25: Safe Spaces were discussed, and the Westlake Chemist, the Red Lion, and Budgens were mentioned. The Chair asked DM to contact the various establishments about being involved and will update the Council at the next meeting.

11. Highway matters

1	<p>Speedwatch – update from Parish Council concerning speedwatch activities</p> <p>Update 3/7/24: MG is still awaiting confirmation that speed watch data is being processed, and will update the Parish Council at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 3/10/24: MG reported that there was no information apparent from the Police regarding speed related data. Action: DB will write to Jean Conway regarding an update on speedwatch activities at CDC.</p> <p>Update 4/12/24: As DB has now left the Parish Council, MG will write to JC re CDC speedwatch updates. IM raised the issues of the need for purchase four SIDS which will be considered at the budget meeting in January. JM accepted responsibility for Highways.</p> <p>Update 8/1/25: JM has accepted responsibility for Speedwatch activities in lieu of MG's absence.</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: JM is awaiting relevant training and will update the Council further at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: The Clerk has contacted OCC to confirm the SIDS installation costs and will provide an update at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: See 13.2 and 13.7</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: IM updated the Council concerning speed issues on Sandy Lane, and forthcoming speed enforcement.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: Speeding issues persist on Rutten Lane. The Clerk informed the Council of resident complaints. MG raised the need for training to be undertaken by a minimum of three people (residents and Cllrs) in order to undertake speedwatch activities. The Clerk noted one Speedwatch Hi Viz jacket has been returned, leaving one outstanding.</p>
2	<p>Council to consider SIDS on Sandy lane</p> <p>Update 8/1/25: JM to raise potential purchase with Police Liaison. The Council agreed that a smiley face SIDS device was a better option than solely a display of the vehicle speed. Milestone/ S106 funding to be investigated – LM/DW to confirm at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: The Clerk has contacted Deddington PC and Cassington PC concerning their SIDS, and will present costs for consideration at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: The Council resolved to purchase 4 x SIDS devices for installation on Cassington Road and Sandy Lane pending approval of the installation costs by the Council.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: See 13.1 and 13.7 IM has contacted OCC Highways for an update on the installation costs and will provide an update at the next meeting.</p>

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	<p>Update 14/5/25: IM has not heard from OCC concerning installation costs. An update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Council will wait until SIDs installation is confirmed before purchasing SIDs for Cassington Rd and Sandy Lane. LM to provide an update at the next meeting.</p>
3	<p>Parish Council to discuss extension of property boundary in to an ordinary watercourse on Cassington Rd.</p> <p>Update 3/7/24: The Parish Council agreed to include this area on the Highways walk-around, as the Parish Council were not aware of any application for a dropped kerb to be permitted to allow access to the property in question. The Parish Council agreed that it would be necessary to inform Cherwell District Council of the boundary breach and obstruction of an ordinary watercourse, which was not disclosed in the planning application for the property.</p> <p>Update 3/10/24: The Parish Council resolved to challenge CDC in terms of their making a robust approach to the enforcement of planning applications.</p> <p>Update 4/12/24: DT has sent IM a location map – IM will raise the issue with OCC Highways directly and provide an update at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 8/1/25: This issue was not discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: See 25/00157/F. DW to liaise with Cherwell District Council and provide an update at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: DW reported that a CDC Enforcement Officer has been made aware of the issue. An update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: See 11c.1</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: DW was not present at the meeting, an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: DW was not present at the meeting, an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p>
4	<p>Update from IM re refreshing the lining scheme around Budgens</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: IM updated the Council concerning the need to refresh the lining scheme around Budgens, and is chasing a response from OCC Highways.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Clerk has discussed this issue with LM who will keep the Council updated at the next meeting.</p>
5	<p>Council to consider 20mph signs</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: SS raised issues with the size and visibility of the 20mph, and the speed of traffic in the village. Issues were raised with the sudden drop in speed from the 50mph on the A44 to 20mph throughout Yarnton. SaS will liaise with LM concerning speed issues and will provide an update at the next meeting.</p>

12. Village hall

1	<p>Council update concerning broadband connection</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Village Hall have permitted the installation of a Virgin Media cable in to the Clerk's office for Parish Council business in order to switch provider from BT. Issue closed.</p>
---	--

13. Environmental matters including airport and orchard

1	<p>Narrowing of the watercourse adjacent to the A44 verge on Highways land.</p> <p>Update 9/5/24: DT to send IM the What3Words geo-location by email to enable him to make a site visit and to follow-up with OCC Highways for action to remedy the issue. It was noted that DB and SS who were not present at the meeting has made a site visit and has confirmed the restriction was present.</p>
---	--

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	<p>Update 6/6/24: DT has sent IM details of the obstruction IM reported that he had not yet had time to visit the location and request action from Highways to resolve the problem.</p> <p>Update 3/7/24: IM was not present at the Parish Council meeting, so as no update was available this item will carry over to the next meeting in September. DB and SS will include this issue during the upcoming Highways walkaround on 20th August.</p> <p>Update 20/8/24: This item was not discussed at the Parish Council meeting</p> <p>Update 3/10/24: DT has a scheduled meeting with the EA 23/10/24 to review the issue and will provide an update at the next Parish Council meeting.</p> <p>Update 4/12/24: DT has met with the EA who are in agreement that the narrowed watercourse is in need of repair to its full width in a linear fashion and that OCC Highways will need to undertake this repair as they are the responsible party. IM to provide an update at the next YPC meeting.</p> <p>Update 8/1/25: IM has raised the issue with OCC Highways and a further update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: The item was not discussed at the meeting due to time constraints.</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: The item was not discussed at the meeting due to time constraints.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: IM has raised the issue with OCC Highways and a response has been received, which indicates that it is the Officer's opinion that there is no such narrowing of the watercourse in question which in his opinion would cause flood water flow rates to be held-back by the restriction in culvert width from 2' to a 6" in the watercourse, and that the tree which has caused this restriction needs not be dealt with.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: DT provided an update to the Council on the disappointing response from OCC Highways in regard their opinion that this issue is inconsequential. The Clerk will meet with the new County Councillor to raise this issue again, and will provide an update to the Council at the next meeting as it has a bearing on the Aysgarth Flooding and the S.19 flood report.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Clerk provided an update to LM at a recent meeting and is awaiting an update, as this issue should be included in the pending S.19 flood report.</p>
2	<p>The Community Service Team have been emailed to ask what The Parish Council needs to do to bring the team back to Yarnton.</p> <p>Update 9/5/24: MG has volunteered to take on responsibility for liaison with the Community Service Team going forward. An update will be provided by MG at the next Council meeting.</p> <p>Update 6/6/24: MG will liaise with the Community Service Team and task the volunteers to clear the debris from the metalled surface of the bridleway that leads from Church Lane to the cemetery.</p> <p>Update 3/7/24: Due to the handover of staff at the Community Service Team office, there has been a break in communication. MG is actively trying to resolve this and will update the Council at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 3/7/24: Update from MG re Community Service team: The Community Service Team have had a handover in personnel. MG updated the Council in regard recent contact and will continue to chase a response from the CST on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Update 4/9/24: The Vice Chairman reported he is contact with the relevant person, but they have been on sick leave.</p> <p>Update 3/10/24: Due to time constraints this issue was not discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>Update 4/12/24: There was no update on this issue at the meeting.</p> <p>Update 8/1/25: MG is away for several months, so will attend to this issue on his return.</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: MG is away for several months, so will attend to this issue on his return.</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: DM has offered to take over liaison with the Community Service Team, and has started this process by reaching out to the Probation Service. An update will be provided by DM at the next Council meeting.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: DM has been trying to reach the probationary service with no reported success – an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p>

