

**MINUTES OF DUCKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2025
in the Lilac Room, Village Hall commencing at 7.30 pm**

143.25 Presentation by Fiona Brown (WODC) Communities Lead / Rural Housing Enabler

Unfortunately, Fiona had to give apologies earlier in the day. We hope to welcome Fiona at a later meeting.

144.25 Parish Councillors Present: David Duthie (Chairman)
Matthew Barker (Vice Chairman)
John Dunsdon
Jo George
Paul Lishman
Sarah Varnom

In Attendance: Cllr Thomas Ashby (OCC)
Graham Lenton

145.25 Parish Councillors' Apologies: Richard Border
John Smyth
Peter Almgill

146.25 Public Participation

Graham Lenton presented the reason for his recent request. (see min 152.25 e)).

147.25 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 5 November 2025:

Cllr Varnom proposed and Cllr George seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

148.25 County Council (OCC) / District Council (WODC) Matters:

Cllr Thomas Ashby (OCC) reported:

Proposed Closure to Three Oxfordshire Fire Stations

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue proposes station closures (Henley, Eynsham, Woodstock), staff/engine cuts, and reduced night-time cover, drawing strong opposition. Cllr Thomas Ashby, Shadow Cabinet for Community Wellbeing & Safety said, "It is fundamentally contradictory to cut fire infrastructure while planning for massive growth. Closing fire stations slows response times and removes essential local protection, effectively 'playing Russian roulette' with resident safety. The Council must recognise that expanding communities requires more infrastructure, including fire services, not less. I demand they urgently rethink these

proposed cuts." To respond to the consultation, please follow the link:

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrsconsultation>

My thoughts here:

<https://tashby971.wixsite.com/thomasashby/post/a-crisis-in-community-safety-why-we-must-reject-the-cuts-to-oxfordshire-fire-and-rescue-service>

Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres are Coming

Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet has voted to change how Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) operate. Key changes include:

- New Hours: Summer hours will be 9 am–5 pm, and winter hours will be 9 am–4 pm.
- Mandatory Booking: Residents will be required to book their visit in advance.
- Proof of Identity: Visitors must provide ID (like a driving licence) upon arrival. Failure to show ID will incur a £15 fee.

Further information can be found [here](#):

Local Government Review: Update

Three proposals have been submitted to the UK Government for local government review in Oxfordshire. Further information on all three proposals can be found here: [One Oxfordshire Oxford and Shires / Ridgeway 3Councils](#)

Apply for your Oxford Congestion Zone Permit

Remember, if you wish to travel into Oxford by car and are not exempt, please follow this link to apply for a permit: [Apply for Oxford Congestion Zone Permit](#)

Councillor Priority Fund is now Open

At the start of this new Municipal Year the Councillor Priority Fund is back allowing Councillors to grant local groups funding. £10,000 has been allocated to each councillor between May 2025- May 2027. To apply for Councillor Priority Funding, please follow the link below:

[Apply for Councillor Priority Funding](#)

Ducklington Parish Signage

As we haven't gotten very far regarding permission to install signage on the Highway, I have asked a question to the Leader of the County Council, in readiness for full council on 9th December: *"Ducklington Parish Council wishes to enhance the Parish's identity, which is larger than Ducklington Village, by installing clear boundary signs. Despite their efforts, they have not yet secured approval for this project. Will the Cabinet Member lend their support to the Parish Council and take action to ensure the installation of signage on their boundary, helping to clearly mark the Parish limits for residents and visitors? *This request is seeking permission, not the funding of the signs**"*

Witney Library

The library will be re-opening on Saturday 6th December at 09:00.

The Moors

Following on from discussions with Cllr Barker after last Parish Council, I received the following on The Moors Development: Oxfordshire County Council: The EA is the planning consultee for development proposed in Flood Zone 3 (fluvial flood risk) and has requested further updates to the FRA and flood modelling report due to deficiencies in that report. The EA has a national

flood risk modelling review team that is qualified to comment on hydraulic modelling reports. It is yet to be seen whether the updated report meets the requirements as set out by the EA. The LLFA does not comment on the fluvial flood risk to proposed development in Flood Zone 3 because the EA is the relevant consultee for this. The LLFA is the consultee for surface water drainage, and while we may comment on surface water flood risk, the overriding risk to this development is fluvial and any mapped flood risk for surface water is likely to be linked to the fluvial flood risk also. As the EA have requested the updates to the FRA and modelling report, we must rely on them to comment on whether the updated details meet their expectations, and whether they can remove their objection.

