

EAST HAGBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DULY CONVENED AND HELD ON THURSDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2023

1. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:

Present were Vice Chairman P. Dixon who chaired the meeting, Councillors C. Gover, R. Jaboor, N. Milner, D. Rickeard and C. Shaikh.

Apologies were received from Chairman I. Duff, District Councillors A-M. Simpson and B. Manning.

In attendance was L. Lloyd (Clerk).

P. Dixon indicated there is 1 vacancy for a parish councillor.

2. PUBLIC FORUM AND QUESTIONS: None

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9TH NOVEMBER 2023:

The minutes of the meeting on 9th November 2023 were approved by Council and signed by P. Dixon.

4. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS: P. Dixon noted receipt of the district councillor's report, please see attachment 2.

5. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

2022-12-01 Footpath 4 surface improvements: P. Dixon reported on progress since the November meeting. R. McNaught of OCC visited the site for an initial assessment, and returned with an approved contractor to quote for the works. P. Dixon said he would send R. McNaught a brief note stating the Parish Council's understanding of what will be supplied, including the chosen surface colour of dark grey. The quote for £8,650 was received today.

ACTION: Councillors agreed that L. Lloyd should speak to TOE ahead of applying by the 8th January deadline for funding, to establish whether the potential grant would be able to cover the full cost, or make a contribution to the project, as well as to clarify whether it would be possible to apply for additional funding for other footpaths in the parish at a later stage.

2023-03-01 Deanfield Homes Car Park Land Transfer: No update this month.

2023-06-02 Parking and Traffic Management on Main Road: No update this month.

2023-06-03: Footway repairs in the Parish: P. Dixon reported that D. Depp has confirmed that there isn't currently any budget in the OCC funds to contribute to footpath repairs, and that the surfaces do not meet the criteria for repairs via FixMyStreet. The footway outside Green Shutters will be reviewed after the hedge has been cut further back.

2023-11-01 Footpath accessibility: *Councillors agreed that this action would be discussed out of sequence.*

C. Shaikh referred to her circulated report of the informal footpaths group's meeting on 1st December, which presented a thorough assessment of all 29 footpaths in the parish. C. Gover has completed a walkabout with R. McNaught of OCC so the countryside access team is also up to date with the current concerns regarding the footpath network.

The report highlighted 8 footpaths for potential repair:

FP4 - see action 2022-12-01 above

FP6 Hagbourne Garage to The Croft - C. Gover confirmed R. McNaught agreed that FP6 is the kind of path that OCC should prioritise in terms of its use and lack of bridge stability. It was agreed that it should be clarified whether there is any OCC funding for this.

FP8 Bakers Lane to The Croft – The suggestion is for aggregate to be laid along the muddy section to the east of the bowls club, as this solution has held up well at the other end of the footpath.

FP10 Shovel Spring – It was noted that most of this footpath is in West Hagbourne, including a good portion of the muddy part in need of surface improvement. Councillors agreed that this should be a joint venture with West Hagbourne Parish Council. **ACTION:** L. Lloyd to contact the WH clerk to start a discussion about WH contributing to surface works.

FP12 Fieldside to the Church - The right turn at the Church end might be a possible stretch for improvement.

Contacting the landowner to discuss the addition of a channel to separate/protect the right of way across the field was discussed. The stretch from Fieldside to Parsonage Lane would benefit from a hard surface as this is a well-used link section. **ACTION:** It was agreed that the field owner should be contacted to discuss possible plans.

FP13 The Causeway, Parsonage Lane – It was confirmed that the causeway would need assessment by OCC Highways as it is tarmacked, and noted that D. Depp has already been alerted to the need for a quote for repair.

ACTION: L. Lloyd to chase for a quote from OCC as well as investigating whether a comparison quote can be obtained, possibly from Aztec who are an OCC approved contractor.