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	<p>Update 14/5/25: DM has been trying to reach the probationary service with no reported success – an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: DM has been trying to reach the probationary service with no reported success – an update will be provided at the next meeting.</p>
3	<p>Council to note the bridleway amendment</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Council noted the bridleway amendment. Issue closed</p>
4	<p>Council to note airport S.106 agreement</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Council noted the S.106 agreement, but did raise that there should be a prescribed flight training route which is not observed by pilots. Issue closed</p>

14. Playing fields

1	<p>Report from the PFC working group</p> <p>Update 4/12/24: The PFC working group has not met so no update is available at the present time. A meeting with the PFC is scheduled for 10/12/24.</p> <p>Update 4/12/24: The PFC working group met with PFC representatives Alun Oliver and Linda Kimber on 10/12/24. LK informed the Council that she was not aware that she was a trustee of the charity. Paul Skinner has been appointed as the PFC Treasurer, and has conveyed the PFCs wishes to remain a charity in order that they can be autonomous, and apply for grant funding from multiple sources. LK confirmed that the PFC has 7 applicants from the various sports clubs as charity trustees. AO confirmed with an email that he is an employee of the PFC, and not YPC. The PFC working group met again on 4/1/24 to discuss allowable grant expenditure under Parish Council legislative powers to spend S.19 and S.137 of the Local Government Act 1976.</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: The PFC Working Group met with the PFC and associated members of the public 7/2/25. The Council representatives confirmed that before any grants would be considered the PFC needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that they have sufficient trustees to manage the charity effectively.• Ensure they have a fit for purpose charity governance statement.• Change the names on the gas, electricity and water bills to that of the PFC.• Take responsibility for the EDF electricity account for Littlemarsh.• Take responsibility for payroll arrangements for their employees.• Ensure that the Fields in Trust status is maintained by allowing public access to the site. <p>The Council representatives confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That as per sections 4.2 and 4.8 of the lease for Rutten Lane Park, the PFC has the maintenance responsibility for the childrens play area equipment.• That quotations have been sought by the Council in reference to the 2024 RoSPA report, and the cost for the urgent RoSPA report repairs will be taken from the remaining 2024 PFC grant.• The total amount of items on the PFC grant application that could not be considered. <p>The PFC Chairman confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the childrens play equipment was purchased by the PFC with funds which were raised by the PFC, with the addition of a 50% match-funding grant from YPC, therefore establishing the ownership and persons responsible for necessary repair work to the play equipment be the PFC. <p>Update 12/3/25: The Clerk has met with the PFC Treasurer who has confirmed that he is able to process payroll arrangements for the Groundskeeper, and the transfer of payroll provider will be effective from the 1st April 2025. Arrangements were also noted for the transfer of the EDF account when the balance has been settled. Signposting was provided by the Clerk in terms of charity governance statements to assist the PFC in their set-up.</p>
---	---

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	<p>Update 9/4/25: The Council is still in negotiations with EDF concerning their charges. The Clerk will update the Council at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Clerk is waiting for EDF to resolve the complaint, which should be finalised by EDF by 31/5/25. An update will be presented to the Council at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: As EDF have failed to resolve the complaint within the specified 8 week period, the Clerk has escalated a complaint with the Ombudsman. An update will be provided at the next meeting.</p>
2	<p>Council to review and minute the effectiveness of internal controls (including risk assessment) for the following areas: Playing Fields</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: See 12.1 for further information.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Council considered the PFC risk assessments and found one document to be viable, but the other risk assessment appeared to be a duplicate of the first. The Clerk and the Chairman will meet with the PFC Chair to raise the issue of the need for specificity in the risk assessments.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Clerk and the Chair met with the PFC Chair and confirmed in detail the expectations of the risk assessments for both Rutten Lane Park and Littlemarsh, and each of the individual items which could pose harm and needed to be included on the PFC risk assessments. The Clerk is awaiting updated copies of the PFC risk assessments.</p>
3	<p>Council to consider the notice board in Rutten Lane Park</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Council resolved to remove the old notice board in Rutten Lane Park on the grounds of public safety as the noticeboard is broken and unsafe. Issue closed.</p>
4	<p>Council to consider RoSPA routine inspections</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Council resolved that proper oversight should be maintained, and SS intends to undertake the tri-monthly inspections. The Council agreed that PFC representatives would be able to undertake the weekly play area inspections, but the Council were of the opinion that the RoSPA reports needed to be conducted by an accountable Trustee of the Charity.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Council Auditor made recommendations concerning bringing forward the RoSPA report, to ensure the play area is safe for public use. The Clerk has advised the PFC of the need to undertake the annual RoSPA report, which has been noted to have been booked in during July.</p>
5	<p>Council to consider repairs to the play area embankments</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Clerk has written to the PFC informing them of the need to maintain the play area after recent vandalism.</p>
6	<p>Council to consider PFC safeguarding policies</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The PFC Chair has disclosed the Clerk that they are developing a safeguarding policy, and an update will be provided once this is provided by the PFC.</p>
7	<p>Council to consider PFC hirer's safeguarding policies</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Clerk has informed the PFC Chair of their need to ensure hirers have risk assessments, public liability insurance and safeguarding policies in place.</p>
8	<p>Council to consider resident complaints concerning childrens play equipment</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: This issue is on the agenda to be discussed with upcoming PFC meeting. Noted that the RoSPA report for 2025 has been booked in for July which will highlight any safety issues.</p>
9	<p>Council to consider H&S requirements</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The PFC Chair informed the Clerk that there were no dedicated handwashing facilities in the RLP pavilion kitchen, and that a food business registration license was not in place presently. The Clerk has informed the PFC Chair of the need to ensure all food business licenses are in place prior to any</p>

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	preparation or vending of food. Copies of all licenses have been requested. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
10	Council to consider post-repair RoSPA inspection Update 11/6/25: The Council has informed the PFC of the need to bring forward the 2025 RoSPA report if possible. Noted this inspection has been booked in during July. Issue closed.
11	Council to consider PFC Public Liability Insurance Update 11/6/25: The Council noted that the PFC has now got public liability insurance in place which covers Littlemarsh and RLP. Issue closed.
12	Council to consider RLP cafe arrangements Update 11/6/25: The Council raised no objections in principle to the cafe providing all of the necessary food business registration licenses are in place, which should be related to food preparation on the premises. Issue closed.

15. Risk assessment

1	SS to provide an update on the village risk assessments. Update 12/2/25: SS Provided an update on the need for a 5x5 risk matrix, and provided an update for the Council regarding the need for additional members of the YENT group. An update on the YENT group will be provided at the next meeting. Update 12/3/25: SS updated the Council with the Yarnton Emergency Management Review Report information. SS, FM and DM agreed to liaise with SS in the completion of the Yarnton Emergency Plan in relation to the 5x5 risk matrix. Update 9/4/25: SS was not present at the meeting to provide an update Update 14/5/25: SS was not present at the meeting to provide an update Update 11/6/25: SS was not present at the meeting to provide an update
2	Parish Council to consider updating the village risk assessment in light of recent flood events. Update 3/10/24: Due to time constraints this item was not discussed at the meeting. Update 4/12/24: SS volunteered to update the risk assessments accordingly and will provide an update at the next meeting. Update 8/1/25: SS has conducted a review of the village risk assessment and found it to be in need of revision in light of recent flooding events. DT has reviewed and updated the Cemetery risk assessment. All other risk assessments have been reviewed and were found to be fit for purpose, bar the Village Hall and Playing Fields risk assessments which will be reviewed at the next meeting. Update 12/2/25: The Clerk will confirm the new risk assessments with SS in preparation for consideration by the Council at the next meeting. Update 12/3/25: due to time constraints this issue was not able to be discussed at the meeting. Update 9/4/25: SS was not present at the meeting to provide an update Update 14/5/25: SS was not present at the meeting to provide an update Update 11/6/25: SS was not present at the meeting to provide an update
3	Council to consider contractor risk assessments and insurance Update 11/6/25: The Council noted that the Internal Auditor had requested risk assessments and evidence of insurance from all contractors for the 2024-25 period. The Clerk has insurance documents and risk assessments from all contractors apart from M. Rudge Tree Services, which is on a 2 year fixed contract arranged under the prior administration. Evidence of these documents was not provided when requested, and

