

Minutes of North Moreton Parish Council Meeting held North Moreton Village Hall on Tuesday 8 July 2025

Present: Cllr. V. Gibbs (Chair), Cllr. Kathy Howat, Cllr. S.C. Harrison, Cllr. C. Topping, Mr. A. Wise (Clerk) and 8 members of the public

	VG opened the meeting at 7:30 pm	
25/3343 Apologies	Cllr. C.I. Shipton (Vice-Chair), Cllr. D. Tebworth Cllr. AM. Simpson and County Cllr. Johnny Hope-Smith	
25/3344 Report on OCC and SODC activities	SODC Report – See attachment 6 OCC Report – See attachment 7	
25/3345 Hear representations from members of the public	- Four members of the public spoke about the current use of the North Moreton farm air strip. Then the chair explained that although this was the one part of the meeting for members of the public to raise issues and ask questions, the parish council is the wrong public body to make a judgement on whether the terms of the lawful use certificate had been breached or not, and whether the airstrip is being used safely. The correct public bodies are SODC and CAA. Can all residents of North Moreton please continue to raise any concerns or objections to the CAA, whose email can easily be accessed or to SODC. The Parish Council has no legal rights or enough knowledge to make judgements - Clerk was asked to write to grass cutting contractor (Jonny Yaxley) to ask him to cut closer to the Rushcroft trees that had been previously done this summer. - Chair to write a piece for the next edition of North Moreton news inviting residents to apply for some travel funding if giving anyone a lift to doctors or hospital appointments etc - Chair to also write a piece for the newsletter reminding residents that if they post something on the village email, they include their contact details for people to come back directly to them rather than through the Parish Council.	Clerk VG VG
25/3346 Approve the minutes of the meeting of 20.05.2025	It was proposed by VG, seconded by SH, that the minutes be signed as a true record. Carried nem con.	
25/3347 Consider matters, not taken elsewhere, arising from the minutes of the meeting of 20.05.2025	All action items have been completed.	
25/3348 Receive reports from Parish Councillors and the Clerk	None	
25/3349 Financial matters	Approval of payments. It was proposed VG, seconded SH, and carried that the following invoices be paid: Parish Clerk's Salary, Expenses, PAYE, Pressure Washing, Fence Repairs, Heavy Duty Padlock and 5 annual donations to village organisations - attachments 2 & 3.	

25/3350 Planning since meeting of 20.05.2025	AW presented the current planning application situation – attachment 4	
25/3351 Highways, Transport and Footpaths	Footpath Update Bob Price reported that he has asked county officials to send an inspector to view the large tree currently overhanging on the footpath in Bear Lane. The potentially dangerous state of the footpath behind the village hall has been remedied thanks to Jo Nickless following it up. Bus No bus update as there was nothing to report from the most recent PTR Meeting due to rep being unable to attend meeting. Minutes have been requested and any relevant information will be reported to Councillors.	
25/3352 Recreation and Playground matters	CIS to add the trees currently growing by the new Rec Ground gate to the list agreed with the tree expert who recently examined the trees on the rec to enable better entry and exiting of the car park.	CIS
25/3353 Risk assessment	VG signed off appropriate parts of the current Risk Assessment Checklist. - attachment 5	
25/3354 Respond to Communications as the Chairman may direct	Clerk reported that x 2 5 drawer filing cabinets for use by the PC and the PCC (church) had arrived and thanks to Jo Nickless they were now in place in storage room No.5. Chair and Clerk now have a key each for the Parish Councils filing cabinet. All parish council records are now stored there apart from the large copy of the Enclosure Award that remains with the chair. The other cabinet has been formally handed over to the PCC.	
25/3355 Attend to any other business at the Chairman's discretion	- Chair to write to Councillors Anne Marie Simpson and Crispin Topping to formally request a grant of £5k from their councillor's grants. This is intended to pay for an extension to existing car park on the Rec Ground by purchasing more Mud Control tiles. She will also approach other local bodies who might be able to top up funding. - The cricket club lease has been sent to the Cricket Club for consideration before signing	
25/3356 Date of Next Meeting	7:30pm Tuesday 16th September 2025 in North Moreton Village Hall.	
Closure	VG declared the meeting closed at 8:40pm	

Signed:

Date:

Attachments:

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

Title	District Councillors' Report
Councillors	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson & Cllr Crispin Topping
Parish	North Moreton Parish Council 8 July 2025

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

Joint Local Plan examination hearings update

The first stage of our Joint Local Plan 2041 examination hearings took place in Milton Park at the beginning of the month. Over three days of public hearings, the inspectors looked at topics such as legal requirements, duty to cooperate, housing requirement, and employment land requirement.

