

**Minutes of North Moreton Parish Council Meeting  
held North Moreton Village Hall on Tuesday 13 January 2026**

Present: Cllr. V. Gibbs (Chair), Cllr. C.I. Shipton (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Kathy Howat, Cllr. S.C. Harrison, Cllr. D. Tebworth, County Cllr. Johnny Hope-Smith, District Cllr. C. Topping, Mr. A. Wise (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

	VG opened the meeting at 7:30 pm	
26/3385 Apologies	District Cllr. AM. Simpson	
26/3386 Report on OCC and SODC activities	<b>SODC Report</b> – See attachment 6 <b>OCC Report</b> – See attachment 7	
26/3387 Hear representations from members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resident asked clerk to contact highways again to come back to clear out the gullies / drains. See action 26/3393</li> <li>Resident asked PC if the newly extended car park could be roped off thus preventing cars from parking on the grass. CIS to purchase necessary parts including pins from Screwfix and claim back via expenses.</li> </ul>	CIS
26/3388 Approve the minutes of the meeting of 11.11.25	It was proposed by VG, seconded by KH, that the minutes be signed as a true record. Carried nem con.	
26/3389 Consider matters, not taken elsewhere, arising from the minutes of the meeting of 11.11.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All action items have been completed.</li> <li>Chair thanked all residents who gave up time to come and assist with the car park extension work.</li> </ul>	
26/3390 Receive reports from Parish Councillors and the Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair handed the clerk a signed copy of the NMPC/MCC lease to 2037 for filing.</li> <li>Chair to write to Muir Parker asking for the latest version of the village emergency plan so that it can be updated before the Clerk sends it into OCC Emergency Planning Team as requested by them.</li> </ul> <p>In particular we need to add in something about the situation that arose in December when a homeless man took up residence in our bus shelter so that we have a clear procedure to follow in the event of a similar occurrence with relevant contact details. There are also some updated emergency contact numbers for weather related issues.</p>	VG/AW
26/3391 Financial matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of payments. It was proposed VG, seconded SH, and carried that the following invoices be paid: Parish Clerk's Salary, Expenses, PAYE, Grass Cutting and 2 website related payments which were reimbursed to Ian Shipton - attachments 2 &amp; 3.</li> <li>Accounts were reviewed</li> <li>Clerk took the councillors through the draft 2026/27 Budget for consideration with only one change proposed. It was proposed SH, seconded VG, and carried that the 2026/27 Budget be adopted. It was proposed SH, seconded VG, and carried that the clerk request a Precept of £17,000:00 for 2026/27.</li> <li>Clerk to update 2026/27 Budget and circulate to councillors before year end</li> <li>Clerk to complete Precept paperwork and submit to SODC Finance before the deadline of later this week</li> <li>Clerk to contact the internal auditor used last year to clarify if he is prepared to undertake the 2025/26 Internal Audit for the PCs accounts.</li> </ul>	AW AW AW

# North Moreton Parish Council

Chmn	
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26/3392 Planning since meeting of 11.11.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW presented the current planning application situation – attachment 4</li> <li>• Chair reported that she had responded to a query from a resident on the PC's decision on responding to planning application P25/S3836/FUL with SUPPORT in particular regard with the track leading to the Airfield.</li> <li>• VG asked for it to be minuted that the PC had responded to the appeal against the refusal of the planning permission P24/S1343/HH at 1, Long Wittenham Road expressing their support for SODC's decision.</li> </ul>	
26/3393 Highways, Transport and Footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerk to write to highways asking for the team to come back to clear out the gullies / drains between Old School House and Goodwood House in Wallingford Road, as they couldn't get to them last time because of a parked van.</li> <li>• Footpath Warden reported by email that he had recently attended a meeting with concerned parishioners regarding the routing of footpath 314/6/10. He will report on any outcomes in future PC meetings.</li> </ul>	AW
26/3394 Recreation and Playground matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair thanked both the village hall committee and the cricket club for their donations of £500 respectively towards the cost of extending the Rec Ground Car Park.</li> <li>• NMCT have also promised a donation of at least £500, and possibly more to be paid once the new clerk has completed a handover from the retiring clerk.</li> <li>• Clerk to seek clarification from PC's insurers that the public liability of £50M covers all PC owned land and property in the village.</li> <li>• CIS reported that in the Spring he would be purchasing necessary supplies of wood preservative, paint, and timber posts and that he would dig 4 holes to enable necessary repairs to the playground equipment on the Rushcroft. Clerk asked the receipts be submitted before the May meeting for approval so that the expenditure comes out of the 2026/27 Precept.</li> <li>• Clerk to provide CIS with the contact details of the Zip Wire contractor</li> </ul>	AW CIS AW
26/3395 Risk assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed– attachment 5</li> </ul>	
26/3396 Respond to Communications as the Chairman may direct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair to circulate email copied to her to Clerk and councillors re work on Earth Trust land at Sires hill</li> </ul>	VG
26/3397 Attend to any other business at the Chairman's discretion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	
26/3398 Date of Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APM to be held at 7:00pm on Tuesday 10 March 2026 with the PC Meeting to follow</li> </ul>	
Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VG declared the meeting closed at 8:40pm</li> </ul>	