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	is not on file for the 2024-25 year. Noted that when requested, only current 2025-26 insurance and risk assessments were supplied.
--	--

16. Burial ground/St Bartholomew's churchyard

1	Council to consider the colour and style of cremated remains headstones Update 11/6/25: The Council requested that colour catalogue images with dimensions were supplied in order that they could consider this memorial at the next meeting.
2	Council to consider resident complaints Update 11/6/25: The Clerk has received complaints from residents concerning several issues in the cemetery: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That one grave had been over-filled and it was not possible to place a headstone, or mow the ground. Noted that an adjacent grave has sunk. The Clerk will recommend to funeral directors that we need to use a regulated company.2. That vehicles had been driven in to the cemetery. The Council agreed that residents with disabilities would be allowed to drive to the cemetery gate.3. That behaviour unbecoming a place of rest had been observed by residents. The Council RESOLVED to purchase a welcome sign to be affixed to the gate providing information to residents.
3	Council to consider bench repairs Update 11/6/25: The Council RESOLVED to purchase a replacement bench to match the others in the cemetery with installation by ODS.

17. Recent Correspondence

18. Report of the District Councillors	See section 29/2025 for the report of the District Councillor.
---	--

19. Report of the County Councillor	For further information see 29a/2025 for items relevant to Yarnton.
--	---

20. Finance and general purpose

1	Council to consider recurring payments for 2025/26 (see attachment 1) Update 11/6/25: The Council approved all recurring payments from the preceding month.
2	Council to consider payments (see attachment 2 and shared finance file for pending invoices) Update 11/6/25: The Council approved all pending payments raised in the preceding month.
3	Councillor's tenure announcements Update 9/4/25: DM disclosed his intent to resign from YPC for a period of 6 months tbc, and subject to agreement under LGA 1972 s85, interim dispensation may be possible and will be confirmed at the next meeting. Update 14/5/25: The Council agreed to the dispensation request to allow Cllr Mizzi to remain on the Council pending his return from absence after a period of six months. Issue closed.
4	Council to consider legal advice concerning property extension built on YPC land

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	<p>Update 9/4/25: The Council resolved to undertake legal advice.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Clerk has reached out to OALC concerning legal recommendation, and will update the Council on next steps and potential costs at the next meeting.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Clerk has been provided with a list of legal advisors and will aim to contact these to obtain costs in preparation for the next meeting.</p>
5	<p>Council to consider reviewing the Clerk's job evaluation</p> <p>Update 8/1/25: The Council resolved to undertake a revised review of the Clerk's job evaluation.</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: This issue was not able to be discussed due to time constraints.</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: This issue was not able to be discussed due to time constraints.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: This issue was not able to be discussed due to time constraints.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Clerk has contacted OALC for advice. Chris Moses will undertake a new job evaluation imminently.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Clerk is waiting to hear confirmation and will liaise with the Staffing Committee once the job evaluation has been received.</p>
6	<p>Council to consider paying the balance of the PFC EDF electricity account at Littlemarsh</p> <p>Update 12/2/25: The Council resolved to pay the EDF bill in full and will continue to pay the direct debit until 31st March. Thereafter the account must be transferred to the PFC to pay.</p> <p>Update 12/3/25: EDF have sent an unexpectedly large bill which the Council feels should be disputed via the supplier's complaints process and the OFGEM ombudsman if necessary prior to any settlement being reached.</p> <p>Update 9/4/25: The Clerk has written to EDF in complaint with no response to date. EDF have disclosed their intentions to increase the Direct Debit, which has been raised in a further written objection to EDF.</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: No further response has been received from EDF. The Council noted that the deadline for the complaint to be resolved is 31/5/25.</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Clerk has had no response from EDF so has raised a complaint with the Ombudsman. An update will be provided at the next meeting, as the Ombudsman will make a decision within 4-6 weeks.</p>
7	<p>Council to agree Chairman's Allowance</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Council RESOLVED to approve the Chairman's allowance of £522 for 2025-26. Issue closed.</p>
8	<p>Council to consider Financial Controls Cllr, to exclude Chairman/Vice Chair/bank signatories</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Council RESOLVED to appoint Cllr Debbie Behan to be the Cllr with responsibility for Financial Control. Issue closed.</p>
9	<p>Council to consider the IT policy</p> <p>Update 14/5/25: The Council RESOLVED to adopt the IT policy. Issue closed.</p>
10	<p>Council to review bank reconciliation for year-end 31st March 2025</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Council reviewed the Bank Reconciliations for 2024-25 (completed monthly via Scribe Accounts) and accepted these by unanimous vote to be accurate. Issue closed.</p>
11	<p>Council to review explanation of variances for year-end 31st March 2025</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Council reviewed the explanation of variances and accepted these by unanimous vote to be accurate. Issue closed.</p>
12	<p>Council to review the Internal Audit report</p> <p>Update 11/6/25: The Council reviewed the Internal Audit report (see 29b/2025) and RESOLVED to action the recommendations which have not already been resolved:</p>

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

1. Certain areas of cost-coding need to be adjusted, particularly relating to staff costs, to ensure that year-end AGAR reports can be easily and accurately produced. **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. Scribe accounts Employer's Tax & NIC setup)
2. I would also recommend the inclusion of expenditure approval dates **IN PROGRESS** and power for expenditure. **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. All entries in Scribe accounts which are supported by the relevant Power to Spend)
3. [I would recommend that] the [minutes] document title includes the full date including the year (not just Meeting held on 3rd July) and that a document header is added so that each page of the minutes contains the full date. **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. the header in these minutes)
4. The Council needs to adopt the latest 2025 amendments to the NALC Model Template Financial Regulations, in particular 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11 as a result of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulation 2024 which came into force March 2025. **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. Policies and Governance page on the YPC website)
5. I would recommend that the Proper Officer should be the only person authorising purchase orders, utilities and contracts, subject to a resolution made by full Council at a meeting. **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. procurement from the PFC employees which have been disallowed under the current administration)
6. I would recommend that a schedule of invoices is signed by 2 councillors upon payment approval. **IN PROGRESS**
7. In the interest of transparency, where contracts are awarded, the successful contractor should be named in the minutes and also named when payments are made rather than just 'Grass cutting £xxx.' **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. Attachment 1 in these minutes)
8. A large amount of parish expenditure relates to the activities of the Playing Field Committee, a charity, which manages the pavilion and land involved under a full repairing lease: THE PLAYING FIELD - 294537, Register of Charities - The Charity Commission (PFC). The Parish Council is reviewing these costs and expenditures, and I would strongly recommend that a clear delineation of activities and responsibilities needs to be formally determined, documented and actioned to ensure that the Council is complying with its own responsibilities and regulations. **IN PROGRESS**
9. Many invoices for upkeep and utilities are being paid by the Parish Council when they should be the responsibility of the PFC. **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. current financial regulations, and PFC working group meetings where the practice was disallowed under the present administration)
10. The Parish Council must ensure that it is complying and acting in accordance with the terms of any leases into which it has entered and that its actions comply with legislation and its financial regulations. **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. the terms of the leases for Rutten Laner Park and Littlemarsh which are now being adhered to by the PFC under the current YPC administration)
11. I would strongly recommend that the Council does not make payments on behalf of other entities but instead considers grant applications made in accordance with its Grants Policy in line with legislative powers for expenditure. **ALREADY ACTIONED** (ref. the YPC grants policy)
12. S137 expenditure should always be recorded as a separate item to ensure that it does not exceed the lawful limit for the year. (2024/25: 2,409 electors@ £10.81 = £26,041) Scribe indicates that