You can review all the sessions via our [YouTube channel](#), including watching Head of Policy and Programmes Tim Oruye's [opening statement](#) on behalf of the councils.

For an overview of the topics discussed, as well as next steps, please read this [summary document](#).

Local Government Reorganisation

Two councils Proposal

Our public engagement exercise on Local Government Reorganisation launched on Wednesday 4 June and will run for six weeks **until 16 July**. You can **find out more** and [take part in the online survey here](#).

This will inform our proposal for a new model for local government in our area that we are seeking to submit to the government in the autumn.

We are working closely with our counterparts in West Berkshire Council, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Councils on both the proposal and the engagement, providing a unified and robust solution to the government's plans to end Oxfordshire's two-tier council structure in a way that best serves our communities.

Our proposal seeks to create two brand new unitary councils that cover the following areas:

- **Oxford City, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Council** (created from the existing district councils of Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire)
- **Ridgeway Council** (created from the existing district councils of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse and the unitary council of West Berkshire).

Our public engagement exercise on Local Government Reorganisation is progressing well with our last public event having taken place on 4 July. Further information about our two unitary councils' proposal is available at <https://twocouncils.org>. Our survey runs until 16 July (see above for link).

Three Councils proposal

Oxford City Council launched its public engagement this week for its alternative proposal, which is to create a [Greater Oxford Council](#). The city's online survey can be found on [Oxford City Council's engagement portal](#).

The city council is going to be holding public drop-in events in our area:

- The Merry Bells in Wheatley between 10am and 1pm on 11 July
- The Berin Centre in Berinsfield between 10am and 1pm on 16 July
- Berro Lounge in Didcot between 4pm and 7pm on 29 July

One Council proposal

Oxfordshire County Council has also launched a public engagement survey for its proposal for a single unitary council that covers the whole of Oxfordshire. You can [read more about it and take part on the county's Let's Talk website](#).

Changes to government neighbourhood planning support

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has recently announced that it will no longer fund national neighbourhood planning support services beyond 2025. This includes both the grant funding and technical advice that community groups previously accessed through Locality.

Despite this change, the Government has reaffirmed its view that neighbourhood plans remain an important part of the planning system, and that communities can continue to prepare them where they see value in doing so.

We recognise this change may raise questions, and we want to reassure communities in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse about what it means in practice and how we will continue to support them through the neighbourhood planning process.

We have also provided general information on the councils' websites: [South](#) / [Vale](#) and please do reach out to if you have any questions regarding these changes

Environment fund helps nature recovery work in Thame

Last week saw the [official opening of the Rycote Meadow footpath](#) in Thame.

It is part of the nature recovery work at the meadow and nature reserve, which has been part funded by South's environment fund managed by environmental charity, the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment.

[More information on the fund available here](#)

South and Vale in top ten district councils in UK for action on climate and nature

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils are in the top ten performing district councils in the country for taking action on climate and nature recovery, according to research by an environmental organisation.

Both councils, which have just published their new joint nature and climate action plan, were rated in the top ten of the Climate Emergency UK's (CEUK) 2025 [climate action scorecard](#), a league table of the country's councils published earlier this month.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse scored highly for 'planning and land use'. In this section CEUK's research focussed on how councils are using their planning powers, primarily through their local plans, (the emerging [Joint Local Plan](#) is currently at examination stage), to

ensure low emission new buildings, homes and developments are built to minimise their impact on the environment.

The councils also did well in the scoring for the 'biodiversity' section which examines actions by local authorities to protect and increase biodiversity in the area through their management of its green spaces and biodiversity net gain requirements for developers. Biodiversity Net Gain requires developers to include wildlife enhancements as part of their plans.

Councillor Sam James-Lawrie, South Oxfordshire District Council cabinet member for environment, said: "This is very positive news for the council, its staff and its residents. The councils have developed forward-looking planning policies on climate change in the emerging joint local plan to help minimise the climate impact of the built environment in our districts. This includes a policy that will require truly net zero carbon buildings to be delivered in the districts."

Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne, Vale of White Horse District Council cabinet member for climate action and nature recovery, said: "We welcome this news which highlights the work being done by staff, particularly on the management of our green spaces. For the past three years the grounds maintenance team has been encouraging biodiversity on council land and now has dozens of meadow areas in the districts which are left unmown. This is in addition to wildflower meadow area sites which are actively sown with wildflower seeds to encourage pollinators such as bees."

Both councils are committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, significantly ahead of the national 2050 target.

Capital grant scheme now open

To support community projects that help improve the quality of life for local people, Our Capital Grant Scheme opened on 2 June for applications of up to £75,000.