Signed:

Date:

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Financial Statements
3. Expenditure against Budget 2023-2024
4. Planning Applications
5. Risk assessment checklist
6. SODC Report

<b>Title</b>	District Councillors' Report
<b>Councillors</b>	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson & Cllr Crispin Topping
<b>Parish</b>	North Moreton Parish Council
<b>Date</b>	13 January 2026

[Booking link](#) for planning surgeries for town and parish councils

## Register for Neighbourhood Planning event on 28 January at 2pm Didcot Civic Hall

We are writing to invite you to an event taking place from 2pm to 5pm on **28 January** at the **Didcot Civic Hall**, open to parish councillors and clerks with an interest in neighbourhood planning. We hope attendees will come away with an enhanced understanding of the value of neighbourhood plans and the practical support available to prepare or review a neighbourhood plan.

As mentioned in our previous email, the event will help groups understand what recent and proposed national changes to the planning system mean for neighbourhood plans. The event will also introduce the **Neighbourhood Planning Guides and Templates** prepared by the council to support groups progressing neighbourhood plans, particularly in the context of withdrawn national funding.

We will also have an optional session at the end of the event during which you'll be invited to ask questions about Local Government Reorganisation as we know from conversations with many of you that it's a topic of interest. Colleagues working on the project have offered to come along and give you a quick update, hear your thoughts, ideas and answer your questions.

The event is open to **town and parish councillors, parish and town clerks, and district ward councillors** with an interest in neighbourhood planning. Please note that, if demand exceeds the capacity of the venue, we may need to limit the number of attendees per parish or town council.

We would kindly ask that **participant details are registered using the RSVP link provided**, where possible. If you experience any difficulties registering online, please contact us by **email on [planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk)** or telephone **01235 422 422** and we will be happy to assist.

If you would like to attend but are **unable to do so on the date and time of this event**, please indicate this using the appropriate section of the registration form. We will use this information to help assess demand for a **potential additional event**, should there be sufficient interest.

## Agenda

- Welcome and introduction at 2pm
- Understanding recent and proposed national planning changes and what they mean for neighbourhood plans
- The continued role and value of neighbourhood planning in an evolving planning landscape
- Q&A session
- Break and networking (refreshments provided)
- Introduction to a new suite of neighbourhood planning guides and templates
- Q&A session
- Local Government Reorganisation Q&A
- Close at 5pm

The event will include participation from the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Planning Alliance (ONPA), who will provide a community perspective on the value of neighbourhood plans and their role in shaping local places.

**If you would like to attend, please follow the link below to RSVP before 11.59pm on Monday 26 January.**

<https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/planning/e590ce70/>

We look forward to welcoming you.

## **Planning Policy**

### **Joint Local Plan (JLP) Examination**

#### **Meeting with Inspectors**

Council officers will meet with government planning Inspectors with the hope the districts' Joint Local Plan will continue its examination.

In September, Inspectors examining the district councils' plan said it had failed on the "Duty to Co-operate", suggesting the councils might need to withdraw the plan from the examination process as a result.