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	<p>£23,306.96 (net of VAT) was allocated to S. 137. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. Scribe accounts S.137 report)</p> <p>13. I would recommend that one non-signatory Councillor is nominated as responsible for internal controls and that this person signs off bank reconciliations and statements at least quarterly and this is minuted. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. May meeting minutes where DB was co-opted and accepted responsibility for financial control)</p> <p>14. A Financial Risk Assessment was reviewed and adopted at the January 2025 meeting. I would recommend expanding upon this to incorporate more strategic operational activities such as risk assessments and inspections. (See Practitioners Guide page 66 for a template Strategic Risk Assessment) IN PROGRESS</p> <p>15. I would also recommend that the Parish Council keeps on file copies of public liability certificates and risk assessments for its contractors providing repairs and maintenance. ACTIONED In addition, the PFC as tenants, should provide risk assessments and proof of insurance for its activities. IN PROGRESS</p> <p>16. NALC has also issued (April 2025) updated Model Template Standing Orders 14 (Code of Conduct) and 18 to reflect the changes made to Financial Regulations, and I would recommend reviewing and adopting these when practical. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. June 2025 minutes 49/2025.29.61 and 49/2025.29.17)</p> <p>17. However, given the full repairing lease for the Pavilion and associated land, I would recommend formally establishing which body (the Council or PFC) is responsible for insuring same. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. current Zurich insurance policy – now excluding the PFC. Buildings insurance costs will be billed-back to the PFC).</p> <p>18. I would also recommend a full review of all assets and insurance coverage prior to renewal of coverage and that this is minuted in detail. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. current Zurich insurance policy and Scribe accounts asset register report)</p> <p>19. It would appear that some assets of the Village Hall are also included in the PC insurance – again it is recommended that a formal review of this is undertaken. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. current Zurich insurance policy and Scribe accounts asset register report. The Village Hall has been referenced as a zero value asset as YPC are the Custodian Trustee, and the VH Committee are the Managing Trustee, and as such have their own insurance)</p> <p>20. At present the policy is in the name of the Parish Council and Playing Field Committee when they are two separate entities. I would strongly recommend that advice is obtained from your Insurers as to which entity and what they will cover. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. current Zurich insurance policy which covers YPC and its property and assets only)</p> <p>21. Inspections of play equipment are carried out monthly by trained Councillors, with a RoSPA inspection conducted annually. However, this area again appears to fall under the PFC's responsibility (full repairing lease) and I would recommend that legal advice is taken and a formal agreement must be confirmed and recognised by both parties going forward, as there could be serious potential ramifications should this be neglected. IN PROGRESS</p> <p>22. A meeting has now been held with the PFC, who have confirmed their responsibility. A decision should be made as to which party will make inspections and their frequency. ALREADY</p>
--	--

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

	<p>ACTIONED (ref. Email sent to the PFC22/5/25 10.33am confirming weekly playground inspections by Mick Hall once he is confirmed as an accountable Trustee of the charity. Quarterly inspections to be completed by YPC and annual inspection by RoSPA)</p> <p>23. Following the recent repairs made by the Parish Council to the play area, I would recommend a post-installation inspection by RoSPA to confirm that the repairs are as required. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. email confirmation from RoSPA 18/5/25 2.01am of the July Rutten Lane Park and Littlemarsh inspection booking.</p> <p>24. Other asset inspections are conducted regularly, and repairs made accordingly. A register of these repairs should be maintained for insurance purposes. IN PROGRESS</p> <p>25. I would recommend that regular formal tree inspections are made, by an independent arboriculturalist of any trees for which the Council is responsible and of course, any necessary remedial works carried out. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. tree inspection report received 16/6/25)</p> <p>26. I would recommend that a digital file or envelope containing passwords and access codes should be stored with the Chairman in case of emergencies. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. Chair's meeting with Clerk 9/6/25)</p> <p>27. I would recommend confirming that the current Remuneration Panel rates from Cherwell DC have been agreed and applied. IN PROGRESS</p> <p>28. For the purpose of local authority assets, I would recommend keeping the purchase values for publication on the AGAR and an insured value for purposes of insurance. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. current Zurich insurance policy with index linked asset values in addition to purchase prices shown on Scribe Accounts asset register)</p> <p>29. I would recommend referring to Sample accessibility statement (for a fictional public sector website) - <u>GOV.UK</u>. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. the accessibility statement on the YPC website)</p> <p>30. I would recommend that the Council reviews the 2025 edition of Practitioners' Guide, as it contains new requirements and guidance which will affect the 2025/26 audit, in particular relating to 'Digital & Data Compliance', and the requirement for an IT policy. A summary of the changes and the guide itself can be viewed at Practitioners' Guide 2025. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. the IT policy in the Policies and Governance section on the YPC website)</p> <p>31. I would recommend that a link to the Councillors' registers of interests, published at Cherwell District Council should be included on the relevant webpage listing Councillors. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. the contact us page for the link to CDCs register of members interests on the YPC website)</p> <p>32. Accessibility statement, Biodiversity and Communication. I would recommend making the relevant corrections to all three documents. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. the Policies and Governance section on the YPC website)</p> <p>33. The Council has a Virtual Meeting Procedure which relates to legislation during Covid and is no longer valid. I would recommend removing it. ALREADY ACTIONED</p> <p>34. Election of Chairman in May and at any other time due to stepping down (e.g. August 2024): The first order of business on the agenda must be the election of Chairman. Following election, their acceptance of office must be signed, and it is recommended that this should be minuted. ALREADY ACTIONED (ref. May meeting minutes 35/2025.3)</p>
--	---

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

13	Council to review and approve Annual Governance and Accountability Return section 1 Update 11/6/25: The Council reviewed and RESOLVED by unanimous vote to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return section 1. Issue closed.
14	Council to review and approve Annual Governance and Accountability Return section 2 Update 11/6/25: The Council reviewed and RESOLVED by unanimous vote to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return section 2. Issue closed.
15	Council to agree the Notice of Public Rights period for 2025-26 Update 9/4/25: The notice of Public Rights period will be agreed at the next meeting, following discussions with the Internal Auditor concerning her availability to conduct the Internal Audit. Update 14/5/25: The Council discussed some dates in principal, and will consider the Notice of Public Rights dates following receipt of the Internal Auditor's report, which should be ready in time for the next Council meeting. Update 11/6/25: The Council agreed by unanimous vote to agree the date of announcement to be Thursday 12th June 2025 and for the Notice of Public Rights to commence on Monday 16th June 2025 and ending on Friday 25th July 2025. Issue closed.
16	Council to consider adopting the revised NALC new model financial regulations Update 11/6/25: The Council RESOLVED to adopt the revised NALC new model financial regulations. Issue closed.
17	Council to consider adopting the revised NALC new model standing orders Update 11/6/25: The Council RESOLVED to adopt the revised NALC new model standing orders. Issue closed.
18	Council to consider insurance revisions Update 11/6/25: The Council RESOLVED to accept the insurance revisions, pending confirmation of index-linked asset valuations from Zurich. Issue closed
19	Council to consider costs of legal action Update 11/6/25: The Clerk is waiting to confirm costs and will provide an update at the next meeting.
20	Council to consider ownership liabilities and VAT reclaims Update 9/4/25: The Council noted the recent correspondence with HMRC. Update 14/5/25: The Clerk has had no response from HMRC to date. An update will be provided at the next meeting. Update 11/6/25: The Clerk has had no response from HMRC to date. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
21	Council to consider asset valuation costs Update 14/5/25: The Clerk will seek advice from OALC concerning an asset valuer. Update 11/6/25: Following discussions with Zurich and OALC, and recommendations made by the Internal Auditor, the Council will continue to use the original purchase price on the asset register, with an index-linked asset valuation for insurance purposes, which will be provided by Zurich. Issue closed.
22	Council to consider contractor risk assessments Update 11/6/25: The Council noted the current contractor risk assessments for M Rudge Trees, and Ricky Smith. Issue closed.