The grant gives organisations a financial boost towards capital expenditure such as making improvements to buildings or play areas.

Applicants must show how their projects will help improve the quality of life for people in South Oxfordshire through projects that; support thriving, healthy and inclusive communities, provide infrastructure that meets local need, that take action on climate change and nature recovery, and improve participation, accessibility and accountability.

Organisations eligible to apply are:

- Town and parish councils
- Non-profit businesses and Community Interest Companies
- Community-based organisations

The Capital Grant Scheme is open for applications until **25 July**. Applicants can apply online through our website, southoxon.gov.uk/grants where the full guidance is available to help submit the best possible application. Thank you for sharing our social media messages on the grant.

Performing Arts grant scheme opening soon

A new round of the £60,000 Performing Arts grant scheme will open for applications on 28 July. The scheme supports voluntary and community performing arts organisations in South Oxfordshire, who will be able to apply for up to £5,000 in funding for projects that improve community wellbeing across the district.

We are holding a funding advice event at Cornerstone Arts Centre from **4pm – 6pm on Wednesday 9 July**. There are limited spaces available, and places must be booked in advance – [please register here](#).

More information can be found on our website southoxon.gov.uk/grants - please help us spread the word!

Bring the family together at Cornerstone

This coming autumn season, Cornerstone Arts Centre invites families to enjoy a wonderful line-up of heartwarming shows, with tickets on sale from Friday 4 July.

Family shows start with [Spot's Birthday Party](#). An interactive adventure based on the beloved Eric Hill classic, where little ones can meet Spot himself!

Fans of picture books won't want to miss [Nick Sharratt's Picture Book Drawalong](#), a lively, hands-on session led by the much-loved illustrator.

And for a touch of festive magic, [Let's All Dance's The Nutcracker](#) brings the classic ballet to life in a beautiful production made especially for young audiences.

There's even more to come! Keep an eye out for cosy half-term activities and the return of a sparkling seasonal favourite... this year's panto promises plenty of magic and mayhem.

Explore the full line-up on the [Cornerstone website](#).

Culture and Heritage Network Event brings local groups together

A brand new event has been launched to help local arts, culture and heritage to thrive, linking the groups and organisations who need support with those that have the ability to provide it.

The inaugural Heritage Network event successfully took place on 25 June at the Abbey Buildings in Abingdon. Around 30 representatives from local museums, cultural organisations, and heritage sites across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse attended. The ambition is for this to become a regular event.

This event organised by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils brings together people and organisations involved in local heritage and culture. The event offered a chance to hear from key organisations like The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Oxfordshire County Council, Museums Development Trust and Arts Council England about funding and future plans across the districts.

To further support culture and heritage, the pathway to a new Culture, Heritage and Creative Industries (CHCI) Strategy has recently been approved by both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and is set to be launched in Summer 2026. This strategy will serve as a long-term plan to strengthen and grow arts, culture and heritage across both districts.

an opportunity for the sector and council representatives to make new connections helping the heritage community find access to the support they need in both districts. Attendees at the first event have already found out about funding that's available to them that they wouldn't have previously known about.

Demolition work starts for Broadway project

Demolition of an old building in preparation for a new housing scheme in Didcot has begun. The old building between 116 and 120 Broadway is being demolished and replaced by nine new one and two-bedroom apartments and a new ground floor space that will be subject to a council decision to award the main contract later this year.

The properties will provide much-needed affordable homes that the council will own and manage and offer at affordable rent, as part of the council's commitment to providing homes and infrastructure that meet local needs.

At the heart of Didcot's community, the new building will revitalise the area while being built to high environmental standards, including sustainable construction and zero-carbon houses fit for the future.

Given its proximity to the town centre, the apartments will be car-free with spaces for bicycles to encourage active travel which is good for both physical and mental wellbeing.

Planning permission was granted for the Broadway scheme on Monday 12 May 2025. The demolition work started on Monday 23 June 2025 with the programme taking around eight weeks to complete.

Contractors will look to keep noise, dust, and disruption to a minimum during the demolition.

Leisure Centres in Berinsfield and Henley to benefit from new clean green energy

Multi-million-pound plans have been approved to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions at two South Oxfordshire leisure centres in Berinsfield and Henley.

South Oxfordshire District Council has been successful in its bid for government funding of around £1.5m towards installing energy efficiency measures including double glazing and insulation, as well as solar panels and air source heat pumps to replace end-of-life gas boilers at the leisure centres.

The owners of the buildings, Oxfordshire County Council, will put in £2m towards the improvements, while the district council will fund a further £2.8m from developer contributions. All work should be finished by the end of March 2028.

