

Background

There are over 8,700 parish and town councils representing around 16 million people across England. They form the most local level of government and cover many rural and urban areas.

The Parish Council has an overall responsibility for the well-being of its local community. It plays an important role in the local community and is a vital link to district and county councils and other agencies on local issues.

The Parish Council's work falls into three main categories:

- representing the local community
- delivering services to meet local needs
- striving to improve the quality of life in the parish

Parish Councils funding comes primarily through the precept. This precept is a local rate which is collected here in Stonesfield by West Oxfordshire District Council as part of the council tax.

Parish Council

Parish Council meets 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Dates are subject to change. The agenda will also be displayed on the notice board by the village shop approximately 1 week before each meeting.

The members of the Parish Council are:

- David Brown (Chair)
- Phil McArdell
- David Baldwin
- Wendy Gould
- Frank Huddleston (Vice Chair)
- Geraldine Lawrence
- Jim O'Brien
- Simon Powell

The Clerk to the Council is Gill Hill, who can be contacted on 07885 256723 or via email at stonesfieldpc@gmail.com

Specific responsibilities

SPC has responsibilities for various local amenities, which include:

- providing land for burial sites
- supplying and maintaining bus shelters, organising grass verge and hedge cutting
- managing and maintaining Stonesfield Common
- supplying land for allotments under lease from Blenheim Estates on Woodstock Rd and collecting annual rents
- supplying and ensuring grit bins are filled for winter road safety
- act as custodian trustee for the village hall and playing field and supplying a rep to their committees
- setting precept and deciding how funds are spent to the benefit of the village
- formally commenting to WODC on planning applications in the parish

Main portfolio roles of Councillors

Frank Huddleston – Playing Field representative, s106 liaison officer with WODC

Phil McArdell – working group for finance and planning

David Baldwin – neighbourhood plan link

David Brown – health and safety advisor and liaison member for legal matters, neighbourhood plan link, working group member for finance and grants

Geraldine Lawrence – general Council member, village hall representative, link with public on general matters of concern

Jim O'Brien – general council member, advisor on planning issues

Wendy Gould – Parish Council website

How can the Parish Council help?

First of all, we need to know about the issue

One way is through the "Public Participation" section of each Parish Council meeting – where members of the community can raise matters for discussion. It would be great if you could give us a heads up on the issue in advance of the meeting, stonesfieldpc@gmail.com, so the Clerk or the Councillors can gather any relevant information beforehand.

Alternatively, if you cannot or do not wish to attend the meeting, please get in touch using the website contact form or call the Clerk to the Parish Council on 07885 256723

Liaison with other organisations and individuals

SPC also reports to the relevant organisations any issues and problems that Councillors or residents have concerns about, such as

- broken street lighting, potholes, road markings or street signage issues, emptying of salt traps, overgrown vegetation obstructing highways – responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and its Highways Dept.
Residents can also report directly to OCC Highways via highway.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk or by telephone on 0845 310 1111. Problems that are the responsibility of OCC can also be reported via <http://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>
- footpath matters, such as broken stiles, obstructed footpaths. Local footpaths – responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council Countryside Dept. Details of all Stonesfield footpaths can be found on OCC Definite Statement footpaths
- planning, road name signs, household waste and recycling collections – responsibility of West Oxfordshire District Council
- housing – to either Cottsway Housing Association who manage social housing in Stonesfield or West Oxfordshire District Council who are responsible for housing development through the Local Development Framework and its Local Plan
- with Thames Valley Police on matters such as speeding, anti-social behaviour and crime prevention
- with the local churches and the Diocese of Oxford
- with local landowners and residents over individual matters

Local Councils

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

01993 861000

www.westoxon.gov.uk

Town Centre Shop, 3 Welch Way, Witney, OX28 6JH

Bins, recycling, Council tax, planning, building, housing, environment, flytipping and abandoned vehicles.

Oxfordshire County Council

01865 792422

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Trading standards, births, deaths, planning, fire and public safety, roads, transport and libraries

Who can be a Parish Councillor?

Parish Councillors must be:

- Aged 18 or over;
- A citizen of the UK, Commonwealth, EU or Ireland;
- On the electoral roll, or a resident or within 3 miles of the parish, own land or work in the parish.

They should:

- Be able to attend regular evening meetings (one Parish Council Meeting every other month plus occasional other meetings as required)
- Be interested in local issues, preferably not just a single issue;
- Have an understanding and willingness to represent the views of the whole community;
- Have an interest in being a professional and effective councillor.

The **National Association of Local Councils** has also published a very useful guide to being a local councillor.

Transparency Code

SPC has to comply with national requirements issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). New requirements are laid out in the Transparency Code, introduced by DCLG in December 2014. These are intended to increase transparency of smaller arms of local government, such as SPC, which has an annual turnover of less than £25,000.

This Code requires SPC to publish annually key information about SPC finances, assets and what the specific roles of your councillors are. SPC complies with this fully as its draft accounts and the statement of accounts are published with the agendas for the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Council meeting annually in May.

National representatives

Local Member of Parliament

Robert Courts

0207 219 5638
robert.courts.mp@parliament.uk

Members of the European Parliament South East Region

Names and contact information: –

www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en

Local Councillors

West Oxfordshire District Council Councillor
representative for Stonesfield

Richard Bishop

Oxfordshire County Council Councillor
representative for Stonesfield

Ian Hudspeth.