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

23	Council to note the EDF complaint to the Ombudsman Update 11/6/25: The Council noted the EDF complaint to the Ombudsman concerning electricity at Littlemarsh. The complaint is expected to be resolved in 4-6 weeks.
24	Council to consider Council reserves and investments Update 14/5/25: The Clerk presented options for Parish Council reserves investments, however the Council would like to make further considerations so this item will be discussed again at the next meeting. Update 11/6/25: The Clerk has confirmed that as a smaller authority, the FSCA £85K cap on protection of investments does apply to Yarnton Parish Council funds. The Council RESOLVED to invest funds surplus to the FSCA CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.
25	Council to consider the Clerk's additional hours Update 11/6/25: The Council approved the Clerk's 28.25 additional hours worked 9/5/25-9/6/25. Issue closed.

The meeting ended at 9.45pm

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 9th July 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall – Ordinary Parish Council Meeting.

Attachment 1

Recurring payments (Inc-VAT) from 1/5/25 to 31/5/25:

1. Scribe, direct debit
2. Nest pensions, direct debit
3. Clerk's salary
4. Village tidier's salary

Attachment 2

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

Payments (Inc-VAT) from 1/5/25 to 31/5/25:

Date	Description	Amount
01 May 2025	Oxfordshire Mind GRANT	-500.00
01 May 2025	Village Hall GRANT	-2500.00
01 May 2025	William Fletcher GRANT	-750.00
01 May 2025	Our Bus Bartons GRANT	-2000.00
01 May 2025	Yarnton Scouts GRANT	-300.00
08 May 2025	Google	-9.80
09 May 2025	ICO membership	-47.00
13 May 2025	HMRC Cumbernauld	-1399.22
13 May 2025	Clerk's travel expenses	-24.30
15 May 2025	BT – phone & broadband	-391.25
15 May 2025	Glasdon UK Limited	-1553.72
15 May 2025	Ricky Smith	-800.00
15 May 2025	M Rudge Trees	-1837.50
15 May 2025	Blue Monkey Trees	-792.00
15 May 2025	OALC	-36.00
16 May 2025	Lloyds Corp Card	-3.00
20 May 2025	EDF Energy	-223.00
20 May 2025	Glasdon UK Limited	-10.55
20 May 2025	Brunel Engraving	-54.24
31 May 2025	Bank Service Charge	-9.15

Receipts from 1/5/25 to 31/5/25:

Date	Description	Amount
None		

29/2025

The District Councillors report:

District Councillor / OCC Councillor Report Yarnton Parish Council 11.06.25

1. The first meeting of the new Council year was held on 21 May, including confirmation of the Portfolio Holders, Chair and Vice Chair.
Cllr Dorothy Walker was invested as Chair; Cllr David Hingley was returned as Leader.
2. At a recent meeting with the majority group Councillors the CEO of the Council laid out the challenging but not critical budgetary situation going forward over the period until 2029, with many financial uncertainties, particularly in relation to forthcoming changes in business rates, which are yet to be clarified. Additionally, the evolving LGR and the following subsequent devolution process will impose substantial costs on local government. He reassured councillors that his aim will be to address these challenges via system transformation, not by cutting of services.

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

3. LGR and Devo update. To date no responses has been received from Government.
4. CDC Housing has reminded residents about its highly regarded programme for the funding and project management of adaptations to housing for people with disabilities. These can be anything from installation of a key safe to provision of an adapted bathroom. Applications should be made to Occupational Health at OCC for assessment. Eligible applicants will be referred to Cherwell's team. The scheme is open to private and social housing residents.
5. Planning: Cherwell District Council's housing numbers have been reviewed and reduced and now sit below the required 5 year supply.
6. Botley West Solar Farm application was heard at planning and was referred to Full Council to authorise a response.
7. Cherwell Parish Liaison meeting is being held on 11th June, all Councillors are welcome to attend.
8. Cherwell Business Awards: Entry now closed and winners will be announced.
9. Election results: Local OCC representation is provided by three Councillors, Laura Gordon (North), Ian Middleton (East) and Lesley McLean (West). OCC now has a majority administration for the first time in a number of years with the LibDems sitting independently. Liz Leffman has been re-elected as Leader with Neil Fawcett as Deputy Leader.

Planning issues update:

1, The Garth: has been called in. No response yet. The queries raised in my objection in relation to the lack of detail regarding the application's conformity with HMO regulations (CDC and national ones) have not been addressed. The Housing Standards officer response simply states: 'No comment'. Neither Highways nor the Police have responded. I'm going to follow this up directly with the delegated officer next week.

3, Paternoster Court, Cassington Rd: According to Enforcement, the temporary entrance has now been removed. No work on the roadside gully so far, but is expected. I will continue to monitor.

45, Merton Way:

This is the reply I have received from Enforcement:

'Two unannounced site visits were carried out to this property, on both of these occasions no work was being carried out.

An arranged visit was carried out on 30 April with myself and the owner, a member of Environmental Protection Team and the Planning Enforcement Team Leader also attended.

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

A concern was raised that an extraction facility has been installed for fumes to escape over neighbouring properties, the Environmental Protection Officer walked around the outside and confirmed there was no extraction unit inside or outside of the garage.

As a matter of fact and degree, based on the evidence presented, it seems probable that the repair of vehicles amounts to a hobby and that no material change of use has occurred. The use appears incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse and as such no breach of planning control has occurred.

At this stage there is insufficient evidence to take further action and no sufficient harm'

It seems that there would need to be concrete evidence in the form of video recordings and contacts made with Environment/Enforcement Planning at the time of any work going on to be able to take this further.

29a/2025

The County Councillor's Report:

Dear Parish Councillors and residents,

I'm honoured to have been elected as County Councillor for the West Kidlington Division.

Thank you to everyone who supported me, whether by voting, volunteering, or sharing your concerns and hopes for our communities. I look forward to working with residents, parish councils, and local organisations to deliver positive change and represent your voices at Oxfordshire County Council. Here are some updates I have gathered for you, but please note I am yet to the set up and it may take a little while to be fully onboarded.

Best wishes

Lesley

Budget

The budget was approved at Oxfordshire County Council and the highlights are as follows:

- An additional £58.8 million fixing potholes
- An additional £17.2 million for children's services
- An additional £1.14 million for SEND
- An additional £10.8 million for Adult Social Care
- An additional £11.8 million for greener schools and public buildings
- Unlocking £22.5 million of developer contributions
- An additional £1.8 million for rural active travel including £200k for the Haddenham and Thame Greenway
- £3.6 million to increase the frequency of gully clearing from every 4 years to annually
- £1 million for better rail stations and greener travel
- Park & Ride prices frozen for 2025/26

Recycling

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

For the 11th year in a row, residents in Oxfordshire are the best in England for recycling, reusing and composting, according to the latest government figures. OCC have again been named the top performing county council waste disposal authority.