Abbey Sports Centre in Berinsfield was built in 1959 as a school, before being converted to a leisure centre in the 1980s. Because of the age of the building, the roof insulation is well below current standards and the centre will benefit from extensive roof renovation to minimise heat loss.

Plans also include replacing gas heating with air source heat pumps, adding double glazing, insulating the squash court walls and installing solar panels on the roof. It is projected that the new measures will mean a 75 per cent saving in energy kWh (gas and electricity).

Built in the 1970s, Henley Leisure Centre has some elderly heating plant – two of the boilers set to be replaced are estimated to be between 22 and 25 years old. Even though the centre is shaded

by trees it will still benefit from solar panels. In addition, the council will install air source heat pumps and roof insulation. It is projected that these three measures will bring a 59 per cent per cent saving in energy kWh (gas and electricity).

The funding for the decarbonisation work has been provided from Phase 4 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme which is delivered by Salix Finance on behalf of the government. The scheme is run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. It is aimed at tackling emissions from heating public sector buildings, aid a green recovery and support the UK’s 2050 net zero target and clean growth goals.

£1.2 million boost for local infrastructure

Over the last six months, we have invested over £1.2 million in vital infrastructure delivered by the council, town and parish councils and other community organisations.

Investments have ranged from public art and flood defences to bus service improvements.

As the local planning authority, we collect financial contributions in the form of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) – this is the funding from housing developers to support the growth of the district when new developments are created.

S106 funding approved towards community projects between 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025 has totalled £251,580. During this six-month period we have also transferred £960,503 of CIL to town and parish councils that have experienced CIL liable development in their area.

Find out more about [CIL here](#) and [S106 here](#). If you have any questions please email infrastructureclaims@southandvale.gov.uk

7. OCC Report

Title	County Councillor’s Report
Author	Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith
Parishes	Cholsey, East Hagbourne, Little Wittenham, Long Wittenham, Moulsoford, North Moreton, South Moreton, West Hagbourne
Date	June/July 2025
Contact Details	johnny.hope-smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Dear Parish Councillors and Residents,

I am honoured to have been elected as County Councillor for the Cholsey and Hagbournes 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 collaborating with residents, parish councils, and local organisations to bring about positive change and ensure your voices are heard at Oxfordshire County Council.

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

Best wishes,

Johnny



1. Local Government Reorganization

The County Council has submitted a bid for a single Oxfordshire-wide unitary authority which contrasts with the view of SODC which is working on a proposal for a 'Ridgway Council' comprising South Oxon, Vale of Whitehorse and West Berkshire. Both those proposals are in line with government's white paper on viable options so it will be up to the Secretary of State (Jim McMahon) to choose.

There are pros and cons to each of those, and I support the inclusion of both bids.

There is a 3rd option with a unitary city on expanded boundaries as well as northern and southern unitaries, also including West Berkshire.

For this month Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is initiating resident engagement on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) starting June 2025. This is to raise awareness based on the Government's White Paper. Residents will be directed to OCC FAQs and dedicated website for more information.

Further detailed discussions will take place between the councils so that final proposals can be submitted by 28 November 2025. The government will then decide what form of unitarisation will take place in Oxfordshire.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/local-government-reorganisation-and-devolution>

2. Green Accolades and Recycling

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has been recognized as the top-performing county council in the UK for tackling climate change for the second consecutive year. This achievement is based on Climate Emergency UK's (CEUK) 2025 climate action scorecard.

The council's response includes initiatives in training, engagement, transport, waste management, the built environment, and nature recovery. OCC aims to be carbon neutral by 2030 and to help Oxfordshire achieve carbon neutrality in the 2040s.

Recent Projects: Installation of energy-efficient LED streetlighting, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 70% and saving £75m in energy costs over 20 years.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-tops-climate-table/>

<https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/scoring/county/>

3. 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 Late 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
https://oxfordshire.highway-iams.uk/Live/PBLC_ANON/PIP/?cg=scheme

4. 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](#)

5. 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.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/first-choice-primary-school-places-oxfordshire/>

6. 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 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authority-rights-of-way-improvement-plans>

This is the first consultation of two that are necessary to produce the third RoWIP for Oxfordshire. This is the **initial review stage** and the views of land managers, local councils and other stakeholders are being sought alongside members of the public, and, taken together, will help officers to write a meaningful and deliverable plan.

7. Oxford Congestion Charge Consultation

OCC approved a 6-week public consultation on a proposed £5 congestion charge for several roads in Oxford.

The consultation will begin on Monday, June 23.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/connecting-oxfordshire/temporary-congestion-charge>

This is in advance of the traffic filters which has been delayed due to the Botley road reopening delay to 2026

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/connecting-oxfordshire/oxford-traffic-filters/how-they-will-work>