West Oxfordshire District Council: The latest update is that the Applicant has submitted flood modelling data to include the Windrush seeking to respond to the EA in their latest comments and continue their challenge of the flood risk categorisation of the site. As I understand it, they are seeking to argue that the Windrush has no connection with the application site and instead, it is the sole effect of the Colwell Brook that needs to be taken into account when considering flood risk. Essentially, they are trying to argue the flood risk has been overstated by the EA. I have reconsulted the EA, as well as WODC Drainage and the Parish Council, on the Applicant's latest submission and we are awaiting a response. Once we have this, my intention will be to bring it to the Committee with the recommendation clearly to be largely influenced by the EA's position. We will continue to oppose the development of The Moors.

West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2043

The key concerns surrounding the Preferred Spatial Options for the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, specifically focusing on growth in and around Witney, Ducklington, and Curbridge, primarily relate to infrastructure strain, disproportionate development, and environmental impact. Any new developments in Witney, Ducklington or Curbridge must come with the infrastructure that needs to be delivered. I believe the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan does not address the infrastructure needs that we need in and around Witney. Here are the main concerns focusing on the requested settlements:

1. Witney (Tier 1: Principal Town Focus) As a Principal Town and the primary focus for strategic-scale growth, the main negatives center on the impact of large new developments on existing capacity:

- Traffic Congestion and the A40: The sheer volume of new housing and employment sites proposed for Witney will significantly exacerbate existing road congestion, particularly on the A40 corridor, which is already cited as a "real pinch point."
- Overstretched Infrastructure and Services: Concerns are repeatedly raised that large-scale development will overwhelm existing healthcare, school capacity, and utilities. Without guaranteed delivery of new infrastructure before or concurrently with the housing, local services will degrade.
- Sewage Capacity: The Local Plan is required to address concerns that existing sewage treatment works are at or near capacity, and large new developments in Witney could lead to further issues with sewage overflow and environmental discharges.
- Delivery Risk: Stakeholders have specifically highlighted issues in Witney where promised infrastructure upgrades from previous plans have not materialised. This raises significant doubt that the supporting infrastructure for the new, strategic-scale sites will be delivered as planned.

2. Ducklington (Tier 3: Large Village) Ducklington is classified as a Large Village and is a candidate for new development, including a potential site South of Ducklington (Area Q). The negatives are about scale and sustainability:

- Disproportionate Growth: There is strong opposition to placing significant new housing, particularly medium-scale sites (11–50 units), in Tier 3 villages like Ducklington. These villages lack the necessary services and robust infrastructure to absorb such growth without fundamentally altering their character.
- Loss of Village Identity: Development, especially on the edge of the village (e.g., Area Q), risks reducing the physical gap between Ducklington and the expanding Principal Town of Witney, threatening its distinct identity and sense of community.
- Infrastructure Deficiencies: Ducklington's local infrastructure (roads, village parking, and utilities) is less equipped to

handle even medium-scale growth than a larger town. This forces new residents to rely on a car to access services in Witney, undermining the plan's goal of achieving sustainable transport.

3. Curbridge (Likely Tier 4 or 5: Small Village/Hamlet) As a smaller settlement, Curbridge is unlikely to be a focus for major allocations but would be negatively affected by proximity to Witney's growth and limitations on its own development:

- Increased Car Dependency: Since smaller villages are anticipated to accommodate only small-scale growth, new residents of Curbridge would likely be more reliant on private vehicles for commuting and accessing key services (shops, schools, healthcare) in Witney.
- Impact from Witney Expansion: Development to the west and southwest of Witney could reduce the physical separation between Curbridge and the town, impacting the rural approach and open landscape.
- Lack of Local Services: The primary negative for smaller settlements is the lack of existing services and facilities. Any pressure to expand beyond small-scale infill would be deemed unsustainable as it does not meet the plan's objectives of delivering growth where people can access day-to-day needs locally.

Councillors agreed to add Fire Station Closures to January 26 Agenda. General felt that a response is needed regards the Proposed Closures.

Cllr Adrian Walsh (WODC) is currently away.

149.25 Parish Councillors - Disclosure of interests on agenda items

Nil recorded for this Meeting.

150.25 PLANNING

a) Application No: **25/02878/RES** - Land East of Witney Rd, Ducklington (the Moors) - Reserved Matters Application for Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale together with associated works for 105 dwellings.

Applicant: Mr John Brooks

Town and Country Planning Act

Applicant Response to Environment Agency Comments / EA Consultation - Modelling Response

Councillors discussed and agreed due to the Technical details GWP should be asked to comment and advise. PL has researched and advised that GWP would be looking at circa £500.00 for initial review and circa £2,000.00 for full report.