But following a ministerial statement from Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, the government indicated that it intended to remove the Duty to Co-operate from the plan making process early this year, and that it would apply to Local Plans currently going through the examination process.

The Inspectors examining the Joint Local Plan wrote to the councils asking them how they'd like to proceed and they replied they'd like the examinations hearings to resume so the plan can move forward towards adoption.

The councils have now received a response from the Inspectors saying they have decided to hold a Procedural Meeting (PM) with the councils to discuss the best way forward for the examination process.

The meeting, which will be held in public at a date and time to be confirmed, will not discuss the soundness of the Plan but instead will focus on practical arrangements of resuming the examination of the Plan given the anticipated change in the law.

Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson, South Oxfordshire District Council Cabinet Member for Planning, said: "This news offers some welcome encouragement that our Joint Local Plan examination can move

forward and we look forward to the meeting with Inspectors to discuss how this could happen. As I've said before, I believe this plan delivers on our vision and priorities as well as providing help to our neighbouring districts."

Cllr Andy Foulsham, Vale of White Horse District Council Cabinet Member for Policy, Programmes and IT, said: "I'm pleased the Inspectors' reply suggests that the tireless work over the past four years to reach this stage will not be wasted.

"This is a good Local Plan – it's robust, innovative, forward-thinking and based on strong community engagement."

See the latest information here [Joint Local Plan 2041 Examination - South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council](#)

## **Oxford Growth Commission Interim report**

[Neale Coleman's Interim Report](#) was published on 15 December. It identifies barriers to growth and sets out 47 recommendations to improve infrastructure and speed up development. The Commission will continue its work through 2026, with a final report expected later, within a year.

## **Planning Reforms**

Government has released a raft of [new guidance](#), including details on the forthcoming 30-month process for preparing new-style local plans.

## **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

A [draft revised NPPF](#) was published on 16 December 2025 for consultation until 10 March 2026. It aims to create a more rules-based system and accelerate delivery of 1.5 million homes this Parliament.

## **What this means for South and Vale**

Although Government policy and the local plan system are changing, there is no direct effect on the Joint Local Plan. The JLP qualifies as a transitional plan, so it is being examined against the 2023 NPPF. For the JLP, we do not need to immediately meet new national policies, adopt the new housing numbers, or switch to the new plan-making system. Those changes will apply to a subsequent local plan. Where these changes impact on development management decision making, officers will set out the relevant weight to be applied in their reports.

Our Planning team sent letters to the Town and Parish councils in December with a clarification and summary of the government's current proposals to reform the planning system. You can read the letters in full via these links [Vale](#) / [South](#).

**Town and Parish Councils have been sent invitations directly (to the clerk – on 12 January) to send two representatives to attend a Planning Training session – in South this will be at Cornerstone, Didcot on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 6-7.30pm.**

## **Disabled Facilities Grant**

Disabled or vulnerable residents can apply now for our Disabled Facilities Grant to make their homes safer and easier to live in. The grant provides up to £50,000 for essential adaptations such as ramps, stairlifts, level-access showers, heating or insulation improvements, and more.

You can read more in our latest press release: [South](#) / [Vale](#)

## **Coming soon: Community Infrastructure Levy Grant**

The second round of funding for the Community Infrastructure Levy Grant Fund will open to Town and Parish councils and not-for-profit community groups in South Oxfordshire early this year.

A total of £750,000 is being offered to support projects that improve or create new community amenities such as community centres, sports and cultural facilities, play areas, and open spaces.

Grants between £75,000 and £250,000 will be available for organisations to apply for to support projects in the district which are needed due to development in the area.

You can find out more in [our latest press release](#), please help us to spread the word to organisations that could benefit in your ward.

## **Thames Water funding for community flood prevention projects**

Thames Water is offering local organisations funds to install small scale SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) schemes e.g. planting, paving removal, water butts etc like the rain gardens we have installed at Portway car park in Wantage. The funding will prioritise areas that are known flooding hotspots - [see this map](#).

Applications are open until **31 March**. There is a webinar on applying in January. Interested parties should get in touch with [swmp.applications@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:swmp.applications@thameswater.co.uk). Please help us to spread the word.

## **Arts Centres in Southern Oxfordshire launch new websites**

Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot and The Beacon Arts, Entertainment and Community Centre in Wantage have launched new websites to make it easier for visitors to explore what's on offer.