Resurfacing Plans 25/26

Oxfordshire County Council is launching a £7.4 million road resurfacing programme this spring, aiming to improve nearly 100 roads across the county. The initiative, running from 22 April to 16 June 2025, will involve surface dressing treatments to over one million square metres of carriageway. This preventive maintenance approach is designed to extend the lifespan of roads and enhance driving conditions. The council emphasises the importance of this work in maintaining road quality and urges motorists to stay informed about upcoming works and to drive cautiously in treated areas.

The method offers many advantages, including:

- Sealing the road surface to keep out water, one of the major causes of deterioration and potholes.
- Reducing the deterioration of the road surface.
- Restoring the necessary level of skid resistance to reduce skid-related traffic collisions.
- Enabling worn out road surfaces to last longer, increasing the time before structural maintenance is required.
- Maximising the cost effectiveness of limited highway maintenance budgets.
- Minimising traffic disruption and congestion as large areas of roads – up to 100,000 square metres – can be treated in a single day.
- The work is highly weather dependent and cannot be completed in wet conditions.

Updated details about the programme, including a map showing where and when the work will be taking place, will be available on Oxfordshire County Council's website.

In the division works are planned for:

A44 Woodstock Road, Yarnton – Surface dressing

Langford Lane, Kidlington – Surface Inlay

Upper Campsfield Road A4095 – Surface dressing.

Grovelands, Kidlington – Surface Inlay

Gulley Cleaning Schedule for 25/26

Below you will find the gulley cleaning schedule for the upcoming financial year. If there are any problem areas you would like me to raise with county officers please let me know.

Start	Finish	District	Ward
01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Cherwell	Kidlington North
01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Cherwell	Kidlington South
01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Cherwell	Yarnton, Gosford & Water Eaton

Plans for Improving Bus Travel

Oxfordshire County Council has submitted an updated Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to the UK government, detailing how it intends to utilise over £15 million in allocated funding to

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

enhance bus services across the county. The plan focuses on making bus travel more reliable, accessible, and affordable, particularly in rural areas. Key proposals include introducing new and faster services, retaining existing routes, and implementing measures such as £1 Sunday bus fares during December to encourage increased usage.

These efforts are part of a broader strategy to increase bus patronage and reduce reliance on private vehicles, contributing to environmental goals and improved public transportation options for residents. The council's submission reflects its commitment to working collaboratively with bus operators and stakeholders to deliver a more efficient and user-friendly bus network.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Oxfordshire is developing its first Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to restore and enhance the county's natural environment. This initiative, part of a national effort under the Environment Act 2021, aims to map out key areas for biodiversity improvement and outline actions to support wildlife, improve air and water quality, and mitigate climate change impacts.

The strategy is being shaped collaboratively by Oxfordshire County Council, district councils, Natural England, and local communities. The development process has involved extensive public engagement. Phase 1 (February–March 2024) gathered input from 1,038 participants through workshops, events, and an online survey. Phase 2 (May–June 2024) focused on identifying specific locations for potential habitat restoration. Currently, in Phase 3, draft documents and maps have been published, highlighting priority areas and proposed actions for biodiversity enhancement. Feedback from this phase will inform the final strategy, set to be published by July 2025.

For more information and to view the draft strategy and maps, visit [here](#).

Devolution and Government Reorganisation

On 16 December 2024, the government published a white paper on a national programme of devolution and reform to local government. The county council's cabinet responded by requesting that the county is fast-tracked for local government reorganisation while continuing to work with partners on a future mayoral strategic authority.

The County Council's has submitted a bid for a single Oxfordshire-wide unitary authority which contrasts the view of CDC is working on a proposal comprising West Oxfordshire, and the City. Both those proposals are in line with government's white paper so it will be up to the Secretary of State to choose.

There are pros and cons to each of those, and I support the inclusion of both bids. However, on balance my current preference is for a smaller unitary which should lead to a more equitable consideration and allocation of resources to our towns and villages.

School Places

More than nine out of ten Oxfordshire children with applications to start reception year in primary schools across the county have been offered a place at their first choice for the next school year.

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

The Oxfordshire all-age autism strategy 2025 – 2030

Oxfordshire County Council is developing its first all-age autism strategy for 2025–2030, aiming to enhance the lives of autistic individuals across the county. This comprehensive plan addresses the diverse needs of autistic people and their families, ensuring access to necessary resources, services, and opportunities for a fulfilling life. The strategy has been co-produced with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

Related to this, if you are a parent or carer of a child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)? Get information and advice straight to your inbox. Sign up here.

Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

Oxfordshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is a key strategic document which Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority is required by law to have in place. It sets out how the council can work with others to try and make sure the public rights of way network meets the needs of the public, now and in the future. More information on ROWIPs can be found at Government guidance on improvement plans(External link). The Current Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2015-2025 can be found here, along with the contact details of the officers involved.Grants and Cost of Living

Hardship fund: OCC's hardship fund (Resident Support Scheme) was launched in June.

Phone: 01865 804171

Home Upgrade Grants: OCC & its partner AgilityEco is reaching out directly to households who will qualify to benefit from Home Upgrade Grants (to improve energy efficiency for 'off-grid' homes).

Community Capacity Grants: The Community Capacity Fund will open for grant applications from 6th September. Grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 are funded by OCC and applications processed by Oxfordshire Community Foundation. Grants are given to projects that "support people to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as Possible".

Local Matters.

Section 19 report for Garden City, Kidlington has been released, others are due shortly.

Sanctuary Housing, Yarnton. They will be attending to clear culverts in the area and are in communication with the Parish Clerk.

Flooding at the Royal Sun roundabout has been noted and remedial works are being chased.

Flood Funding. Expressions of Interest were made and funding will be discussed and confirmed over the next few weeks.

29b/2025

The Internal Auditor's Report:

Internal Auditor: Deborah O'Brien CiLCA PIALC

Smaller authorities are required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

‘undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.

In accordance with guidelines contained in the 2024 Practitioners’ Guide (JPAG) paragraphs 4.6-4.12, I am independent of the Parish Council and its members as well as being a CiLCA qualified Clerk with over 10 years’ experience.

I have carried out a selective assessment of the Council’s compliance with relevant procedures and controls, which I expected to be in operation during the year ended 31st March 2025, as outlined in the letter of engagement signed by the Council at its 4th December 2024 meeting. The function of this internal audit is to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Council’s procedures, not to detect errors or fraud, or to give legal advice, as the management of the Council’s internal controls and governance is a function of the Council as a whole. (Practitioners’ Guide, paragraphs 4.4-4.5).

The Council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

An excellent interim audit was conducted in July 2024, following the employment of a new Clerk/RFO, as well as an advisory report from a VAT specialist in November 2024. I will not re-iterate the findings of either but have considered them and taken notice, with reference to them made in some cases. The Parish Council has also reviewed them and acted accordingly. I would also recommend the need to consult with sector-specific and/or legal advisors for any situations that merit it, such as VAT, employment/HR, Charity trustees etc.

This internal audit has been conducted electronically utilising requested documents and information provided by the Clerk, as well as those present on the website at Yarnton Parish Council. In addition, a Zoom meeting was held on 3rd June 2025 to review this report.

This written report is laid out using the same format and headings as the AGAR Internal Audit report (page 3). Where I have answered NO to any of the AGAR2024/25 Internal Auditor’s report Yarnton Parish Council

2

assertions, the comments in bold in this report demonstrate the reasoning. I would recommend that the Practitioners’ Guide is also referenced – the version for 2024/25 is available at Practitioners’ Guide 2024. A newer version for 2025/26 can also be downloaded.

Overall, the standard of management and governance processes is improving, with some issues highlighted below for the attention of the Parish Council. I would like to thank the Parish Clerk/RFO, David Thornhill for his cooperation and assistance in facilitating this internal audit. He has made great strides in remedying some of the Council’s processes ensuring compliance with legislation and best practices.