PL proposed we asked for the initial review. MB seconded. **UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED** to ask

GWP to undertake Initial Review at circa £500.00

Clerk to be asked for return date to WODC and possible Extension for date for Comments.

b) Application No: **25/00423/OUT** - Land to the South of Standlake Rd. Ducklington - Outline planning application for up to 36 dwellings with creation of new vehicular access off

Standlake Road and provision of public open space with associated infrastructure and earthworks. All matters reserved except access (Amended Description)

Applicant: Jenny Hutchings

Town and Country Planning Act

PL to talk to Turley to understand outstanding concerns

c) West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 - Preferred Spatial Options Consultation. PL

to update Response. - Circulating Draft before sending it back to WODC.

d) Neighbourhood Plan

Deferred to the next meeting.

151.25 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

a) Hotel

Nothing further to report.

b) Village Hall

Cllr Varnom advised that an AI App has been used for aiding taking Minutes. A new Village Hall Website will be live soon.

Cllr George reported that energy saving works have started to be implemented

DD noted that he will send a Planning Application to WODC for the proposed window replacement works.

c) CCTV Camera Log

Reported there had been no incidents on the CCTV log this month. Broadsword has done the Annual Inspection.

d) Village Newsletter

The Clerk reminded councillors that the deadline for articles to be published in the February / March Village Newsletter (Issue 236) is 16 January 2026.

Articles should be submitted to Emma Buckard: newsletter@ducklingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Action : DD to prepare Profile for next Newsletter.

All expressed their gratitude for the Excellent recent issue.

Emma to be asked to note that the Newsletter can be accessed "On line"

All enjoyed the element of colour on the printed issue. (Online all colour can be viewed)
Questions have been raised about the possibility of getting a cheaper source to enable colour to be used in a wider way. PL will ask Emma to get a sample. Agreed Emma to have a Budget of £100.00 to provide a sample.

The councillors voted unanimously for Cllr George to be able to post on the Ducklington community face book page as the DPC concerning the recent newsletter and online access via the dpc website

e) Projects Committee

Cllr George updated members on progress of ongoing projects for the Art Trail. Planters are in position at the Village Entrances, Natasha Housego has completed at Bartholomew Close. Sensory Garden Hard landscaping is complete. Chris Townsend has advised he should complete the 2 Sculptures by the end of January 2026.

Cllr George advises that Natasha Housego can provide a yearly maintenance provision on the Sculpture. JG to research cost of Annual Maintenance from Natasha Housego. (Post Meeting Note; Cllr George advises that this will be £400.00/year)

Cllr George requested that the Clerk seek a premium for insurance for the new Art Works. Cllr Barker recorded Thanks to M P Whittle for their works on the Sensory Garden. . Cllr Barker will confirm suppliers and prices for Sundial and Hazel twigs for the Sensory Garden.

f) Nature Plan

Noted that the Clerk had sent an e mail to Smiths of Bletchingdon thanking them for the supply of Rocks and Shingle. It was felt we should have a "Formal, Letterheaded" thank you letter, even if this was attached to an e mail.

g) Village Events Committee

Cllr George reported that the Christmas Fayre raised a Nett £241,60 and Apple Pressing £806.24. Update on the Funds raised / Accounts to be included in the next Newsletter.

Cllr Barker confirmed that the VEC would like approval to be able to spend up to £300.00 where needed. Motion to be made on the next Agenda.

Cllr Barker requested permission to purchase some new lights for the Christmas Tree. Agreed.

h) Wild Ducks

Marilyn Morris is updating plans for next year. Wild Ducks to be amalgamated with Nature Plan on future Agenda's.

i) Training on Storing and Sharing files in Google Drive

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

j) Provision of Outside Electric Socket at Village Hall

Councillor Smyth has previously reported that a Defibrillator is available from the Sports Club and it was decided to contribute £100.00 to the Sports Club.

k) EV Microhubs

Cllr George has chased Stuart Cole but Nothing further to report.

l) Village Christmas Tree

Cllr Barker reported that there had been problems with the Proposed Supplier. However, with the help of Jim and Helen Shackell a Christmas Tree has been collected and ready for erecting on Saturday 6th December 2025. Thanks are recorded to MB and Jim and Helen Shackell.

m) St George Flag on Telegraph Pole

The Clerks report detailed actions taken to get the Flag removed. Currently still in place. Clerk to be asked to chase up.

n) Lone Worker Policy re; Clerk's Use of the Lilac Room in the Village Hall Deferred to a later meeting.

o) Access to Village Hall / Lilac Room when Meetings in Progress Discussions

were held and it was resolved not to pursue the installation of a door bell.

152.25 New Business

a) Cemetery Management Issues

DD met with the Church Administrator on Monday 1st December 2025. Cemetery Plans will be emailed over soon along with Faculty Details and Requests. The Church are to keep their

Register of Public Graves in Un- or Consecrated Grounds

Register of transfers of exclusive right of burial

Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial.