As part of their ongoing Action Plans to ensure long-term sustainability, these updates are key steps in enhancing the venues' services and ensuring they continue to serve the local community for many years to come.

The new sites feature a clean, modern look that highlights the venues' events, activities, and services. They've been made easier to navigate, with simple access to information on events, exhibitions, classes, and venue hire.

Both websites work well on mobile phones, tablets, and desktops, and are linked to the Spektrix ticketing system, so visitors can easily browse and book events.

The new sites also focus on accessibility, making sure they are easy to use for everyone. They include better search engine optimisation and tools to help the venues understand their audience and improve their online services.

While both websites share a similar layout for a smooth experience, each has its own design to reflect the unique feel of Cornerstone and The Beacon.

For more information, including details of the new spring season's shows and classes, please visit their new websites:

- [Cornerstone Arts Centre](#)

- [The Beacon](#)

## **Councils secure a high-quality and sustainable future for leisure facilities in uncertain time**

Local residents can look forward to high-quality, sustainable leisure services for at least the next three years after their councils struck a deal for a contract extension.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have secured the future of the districts' leisure services by extending their leisure contract for a further three years, unlocking savings, and securing fresh investment in facilities until 31 August 2029.

With the government planning to reorganise councils in Oxfordshire in the coming years, a short-term contract extension - rather than a new long-term deal - provides the greatest flexibility for the new unitary council that will be replacing the two districts in the next few years, whichever form it takes.

The councils current long term leisure services contract was nearing its end in August 2026. Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), who operate under the brand 'Better', has successfully delivered leisure services on behalf of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, since the award of a joint leisure operating contract in 2014 (and separately for both councils for several years before that). This covers leisure facilities - with seven in South Oxfordshire and four in Vale of White Horse, (including outdoor pools in both areas). Changes within the new three-year extension contract offer significant financial benefits for both councils, generating cost savings without any compromise on service. There is further significant investment earmarked for facilities across both districts.

Both councils have invested significantly in sports and leisure facilities over the last few years, with further investment planned over the coming year. Investments will focus on quality, accessibility and sustainability.

Multi-million-pound major energy-saving decarbonisation projects across several sites, coming to fruition in 2025/2026 – such as installation of insulation, new windows, solar panels, air source heat pumps and external wall insulation - aims to reduce the councils' overall carbon emissions by more than 25 per cent.

The councils have also recently adopted Playing Pitch and Leisure Facility Strategies, which provide a road map for the future aspirations of leisure and sports provision.

## **2026 Council Calendars**

Our Diversity and Social Campaign calendars for 2026 are now live on our websites [South](#) / [Vale](#).

The dates in these calendars have been approved by Cabinet and Leaders and are important for us as they reflect our council priorities and the key messages we want to communicate with residents and businesses, including those championing diversity and inclusion. Please help us to share these messages throughout the year.

## **Reservoir FAQ**

We've created a useful FAQ for Thames Water's proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option

(SESRO) as we know this is an important topic for both council members and our residents.

You can access the FAQ document [via this link](#) (please note this document will download to your computer when clicked).

## Laptop donation to Aspire and SOFEA

The councils donated the older laptops which still work but are no longer usable for South and Vale to SOFEA and Aspire for their 'getting people online' programme and supporting local people. They hope to get many out in time for Christmas. This included:

- 276 devices in total
- 154 laptops
- 89 Surface pros
- 33 desktops

You can also donate your unwanted laptops to help - [Put your old laptops to good use!](#)

## River charity appeals for volunteers

Thames21 is looking for volunteers to monitor river pollution between Wallingford and Caversham. They need people to commit to 30 minutes a month for a year as a Thames Water Watcher. Training will be provided on **17 January 2026, 11am - 1pm, Goring Village Hall**. Booking is essential for the training session. Details on the [Thames21 website](#) or email [claire.robertson@thames21.org.uk](mailto:claire.robertson@thames21.org.uk) This event is run by **Thames21** for the **South Chilterns Catchment Partnership**, funded by **Mend the Gap**.

## New Leader at South Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers is the new Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council. She was chosen by councillors during a vote at the [Council meeting Thursday 11 December 2025](#).

Her election as Leader comes after Cllr David Rouane chose to stand down having led the council for four years - and having served as the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment for two and a half years before that. He will remain in his role as councillor.

Cllr Filipova-Rivers, who is ward member for Goring, has served since 2019, as Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities at South Oxfordshire District Council, and since May 2025, as a county councillor in Oxfordshire. Her work spans affordable housing, homelessness prevention, public health, and community resilience, including playing a key role in the Covid response. She also served as Vice Chair of the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board.

Maggie is a public policy and economic development professional with extensive experience in green growth, refugee integration, and multi-sector partnership work. She holds an MSc in the Political Economy of Development and a BA in Financial and Business Economics. Her professional experience includes work with the World Bank's Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation Global Practice, where she contributed to major investment programmes decarbonisation and economic inclusion. Alongside this, she advises more than 180 councils across the UK on refugee integration strategy through City of Sanctuary UK, helping local authorities strengthen access to a broad range of services and develop more inclusive communities.

Cllr Filipova-Rivers' was elected unopposed and by a unanimous decision.

Cllr Filipova-Rivers' new role as Leader means there are some changes in the Council's cabinet. They are as

follows:

- [Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers](#) – Leader, plus Legal and Democratic Services.
- [Councillor Tony Worgan](#) – Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for plus Housing and Planning Development Management.
- [Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker](#) – Cabinet Member for Finance and Property Assets.
- [Councillor Mike Giles](#): Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Policy and Climate Action.
- [Councillor Georgina Heritage](#) – Cabinet Member for Communities (Including Community Hub).
- [Cllr Sue Cooper](#) – Cabinet Member for Environment.
- [Councillor Leigh Rawlins](#) – Cabinet Member for Economic Development.
- [Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson](#) – Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, including Garden Communities.

At the same meeting, and at Vale of White Horse Council meeting on Wednesday 10 December, Adrianna Partridge was confirmed as the councils’ new, shared Chief Executive. Adrianna will formally take up the post on 1 January 2026.

## 7. OCC Report



<b>Title</b>	County Councillor’s Report
<b>Author</b>	Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith
<b>Parishes</b>	Aston Tirrold/Upthorpe, Cholsey, East Hagbourne, Little Wittenham, Long Wittenham, Moulsoford, North Moreton, South Moreton, West Hagbourne
<b>Date</b>	December 2025 / January 2026
<b>Contact Details</b>	<a href="mailto:johnny.hope-smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk">johnny.hope-smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>

Dear Parish Councillors and Residents,

Here are some updates and news I have gathered for you. Please provide any feedback, if its too much or not enough and of course any more information on a specific topic I can help with. I have put in **BOLD** the items which I think may be specifically appropriate for the Parishes to consider advertising or acting upon

Best wishes,  
Johnny

## Consultation – Improving Oxfordshire’s Fire and Rescue Service

Oxfordshire County Council is consulting on proposals to improve how the Fire and Rescue Service responds to emergencies and delivers community safety. The aim is to ensure:

- More fire engines available during peak risk times
- Faster response to incidents across Oxfordshire
- Better alignment of resources to areas of greatest need
- Futureproofing the service for growth and sustainability

Why change?

- Currently, fewer firefighters are on duty during the day, when emergencies are most frequent, and more at night, when incidents are less common.
- This imbalance can lead to slower daytime response times and costly overtime.
- Changes projected to deliver £189k–£310k annual efficiencies by reducing overtime and fleet costs and allow reinvestment into prevention work and modern facilities
- Proposals are based on independent modelling and include reshaping prevention and protection work.

More locally, Impact on Rural Villages like ours (e.g., Cholsey, Wittenhams, Moretons, Hagbournes): positives.

- Faster daytime response: The main proposal forecasts 1 min 46 sec quicker arrival for the first fire engine during the day.
- More prevention work: Extra daytime capacity means more home safety visits and community risk reduction activities in rural areas.
- No change to the Didcot day crew and key hub station

More locally, negatives;

- Wallingford Fire Station Changes
  - If moved to Crowmarsh, this is positive for modern facilities, but it means construction disruption and possible longer travel for some staff.
  - On-call firefighters who mainly work during the day may face redundancy risk.
- While daytime response improves, night-time response remains vulnerable due to low on-call availability.
- Staff Morale and Recruitment - Changes to crewing models and relocation may affect morale and retention, especially for on-call firefighters in South Oxfordshire.