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

Internal Audit report assertions

A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

- Appropriate accounting records have been kept throughout the year (Scribe accounting system). These are now up to date and well maintained. I would recommend uploading all invoice documentation to Scribe and note that this was done for the latter part of the year. Certain areas of cost-coding need to be adjusted, particularly relating to staff costs, to ensure that year-end AGAR reports can be easily and accurately produced. I would also recommend the inclusion of expenditure approval dates and power for expenditure.

- Council minutes for the year are complete and up to date and have been initialled & signed. Parish Council minutes become a legal document once they are physically initialled (each page), signed and dated following approval at the ensuing meeting. The pages must be numbered sequentially and filed in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 sched 12 paragraph 41 (1) (2).

I would also recommend that the document title includes the full date including the year (not just Meeting held on 3rd July) and that a document header is added so that each page of the minutes contains the full date.

B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

- Financial Regulations have been reviewed and are based on the 2024 model template. The Council needs to adopt the latest 2025 amendments to the NALC Model Template Financial Regulations, in particular 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11 as a result of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulation 2024 which came into force March 2025.

- The Council's Financial Regulations are being followed in most cases, but there are instances of services/orders placed by other bodies without authorisation, not following procurement guidelines in Financial Regulations, and yet the PC agreed to make payments. Some Direct Debit charges were not authorised or set up by the Parish Council and are under review. I would recommend that the Proper Officer should be the only 2024/25 Internal Auditor's report Yarnton Parish Council

3

person authorising purchase orders, utilities and contracts, subject to a resolution made by full Council at a meeting.

- A random sample of 15% of payments was reviewed and found to be generally administered and processed correctly. I would recommend that a schedule of invoices is signed by 2 councillors upon payment approval. The Council has adopted effective controls, and dual authorisation is required to authorise BACS payments, which agrees with Paragraph 7.1 of your Financial Regulations state: "Where internet banking arrangements are made with any

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

bank, the Clerk/RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the Council shall identify a number of Councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. No signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.”

- In the interest of transparency, where contracts are awarded, the successful contractor should be named in the minutes and also named when payments are made rather than just ‘Grass cutting £xxx.’

- A large amount of parish expenditure relates to the activities of the Playing Field Committee, a charity, which manages the pavilion and land involved under a full repairing lease: THE PLAYING FIELD - 294537, Register of Charities - The Charity Commission (PFC). The Parish Council is reviewing these costs and expenditures, and I would strongly recommend that a clear delineation of activities and responsibilities needs to be formally determined, documented and actioned to ensure that the Council is complying with its own responsibilities and regulations. The PFC has (in February 2025), acknowledged full responsibility for the play area and going forward will also be responsible for its repairs and insurance. Many invoices for upkeep and utilities are being paid by the Parish Council when they should be the responsibility of the PFC. The EDF electricity bills transferred back into the PFC’s name as of 1/4/25, when the PC ceased making payments. There is a large outstanding bill which is currently under appeal. The invoices are not always made out to the Parish Council or represent orders made by the Parish Council which may not comply with legal requirements for making VAT reclaims. The Council has consulted with a VAT expert who has made recommendations that the Council has accepted, and a letter of explanation has been sent to HMRC. The Parish Council must ensure that it is complying and acting in accordance with the terms of any leases into which it has entered and that its actions comply with legislation and its financial regulations.

- I would strongly recommend that the Council does not make payments on behalf of other entities but instead considers grant applications made in accordance with its Grants Policy in line with legislative powers for expenditure.2024/25 Internal Auditor’s report Yarnton Parish Council

4

- S137 expenditure should always be recorded as a separate item to ensure that it does not exceed the lawful limit for the year. (2024/25: 2,409 electors@ £10.81 = £26,041) Scribe indicates that £23,306.96 (net of VAT) was allocated to S. 137. See SLCC | Section 137 spending limit for 2024/25 and Section 137 expenditure limit for parish and town councils announced for 2025/26

However, this is the power of last resort and I would venture to suggest that other expenditure powers should have been allocated to some costs, such as

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

OurBus Bartons - Community Transport – Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s.26-29; Village News – Local Government Act 1972 s.142. I would recommend that the Council refers back to the interim audit report page 2.

- The Council has just acquired a debit card for smaller expenses and a policy has been developed to cover this.

C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. Please also refer to Model Financial Regulations 2.4.

- I would recommend that one non-signatory Councillor is nominated as responsible for internal controls and that this person signs off bank reconciliations and statements at least quarterly and this is minuted.

- A Financial Risk Assessment was reviewed and adopted at the January 2025 meeting. I would recommend expanding upon this to incorporate more strategic operational activities such as risk assessments and inspections. (See Practitioners Guide page 66 for a template Strategic Risk Assessment)

- I would also recommend that the Parish Council keeps on file copies of public liability certificates and risk assessments for its contractors providing repairs and maintenance. In addition, the PFC as tenants, should provide risk assessments and proof of insurance for its activities.

- The 2018 (revised 2020) version of Standing Orders was adopted in December 2024 and should be reviewed regularly. NALC has also issued (April 2025) updated Model Template Standing Orders 14 (Code of Conduct) and 18 to reflect the changes made to Financial Regulations, and I would recommend reviewing and adopting these when practical.

- Insurance coverage (Public & Employers' Liability, assets and Fidelity Guarantee) is generally adequate. However, given the full repairing lease for the Pavilion and associated land, I would recommend formally establishing which body (the Council or PFC) is responsible for insuring same. At present the policy is in the name of the Parish Council and Playing Field Committee when they are two separate entities. I would also recommend a full review of all assets and insurance coverage prior to renewal of coverage and that this is 2024/25 Internal Auditor's report

Yarnton Parish Council

5

minuted in detail. It would appear that some assets of the Village Hall are also included in the PC insurance – again it is recommended that a formal review of this is undertaken. I would strongly recommend that advice is obtained from your Insurers as to which entity and what they will cover.

- Inspections of play equipment are carried out monthly by trained Councillors,

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

with a RoSPA inspection conducted annually. However, this area again appears to fall under the PFC's responsibility (full repairing lease) and I would recommend that legal advice is taken and a formal agreement must be confirmed and recognised by both parties going forward, as there could be serious potential ramifications should this be neglected. A meeting has now been held with the PFC, who have confirmed their responsibility. A decision should be made as to which party will make inspections and their frequency. Following the recent repairs made by the Parish Council to the play area, I would recommend a post-installation inspection by RoSPA to confirm that the repairs are as required.

- Other asset inspections are conducted regularly, and repairs made accordingly. A register of these repairs should be maintained for insurance purposes. Defibrillator checks are made by Councillors and the Clerk.
- I would recommend that regular formal tree inspections are made, by an independent arboriculturalist of any trees for which the Council is responsible and of course, any necessary remedial works carried out. I note that some inspections have been conducted and recommend that you check with your insurers as to their requirements for frequency. (Road-side trees usually should be inspected more frequently – see Court of Appeal decision in Witley Parish Council v Cavanagh EWCA Civ 2232.
- Electronic documents are presently backed-up on a remote hard drive as well as Google cloud storage. I would recommend that a digital file or envelope containing passwords and access codes should be stored with the Chairman in case of emergencies.
- Hard-copy documents are stored in the Clerk's 'Council Office'. The Council may wish to review the security of access to this space.

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

- The 2024/25 budget was reviewed and considered at the 9th January 2024 meeting, followed by the setting of the precept in the amount of £142,465.
- The 2025/26 budget was reviewed and considered at the 22nd January 2025 meeting followed by the setting of the precept in the amount of £148,235.83.
- Financial reports compared to budget are presented to council and considered at monthly meetings.
- I would refer the Council back to the Interim Audit report of July 2024, pages 12-13. 2024/25 Internal Auditor's report Yarnton Parish Council

6

- The Council has developed a Reserves policy and both ear-marked and general reserves are considered during the budget setting process. Currently approximately £52,586 is ear-marked with £83,408 in general reserves. However, because of a potential VAT repayment and a substantial outstanding

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

EDF bill which is under appeal, some of these reserves may be depleted, necessitating a further review.