RESOLVED to purchase copies of these.

b) Cemetery Management (Scribe).

RESOLVED; Purchase of Scribe Cemetery Package

c) Replacement Speed Indicator Sign. (County Councillor Priority Fund)

MB requested that we use this fund to update the sign outside The Moors to 20 mph. Relocating the existing sign to the other end of the Village, where the sign does not appear to be working.

RESOLVED To ask the Clerk to obtain a quote for a 20mph speed sign and cost to relocate existing sign.

d) A415 Speed Limit

Resolved To ask the Clerk to write to Mr James Wright OCC Highways, requesting a reduction of the speed limit from 60mph to 50mph for the length of the A415 from the Roundabout to the coppice at Cokethorpe School.

e) Parishioner Request

Graham Lenton requested permission to plant a tree and place a bench in memory of Rosemarie by the Pond. **RESOLVED** Approved and for DD to meet Graham to agree location.

f) Citizens Advice Oxfordshire - Request for Financial Support

All agreed a worthwhile cause. **RESOLVED** to ask Clerk to add to a list for Donation in line with our Grants Requests

g) Request for Dog Bin at Mill Meadow.

Questions were raised as to whether this was the ideal location considering other areas where bins were no longer present. **RESOLVED** to ask Clerk to speak with Bill Oddy at WODC about process and costs.

153.25 Playgrounds, Litter, Open Spaces, Sports Pavilion, Sports Field, Allotments

a) Playgrounds - Inspection Reports

Carried over to January.

b) Sensory Garden, Chalcroft - Connecting to a water source.

Clerk to be asked to update.

c) Litter Picker's Report

Councillors noted the Litter Picker's report in the Briefing Pack.

d) Village Green - Damaged Bollard & Tarmac

After discussion it was agreed a Bollard replacement was not necessary. **RESOLVED** to ask Clerk to contact G Hill and ask for an emergency Tarmac repair only.

e) Village / School Car Park - Drainage Issues.

Awaiting 1 more quote.

f) Allotments - Water Meter

After discussion it was agreed to let Castle Water read the meter every 6 months.

g) Allotments Management Issues

Cllr Duthie passed to Cllr Dunsdon a laminated A3 annotated map for the Allotment notice board. Updated map to be handed to the Clerk.

Cllr Dunsdon advised of some vacancies. Item to be added to the next newsletter advising same.

Cllr Dunsdon advised of some illegal dumping of Chippings.

h) Allotment Management Module (Scribe)

Resolved: to purchase Scribe Allotment Management Module Proposed Cllr Duthie Seconded Cllr Barker

154.25 FINANCE

a) Account Balances, Debts due to Council and Bank Reconciliation

Account Balances

The Clerk advised members that the sum currently held in the Unity Trust Bank Current T1 account is £93.82 (as at 30 November 2025) and in the Unity Trust Bank Instant Access

account is £68,836.80 (as at 30 November 2025).

Debts due to Council

The Clerk reported he had not currently received a payment of £217.00 from the Treasurer of Creditor 1 on 30 November 2025 to reduce the outstanding balance. Thus currently remains at £2,387.00.

Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk circulated a Bank Reconciliation to councillors at the meeting which was signed by the Chairman.

b) Invoices due for payment

Councillors considered the schedule of proposed payments set out in the Briefing Pack and **RESOLVED** that all be paid. Cllr Duthie, Cllr Barker or Cllr Almgill to authorise the payments.

c) Final Budget - Financial Year 2026 -27

No further comments on the presentation in November. **Resolved** to accept the recommendation of 5% increase. Giving a new Precept of £47,250.00

d) Annual Review of Internal Controls

Resolved; to accept The Clerks recommendation to adopt the OALC update

e) Reserves

With Peter's absence carried over to a later meeting.

155.25 Other comments/Matters for next Agenda

a) Cllr Dunsdon asked if further thought had gone into the Allotment Holders recent request for Security Camera's? Cllr Duthie proposed that a Motion for January 2026 meeting that DPC would contribute up to £500.00 (50% costs) towards purchasing 2 camera's, with Allotment holders funding the remaining 50% and erecting same.

b) Cllr Barker asked if a Draft Agenda could be circulated on the Wednesday prior to the Agenda going out on the Friday before meetings? Thus, avoiding the opportunity to ensure all Councillors views / Possible discussion items are not overlooked.

c) Cllr George raised the issue of thanking Smiths of Bletchingdon (see item 151.25 item f earlier)

d) Cllr Duthie gave his Apologies for absence for the January and February Meetings.

156.25 Date of Next Meeting: Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday, 7 January 2026 - 7.30 pm, Lilac Room, Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.32 pm.

Signeddated.....2026
Chairman