Key dates

- Consultation Closes: 20 January 2026
- Decision: Spring 2026 after Cabinet review

**What parishes can do**

- **Encourage residents to read the consultation document and take the survey:**
- **Take part here <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrs-consultation>**
- **Offer feedback on local priorities (e.g., rural coverage, prevention work)**

## **Your residents will need to book a visit to a household waste recycling centre from January**

Oxfordshire County Council has agreed changes to how the county's seven HWRCs will operate, following a public consultation with over 5,800 responses

Why the changes?

It is designed to improve recycling rates and traffic flow and ensure fairer costs for Oxfordshire taxpayers.

Key Details

- Booking system starts: 14 January 2026
- Residents to book up to two weeks in advance or 30 minutes before visiting.
- Customers must separate recyclable material from mixed waste before visiting.
- £15 charge for non-Oxfordshire residents per visit.

- Van/trailer permits reduced to 10 per year.

## What Parishes Can Do

- **Share the booking system start date (14 January 2026) with residents.**  
**<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/household-waste-recycling-centres/book-recycling-centre-visit>**
- **Encourage sorting waste before visiting to comply with new rules.**
- **Inform residents about permit changes and charges for non-Oxfordshire users.**

## EV Charging for Homes Without Driveways – Gul-e Rollout

Oxfordshire County Council has appointed ODS to deliver up to 500 cross-pavement EV charging cable channels across the county, using the innovative Gul-e system. This is part of the UK's largest programme of its kind and a wider £4.3 million government-backed project to expand EV infrastructure. Around one-third of Oxfordshire households lack off-street parking — this scheme makes EV ownership more practical and affordable. This supports Oxfordshire's net zero goals and complements plans for 1,200 public EV chargers by 2027.

### Key Details

- Gul-e units allow safe, trip-free charging from home electricity to vehicles parked at the kerbside.
- Applications are still open via the council's website; each site will be assessed for safety and suitability.
- Successful applicants will benefit from significantly reduced installation costs thanks to a £700,000 government grant.
- Residents must install a compliant home EV charger once the Gul-e channel is fitted.
- ODS will maintain and inspect installations twice yearly.

## What Parishes Can Do

- **Promote the application opportunity to residents without driveways. apply here**  
**<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/firm-chosen-to-install-electric-vehicle-charging-cable-channels-for-homes-without-driveways/>**
- **Encourage residents to check eligibility and safety criteria before applying.**

## INFO - Nearly 70,000 Gullies Cleaned Since April

Oxfordshire County Council is on track to clean every highway drainage gully in the county by March 2026, as part of a £2.6 million programme to improve drainage and reduce flooding risk.

### Key Details

- Target: Clean 145,000 gullies and manholes in 12 months.
- Progress: 67,000 gullies cleaned by end of October; 17,000 in October alone.
- Investment: £1.5m additional funding approved in the 2025–26 budget.
- Delivery: Crews doubled from 6 to 12, working day and evening shifts for efficiency.

### Benefits:

- Reduces surface water and flood risk.
- Protects roads by preventing potholes caused by standing water and freezing.
- Technology: Tankers use asset management software to log cleans and schedule revisits.

## What Parishes Can Do

- **Report blocked drains via Fix My Street:** <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/nearly-70000-drainage-gullies-cleaned-since-april/>

## **INFO - New Management Plan for North Wessex Downs National Landscape**

I was this year appointed by Oxfordshire County Council to represent the authority on the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NWDNL) partnership and am pleased to say that the NWDNL has launched a new five-year Management Plan, setting ambitious targets for nature recovery and stronger protections for this nationally important area.

### **Key Details**

- Covers 668 sq miles across Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, and Wiltshire.
- First plan since the law changed in 2023 to require authorities to “seek to further” the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.
- Nature targets:
  - Increase wildlife-rich habitat, tree canopy, and woodland by 3,400 hectares by 2030.
  - Contributes to national goal of protecting 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030.

### **What Parishes Can Do**

- **Share the plan link:** <https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/>
- **Encourage local involvement in nature recovery projects and volunteer opportunities.**
- **Consider parish-level actions that align with the plan’s priorities (tree planting, habitat creation, supporting biodiversity).**
- **Highlight the strengthened legal duty for councils and parishes to further the conservation and enhancement of the landscape**

## **INFO - SEND Service update**

A recent monitoring inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has confirmed that Oxfordshire’s local area partnership has taken effective action to improve services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) following the 2023 inspection.

### **Key Improvements**

- All five priority areas addressed, including governance, communication, and family involvement.
- Better EHCP timeliness and quality, with faster decisions and improved waiting times.
- Enhanced partnership working between education, health, and social care.
- More opportunities for families and young people to contribute, including SEND Youth Forum and SEND Together events.
- Successful pilots in areas like speech and language screening.

## **INFO - Oxfordshire’s Gritters Get New Names (Full List at the End!)**

Oxfordshire County Council has named its fleet of 30 gritting lorries after famous local figures, landmarks, and cultural icons following a public competition that attracted nearly 1,500 suggestions.

### **Key Details**

- Names include Sir Winston Chur-chill, Agatha Gritstie, Alfred the Grit, Inspector Norse, Radiospread, Prof Stephen Thawking, and Sir Roger Ban-ice-ster.
- Local landmarks feature too including local Grittenham Clumps.
- Pupils from schools near gritter depots helped choose names and will meet their gritters later this winter.
- The fleet treats 42% of Oxfordshire's road network, covering 27 routes and over 1,960km each time temperatures drop below freezing.

Salt barns in Woodcote, Deddington, and Drayton store 10,000 tonnes of salt for winter operations.

## What Parishes Can Do

- **Share the gritter tracker link so residents can follow gritting activity:**  
<https://dataroute.exactrak.co.uk/whereismygritter/org/milestoneoxfordshire/>
- **Remind drivers to take care when following gritters (speed limited to 30mph) and never assume roads are ice-free.**
- **Promote winter readiness tips for safe driving in cold conditions.**

## REMINDER: Councillor Priority Fund – Supporting Local Projects

The Councillor Priority Fund has reopened, offering each Oxfordshire County Councillor £10,000 to support community projects within their division. This funding is designed to help deliver local priorities and strengthen community initiatives.

Parish councils, community groups, and local organisations are encouraged to apply for funding to support projects that benefit residents. Examples might include:

- Improvements to community facilities
- Local environmental initiatives
- Activities that promote wellbeing or inclusion
- Smaller-scale projects are especially encouraged, as the fund is modest and intended to support a wide range of communities across Oxfordshire

## Key details:

- Applications must be submitted by 30 November **2026**
- Grants are typically paid within 28 days of approval
- Applicants must register for an account to apply and track progress
- Monitoring and reporting are required for successful projects

To ensure your project meets the funding criteria, please read the guidance document before applying.

## What parishes can do:

- **Identify local projects that could benefit from modest funding**
- **Collaborate with community groups to develop proposals**
- **Submit applications early to allow time for review and payment**

Keep records and be prepared to report on outcomes

For more information or to apply, visit the Councillor Priority Fund page.

<https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund>

## Appendix One – The Full Gritter Names.. Any favourites?

- Bossy
- Monster Rich

- Snow-bi Wan Kenobi
- Robin the Great
- Duck, Duck, Grit
- Draytonator!
- Did You Just In-Salt Me?
- Great Gritain
- Hansel and Gritel
- Gritasaurus
- Ready, Spready, Go
- Elvis Spreadley
- Inspector Norse
- Agatha Gritstie
- Snowy Beauchamp
- Gritty Gritty Bang Bang
- Sir Winston Chur-chill
- Shotover Chill
- Snowdo Baggins
- Radiospread
- Professor Stephen Thawking
- Claudia Sprinkleman
- Blenheim Pal-ice
- Sir Roger Ban-ice-ster
- Grittenham Clumps
- Grittmeister 5000
- Alfred the Grit
- Spready Mercury
- John Thaw
- Blizzard of Ozz

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