E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

- The correct precept amounts were received and match the government's national parish data report.
- In addition to the precept, the council received a devolved services grant of £2,941 from Oxford County Council, and bank interest in the amount of £3,667 and some smaller grants. Burial fees were also received.
- No VAT claims were made, pending the outcome of the current review. VAT was last reclaimed/received during the 2023/24 financial year.
- Cemetery/burial fees were reviewed during the year.
- An investment policy is now in place (adopted 9/4/25).
- The Council is not VAT registered.

F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.

- No petty cash held. £60 balance from 2023/24 has been paid into the bank.

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

- The Council is registered with HMRC as an employer, and both current employees have up-to date contracts. (Clerk & Village Tidier)
 - A payroll provider is used for processing staff salaries and pensions.
 - The Council re-declared compliance with the Pensions Regulator on 28th March 2025.
 - The former village tidier was not on an employment contract and invoiced for services as an independent contractor. As of 1/1/2025, the new tidier is employed, under contract and both his and the Clerk's salaries, PAYE and any NICs or pensions are included in line 4 Staff costs of the AGAR.
 - The Council has historically been processing a salary for a non-employee of the Council, including making the salary and PAYE payments then allocating the costs of same as a retrospective grant to the PFC. As of 1 April 2025, full responsibility has been handed back to the PFC. These costs are not included in line 4 staff costs, as they are for a non-contracted, non-employee of the Parish Council.
- 2024/25 Internal Auditor's report Yarnton Parish Council
- 7
- No working from home (WHA) allowance is paid as the Council maintains an office within the Village Hall. For further guidance, see Claim tax relief for your job expenses: Working from home - GOV.UK
 - Councillors' allowances are paid and processed through payroll with appropriate (if any) deductions made. These costs are not included in line 4 staff costs. I would recommend confirming that the current Remuneration

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

Panel rates from Cherwell DC have been agreed and applied. (Refer to the Remuneration Panel notice in the 2023/24 Accounts for guidance)

- I have reviewed a year-end statement from HMRC showing a small balance of £2.08 due.

H. Asset and investment registers were complete and accurately and properly maintained.

- The asset register shown in Scribe has a purchase price value which is as Practitioners' Guide requires and also a 'current value' which in some cases reflects depreciation. For the purpose of local authority assets, I would recommend keeping the purchase values for publication on the AGAR and an insured value for purposes of insurance. Depreciation of assets does not apply.

- The Council still needs to determine if in fact, all of the included assets are 'theirs' and not those of the PFC or village hall. Guidance on which assets should be declared as the PCs can be found in Practitioners' Guide, paragraphs 2.25, 2.27, 5.140, 5.174, 5.177, 5.180 and page 32 section 'H'.

- The Council does not hold any long-term investments or loans.

I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.

- Bank reconciliations are presented to the Council at monthly meetings. I was able to see minuted evidence for some months, that the bank statements were also reviewed.

- The year-end bank reconciliations agree to the bank statements and equates to box 7 of the Accounting Statement.

J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

- The totals shown on the AGAR accounting statements match the cashbook and last year's brought forward figures.

- Staff costs do not include payroll costs, payments to non-employees, independent contractors or councillors' allowances.

- The asset register value shown in line 9 matches the asset register. 2024/25 Internal Auditor's report Yarnton Parish Council

8

K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.

- Not applicable – the Council exceeded the exemption threshold.

L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

- The council is above the £25,000 threshold and is not subject to the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities 2015. However, it is publishing as much information as possible in the interests of transparency. I was unable to view agendas for 2024 online – I would recommend uploading these when practical.
- The council is in compliance with The Accounts & Audit regulations 2015 regulation 13 (At least five years of AGARs and associated documents must be published).
- The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 requires that public sector bodies must comply with the accessibility requirement. Regular testing of the website should be undertaken; the required standard is now WCAG 2.2 AA. There is no test date shown (according to the Accessibility Statement). The accessibility statement also references Launton Parish Council. I would recommend referring to Sample accessibility statement (for a fictional public sector website) - GOV.UK. It is the council's legal responsibility to ensure that the website meets accessibility requirements. (WCAG 2.2 AA)
- All published documents dated after 23 September 2018 and created by the Council should be in an accessible format and where these are PDFs should be PDF/A created with header bookmarks within the document. Assistance with this can be found at Creating Accessible Documents | AbilityNet.
- A Model Publication Scheme and a Privacy policy are available on the website in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. ICO data protection registration fee has been paid for 2024/25.

M. In the year covered by the AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set?)

- 2023-24 Electors' Rights notice is on the website allowing for 30 working days review and including the first 10 working days in July. (5th June – 16th July 2024). The announcement date was 4th June 2024. However, the minuted AGAR approval meeting was 6th June 2024, and the electors' rights cannot be announced or commence until after the approval meeting. This 2024/25 Internal Auditor's report Yarnton Parish Council

9

was commented upon by the External Auditor in their 2023/24 report and certificate.

N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR page 1 Guidance Notes)

- The council complied with this requirement.

O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

met its responsibilities as a trustee.

- Not applicable – the Council is not a trustee.

Other matters not covered above:

- I would recommend that the Council reviews the 2025 edition of Practitioners' Guide, as it contains new requirements and guidance which will affect the 2025/26 audit, in particular relating to 'Digital & Data Compliance', and the requirement for an IT policy. A summary of the changes and the guide itself can be viewed at Practitioners' Guide 2025.
- I would recommend that a link to the Councillors' registers of interests, published at Cherwell District Council should be included on the relevant webpage listing Councillors.
- As well as the Accessibility statement, two policies online reference Launton instead of Yarnton – Biodiversity and Communication. I would recommend making the relevant corrections to all three documents.
- The Council has a Virtual Meeting Procedure which relates to legislation during Covid and is no longer valid. I would recommend removing it or updating to reflect that it only applies to members of the public and not Councillors, who must attend in person.
- Election of Chairman in May and at any other time due to stepping down (e.g. August 2024): The first order of business on the agenda must be the election of Chairman. Following election, their acceptance of office must be signed, and it is recommended that this should be minuted. Local Government Act 1972 sched 83 (4). If any co-options take place through the year, they must also sign an acceptance of office which should be minuted.
- "Confidential discussions (e.g. in June 2024)": – these require the Exclusion of Public and Press and therefore a resolution must be made by the council to so do. Suggested agenda wording: "The following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters. It is therefore RECOMMENDED, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, that the public and press be excluded. (followed by item(s) to be discussed such as staff matters, commercial tenders or legal advice)." Then it should be recorded in the minutes that "pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the Council RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded." The minutes for the 2024/25 Internal Auditor's report Yarnton Parish Council confidential session should also include some limited detail such as 'legal advice relating to a lease was considered and adopted.'

This report and its recommendations are meant to assist the Parish Council and not to criticise it. As mentioned previously, the Clerk has undertaken an enormous amount of work to introduce new policies and best practices to ensure compliance with legislation. I would again stress the recommendation to take expert sector-specific legal advice and guidance where needed. The report should be submitted

Signed as a correct record:

Date:

Minutes of the meeting of Yarnton Parish Council

Meeting held on 11th June 2025 at 6.30pm at Yarnton Village Hall

along with the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 to the full council for review and consideration, prior to completing the Annual Governance Statement.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Deborah O'Brien CiLCA PIALC

3rd June 2025

Signed as a correct record:

Date: