

STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Stonesfield Primary School on Wednesday 4th December 2024 at 7pm

Meeting starts at 7pm

Attendees: Cllr Ursula Rice (Chair), Cllr Claire Renshaw (Vice Chair), Cllr Simon Powell, Cllr David Brown, Cllr Jessica Huband, Cllr Laura Bate, Cllr Philippa Lowe.

Other present: The Clerk, Cllr Tim Sumner (WODC) and 3 members of public

24/805: Public Participation:

- i. **Merilyn Davies – Community Lead at Blenheim**, said she will try and bring surrounding villages and towns voices back into decision making at Blenheim. The aim is to open the lines of communication and get two-way conversations going. Other subjects addressed were:
- The use of the park for cycling is a political issue, however Blenheim have agreed to do a trial just for Stonesfield & Combe, commuter time only.
 - Goral Doors – are to have sensors on them, this will measure the type of vehicles coming in – leading to better signage and the involvement of highways to reduce the speed limit.
 - Event information will come through Merylin Davies and will be on Blenheim Communities Facebook page.

Councillors asked the below questions – Merylin agreed to take them away and respond accordingly.

- Tree survey – Could Blenheim’s Tree Survey be extended to include the rest of the village? Stocky bottom is done in conjunction with the environmental & H&S assessment, it will be asked if it can be extended.
- The gates at the pumping station end of Stocky Bottom woods are both broken (upper and lower paths), need reinstating.

- ii. **David Lydiat** – spoke on behalf of the school parents regarding road and access safety around school. He has witnessed by number of parents, particularly at the back gate of field, having near misses, the increasing traffic travelling along the villages winding roads, make it only a matter of time before something tragic happens. He asked for the PC’s support before going to OCC, requesting improved signage and marked crossing just passed the shop, where visuals are very slim, and you cannot see passed hedge. The school and parents are already supporting this action.

Cllr Jess Huband advised to get in touch with the SAFER team as a first step, Cllr Laura Bate noted that parents driving to school abandoning cars on Church Street adds to the problem. Cllr David Brown advised that it should be a one-way system. DCllr Tim Sumner advised the group to come up with a scheme that is endorsed by SPC and then take it to CCllr Andy Graham.

24/806: To receive and accept apologies for absence: Cllr Simon Warr, CCllr Andy Graham (OCC), DCllr Genny Early (WODC).

24/807: Declarations of interest: Cllr Claire Renshaw and Cllr Laura Bate as they are Village Hall Committee Members. Note: There is no item on the agenda relating to this.

24/808: To approve the minutes of the meeting 6th November 2024. It was *RESOLVED* to approve the minutes.

Proposer : Cllr Ursula Rice **Seconder :** Cllr Claire Renshaw – all in favour.

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24/809: Questions on the Clerks Report on matters arising from them: No questions, reminder to councillors for their personal details for Unity Bank.

24/810: To consider and receive reports from District Councillors: DCllr Tim Sumners updated the following:

- Flooding, WODC will ask the PC to consider a two-tier approach, tier one is OCC and the EA etc., tier two is local and a practical level (i.e.) sandbags and checking in on people. The Clerk advised that WODC will not deliver sand or bags until dry secure storage is provided. Cllr Ursula Rice will ask Dave Holloway to house sand and bags in his barn.
- Stonesfield Scout group have received a £30,000 pledge from the WODC Community Infrastructure Fund via Spacehive (Westhive) for the rebuild of their hut. But in order to receive this pledge the campaign must hit its fundraising target (£113,225) by 11 Feb 2025
- SOUP scheme goodlocaleconomy.

24/811: To consider and receive reports from County Councillor: None.

24/812: To consider and receive reports from Parish Councillors.

- i. **Recruitment of New Clerk** – Cllr Claire Renshaw confirmed receipt of 1 more application.
- ii. **Wilderness Debrief** – Cllr Jess Huband attended an online local forum, where plans for 2025 event were discussed. Date will be 31st Jul – 3rd Aug 2025, it will not be increasing capacity 29,999 including public & workers. The 2024 event had a listening point in village, used consultants and WODC noise pollution team, 2 nights out of the 4, there was no noise and the other 2 nights were very low. Cllr Jess Huband will investigate noise levels and the data. Residents outreach delivered 3,000 letters, but did not include Stonesfield. The event organisers choose specific postcodes and do not look at local knowledge and distances. It was suggested that rather than choosing postcodes use regions. Cllr Jess Huband will have a 1 to 1 meeting to talk specifically about Stonesfield.
- iii. **Laughton Hill / The Dene** – Drainage issue & “Ice” signs from OCC were discussed, SAFER team asked if temporary ice signs can be put up above the crossroads. There is a need for warning signage. Cllr Simon Powell advised that SAFER said that the signs will stay out and people will no longer take notice of them. Cllr Jess Huband suggested the SAFER Team could do it, as Speedwatch paused over winter months. Cllr Ursula Rice proposed that the PC agree there should be an Ice Sign put out between November – March, it should be left out for the duration of those months and then removed. Seconded Cllr Claire Renshaw. Vote all in favour except Cllr Simon Powell who abstained from voting.

24/813 The Glebe was **approved** as a working party of the Parish Council and Cllr Simon Powell will be the PC representative.
Proposer Cllr Simon Powell, Seconder Cllr Ursula Rice – all in favour.

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24/814 To receive reports from Stonesfield PC working groups:

- i. **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:** No meeting this month. Richard Morris verbally updated that the plan is nearing completion, at the scheduled meeting on the 16th Dec 2024, the Steering Group will have had sight of the completed plan and will agree for it to come to the PC.

This will be a PDF document of the plan, and the associated appendices. It is a draft, the Councillors are urged to comment on the plan, read and check before it goes out to residents of the village for public consultation. PC feedback is required by the January PC meeting.

The landowners for the proposed Green Spaces will be informed before it goes fully public, please refer to item 16.ii – Cllr Claire Renshaw suggested a post box on the side of Village Hall, she will arrange.

- ii. **The Common:** - Richard Morris advised that: Abingdon & Witney College had erected the fences, he had thanked them on behalf of PC. The cows had been taken off common because of the flooding and they have gone for TB testing, they will come back Jan – March. The flood caused damage to fences; new fencing is a possibility. Cllr David Brown to ask Ian Hedges. Do not need sheep fencing, can have wire instead.

24/815 Thames Valley Police representation: a request was sent to PCSO Helen Duffield, no response, request sent direct to Woodstock Station email received by TVP asking ASB to be reported via 101 or online. The Clerk to use contact information sent from Woodstock Town Clerk, it is vitally important that all crimes are reported as the more logged the higher up the priority list the village will go.

24/816 Communications Plan: the first topic will be who new Cllr's are. The second will be what the PC does and what the PC does not do.

24/817 Planning:

- i. **24/02950/HHD | Demolition of existing single storey structure to side of dwelling and erection of single storey side extension | Russett Cottage Witney Lane Stonesfield Witney Oxfordshire OX29 8DN - No Comment**

24/818 2025-26 Budget: the 2025-26 budget was agreed as follows:

Overheads and Staff Costs	24/25 Budget	25/26 AGREED Budget
Statutory Obligations inc Staff, legal, Insurance & Audit	£28,573	£29,317
General Maintenance/Rent/Utilities	£6,110	£7,632
MUGA Maintenance	£0	£0
Common Maintenance	£1,100	£1,100
Neighbourhood Plan	£0	£1,706
SAFER	£1,000	£1,000
Total Overheads and Staff Costs	£36,783	£40,755

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Grants	£5,000	£5,000
Total Grants	£5,000	£5,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£41,783	£45,755

INCOME	24/25 Budget	26/26 AGREED Budget
Miscellaneous	£170	£170
Common Grants	£1,100	£1,100
Precept	£39,722	£42,963
Grass Cutting Grant	£522	£522
VAT	£1,000	£1,000
TOTAL INCOME	£42,514	£45,755
	24/25 Budget	25/26 AGREED Budget
INCOME minus EXPENDITURE	£731	£0

24/819 2025-26 Precept: The precept for 2025-26 was agreed at £42,963, or £58.87 per house per annum charge. A 7.5% or £4.11 per house per annum increase.

Cllr David Brown proposed the increase, he noted that traditionally the PC had kept the precept low, which leaves no room to move and flexibility for SPC, seconder Cllr Simon Powell, voted all in favour.

24/820: To consider matters of finance and policies.

- i. **Ratification of Payments** – all are paid via bank transfer: The council *RESOLVED* to approve the finance report circulated by the clerk. *Items in italics were paid in November 2025.*

Proposer: Cllr Ursula Rice, Seconder: Cllr Claire Renshaw

Gross Amount (£)	VAT Value (£)	Payee	Details	Power
1350.00		Locum Clerk & RFO	November 2024	LGA 1972 S112
1000.00		Stonesfield Tennis Club	Grant agreed at Nov 2024 meeting	LGA 1972 S137
301.06	50.18	Barlows Woodyard	Fencing for the Common	Open Spaces Act
7390.00	1231.67	Zavos Machinery	Tractor Hedge Trimmer	LGA 1972 S112
<i>Confidential</i>		<i>Previous Clerks Back pay</i>	<i>Backpay April to Aug 2024</i>	<i>LGA 1972 S111</i>

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<i>Confidential</i>		<i>Clive Parsons</i>	<i>Maintenance Salary</i>	<i>LGA 1972 S111</i>
<i>46.40</i>		<i>HMRC</i>	<i>PAYE / NI</i>	<i>LGA 1972 S111</i>
<i>25.00</i>		<i>Charity Farm</i>	<i>RBL Wreath Poppy Appeal</i>	<i>LGA 1972 S137</i>
<i>51.38</i>		<i>David Brown</i>	<i>Reimbursement materials for war memorial refurb</i>	<i>Open Spaces Act</i>

It was noted that the PC were not funding the Hedge Trimmer, this was being done so by the Playing Field Association.

- ii. **To consider and discuss Grant application:** St James the Great Parish Church – grass cutting grant, for £1,800.
Cllr Ursula Rice Proposed £250, Seconded Cllr Claire Renshaw - all in favour.

- iii. **To consider a Po Box address for the Parish Council:** Two options 1) Po Box Deliver @ £424.20 per annum or 2) Po Box Collect @ £353.40 per annum.
See minute ref: 24/814.

24/821: Items for the next agenda:

- i. Communication Plan – monthly subjects for The Slate and Facebook
- ii. Neighbourhood Plan

24/822: Date of the next Full Council Meeting: 8th January 2025 at 7pm (Stonesfield Primary School)

Meeting closes 9:21pm