FP14 Telegraph Road – Muddy, rutted sections at the kissing gates. One gate is on the parish boundary but the other is in West Hagbourne parish. **ACTION:** L. Lloyd to contact West Hagbourne about adding aggregate along this stretch.

FP15 Fieldside to Lower Cross – There are patches that have had aggregate laid in the past. Some patches may benefit from the same treatment.

Councillors discussed potential actions arising from the list; these are noted alongside the relevant footpaths. In addition it was agreed that R. McNaught would be a key contact to discuss potential repairs that have been noted for the footpath network, both to discuss resurfacing options in further detail and to confirm permissions for the Parish Council to action minor works such as aggregate patching.

2023-07-01 Kingsholm Close dropped kerb: P. Dixon confirmed that OCC have agreed to add dropped kerbs at Kingsholm Close for pedestrian accessibility and will fund the works from the County Council's budget.

2023-10-01 Disabled Parking Spaces in the village car park: No progress this month.

2023-10-02 Japanese Knotweed at the allotments: See item 7.a)

2023-10-03 Weed Management on Main Road: P. Dixon reported on a meeting held between I. Duff, K. Morris of SODC and D. Depp of OCC on 23rd November, which has resulted in SODC and OCC agreeing to tackle the weed issues in tandem. SODC are carrying out a further deep cleanse under the supervision of K. Morris on 10th December, with results being reported to OCC who will then look at how to approach structural concerns with the raised slabs. At the same meeting, a team reviewed the removal of stone steps in the verge following works by Southern Gas Network (SGN). This has since been raised by OCC as an official reinstatement job with SGN.

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- a) **Deanfield development adjacent to the village hall:** P. Dixon noted I. Duff's report: The bird and bat boxes have now been installed, and the embankment access has been reseeded. The embankment is still not open although it was due to be accessible by the end of November. Line painting will be taking place for the OCC Highways S278 works in the Easter holidays.
- b) **Priorities for CIL funding based on the list of options previously circulated:** Councillors reviewed the revised project list, which has been refined from the longer list. One item on the list, the possible development of the playground, requires significant thought before any expenditure to ensure it is of maximum benefit; it was agreed that playground improvements could be a lasting legacy for CIL expenditure. It was agreed that councillors would hold an off-line meeting to do an option study.
- c) **Liaison with OCC and set up an S101 agreement for delegation of grass cutting duties in the built (urban) areas of East Hagbourne parish:** Councillors agreed to move forward with the S101 agreement. **ACTION:** L. Lloyd to liaise with OCC to get a formal agreement for East Hagbourne drawn up for review and decision at the January meeting.

7. ITEMS FOR DECISION:

- a) **To review the proposal for treatment of Japanese Knotweed at the allotments, and approve the quote for £1,800 from SE Environmental:** P. Dixon confirmed that eight companies had been contacted with four indications of price: three at around £1800, and one at £3000. The most comprehensive quote is still SE and councillors resolved to approve the quote and instruct SE Environmental to carry out the treatment programme. As the treatments will commence next spring, this will be factored into the budget moving forward.
- b) **To review the proposal for hedge cutting at the allotments and approve the quote for £1,200 from BGG Garden and Tree Care:** P. Dixon asked for views on the proposal. D. Rickeard noted that there is a balance to be achieved between biodiversity and provision of allotment space, but considered the proposal to cut the existing hedge to 3m height to be a good compromise. Councillors approved the proposal and £1,200 expenditure which will be funded from the general reserve this financial year.
- c) **Allotment Fees for 2024/25:** P. Dixon confirmed that 3 months notice is required to increase allotment fees and that following review, the suggestion was to retain the current fees for 2024/25. Currently the allotment rental covers the water costs and the allotments' share of the Butts Piece rent, and the remainder (around £300) contributes towards the general budget. Councillors agreed to retain the current allotment fees for 2024/25 and review again for 2025/26.
- d) **To adopt the revised Climate and Biodiversity Strategy and agree for it to be made available to the public:** D. Rickeard circulated the revised draft ahead of the meeting for review. There is concern to ensure

that the strategy should engage with the general public, without lecturing on the situation. The document itself is quite complex, and N. Milner and C. Gover suggested that it is difficult to digest in its current form. N. Milner also expressed concern that a decision to approve would be difficult as she didn't feel it is very easy to understand. Councillors agreed that the Climate Change and Biodiversity front page on the website needs updating, and a shorter summary document should be drawn up to also be available on the website, to complement and refer to the detailed strategy. C. Gover proposed that the strategy should not be put onto the website ahead of the summary document being approved. The decision to adopt the revised Climate and Biodiversity Strategy was deferred until the summary document has been written and approved by councillors. **ACTION:** N. Milner and D. Rickeard agreed to meet to draw up the summary document.

- e) **To adopt the updated Community Project Strategy and post it on the website:** N. Milner suggested that the strategy should be referred to more, and C. Gover confirmed that the intention of the strategy is to present potential projects and allow members of the public to comment via the website. It has been integral in forming the priorities for CIL funding and will be updated as these are reviewed and progressed so will naturally become more prominent in council discussion. Councillors approved adoption of the updated strategy and agreed that this updated version should be posted on the website.
- f) **To consider awarding grants to the following charities following donation requests:**
Councillors considered the four requests below, in line with the £550 remaining budget allocation for grants in 2023/24.
 - i) **Oxfordshire South & Vale Citizens Advice - £300:** Councillors resolved to award a grant of £300.00 in accordance with the council's powers under Section 137 (S137) of the Local Government Act 1972.
 - ii) **Home Start Oxfordshire – £100:** Councillors agreed that as Home Start Oxfordshire last received grant monies in April 2023, this request for additional funds could not be accommodated within this year's available budget and must be regrettably refused. Requests made in line with the 2024/25 financial year will be duly considered.
 - iii) **Oxfordshire Mind - £100:** Councillors resolved to award a grant of £100.00 in accordance with the council's powers under Section 137 (S137) of the Local Government Act 1972.
 - iv) **The Abingdon Bridge - £100:** Councillors resolved to award a grant of £100.00 in accordance with the council's powers under Section 137 (S137) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- g) **2024/25 Budget and Precept – initial discussion:** The draft budget was circulated to councillors ahead of the meeting. L. Lloyd confirmed that it is possible for interest to be discounted for precept setting as it is unreliable source of income. It would be possible to mark interest income as an additional CIL reserve to maintain the CIL fund value in line with inflation. D. Rickeard noted a query over potential legal fees involved with renewal of the Pavilion lease and suggested a figure of £1000 be included for this. He spoke in favour of maintaining the current precept and asked for the figures to be checked to confirm whether this would be viable. L. Lloyd noted that the current draft budget does not have any funds for non-CIL project expenditure which should be considered. It was agreed that councillors would consider this and discuss ahead of the budget approval and precept decision in January.

8. ITEMS FOR REPORT:

- a) **Planning Applications:** L. Lloyd confirmed that there is one current planning application - P23/S4023/HH for 18 Fieldside, who wish to demolish and replace their conservatory. I. Duff will discuss with the applicant and neighbours before a proposed response is circulated to councillors for approval.
- b) **East Hagbourne Sport and Recreation Committee:** Nothing to report.
- c) **Cemetery Committee:** Nothing to report.
- d) **Employment Committee:** C. Shaikh confirmed that following the November meeting, payment of backpay from April was agreed to be split between the November and December to avoid unnecessary payment of NI for the clerk. The Parish Council is now liable for employers NI, at a sum of £3.68 per month based on the 2023-24 pay award.
- e) **Butts Piece Allotments:** Nothing further to report, see items 7.a), 7.b), and 7.c).
- f) **Community Speedwatch:** R. Jaboor confirmed that the Clerk at Harwell has recently changed which has made initial contact for discussion about their speedwatch efforts difficult. **ACTION:** R. Jaboor confirmed he will speak with L. Lloyd to obtain contact details for clerks in other local villages with active speedwatch groups.
- g) **Didcot Garden Town:** Nothing to report. Remove from future agendas.
- h) **Flood Group:** D. Rickeard confirmed that R. Ainger is keeping an eye on the stream but there is nothing specific to report on this. Remove from future agendas.
- i) **Future Oxfordshire Partnership:** Nothing to report.
- j) **Neighbourhood Plan:** D. Rickeard reported that the next stage in the process, examination of the Neighbourhood Plan Review, has yet to be confirmed.
- k) **Climate Change and Biodiversity:** Nothing to report. Remove from future agendas.

- I) Matters raised at the Chairman's Surgery and OALC Chairman's meeting:** P. Dixon summarised a report from I. Duff concerning his recent Chairman's Surgery, many items raised are resolved or being considered as part of the footpath accessibility actions:

Concerns raised over the bridge leading to Mowbray fields from FP189/17 (this is in Didcot Parish).

Shoe Lane hedge was encroaching on the footway, this has since been cut back.

A near-accident was reported by the lavender on the raised footway near the Fleur on Main Road.

Complaint about the bad state of FP4, the person was happy to hear the plans to fix the path.

Improvements requested for the surface of FP8 at Bakers Lane end.

FP1 along the western parish boundary is used by residents of West Hagbourne to access Didcot, it was suggested this path surface could be improved.

FP10 accessibility was raised again by a resident of West Hagbourne.

Complaint about the footway outside the Fleur which is still deteriorating.

There were also some positive comments following on from the grass cutting meeting.

9. Correspondence:

L. Lloyd confirmed the following correspondence since the last meeting:

Reports regarding the car park lighting not functioning properly - the timings have been adjusted accordingly. One lantern is out and a visit from SSE contractor is needed to clarify whether it is a faulty sensor or bulb replacement is required. While not anticipated, as the lanterns should last 10-15 years, this is considered to be essential maintenance. The works could cost up to £219.24 but will hopefully be completed at the lower cost of £73.08 which can be covered by the car park electricity budget.

An email was received yesterday from the Children's Services team in Oxfordshire County Council, with a proposal to change a property on Great Mead into a children's home. This proposal will be circulated to councillors for discussion.

10. Finance:

a) Expenditure and receipts since the last meeting and account balances:

a) Payments since last meeting shown in c) NB: Payments pending are shown in yellow and are not included in the account balance

Payee	Item	Online Payment/ Cheque No	Amount	VAT	Total	Date
SODC	INV10345142 Dog Bin Emptying 1 April - 30 September 2023	C Shaikh / C Gover	£2,577.60	£515.52	£3,093.12	20/11/2023
Dark White Digital	INV001373 web hosting November 2023	C Shaikh / C Gover	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	20/11/2023
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV 6981 October bin emptying at Butts Piece	C Shaikh / C Gover	£13.00	£2.60	£15.60	20/11/2023
EHS&RC	INV 231004 Pavilion hire for meeting 12/10	C Shaikh / C Gover	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	20/11/2023
Reg Dawson	Expenses - Paint for cemetery gate	C Shaikh / C Gover	£10.00	£2.00	£12.00	20/11/2023
Edge IT Systems Ltd	INV37349 Heritedge setup and annual fee (Cemetery digital mapping)	C Shaikh / C Gover	£131.00	£26.20	£157.20	20/11/2023
BGG Garden and Tree Care	INV 825.23 Parish and cemetery cut 13/10	C Shaikh / C Gover	£275.00	£55.00	£330.00	20/11/2023
BGG Garden and Tree Care	INV 857.23 Allotment herbicide spray	C Shaikh / C Gover	£40.00	£8.00	£48.00	20/11/2023
Royal British Legion	S137 Grant	C Shaikh / C Gover	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	20/11/2023
Grundon Waste Management	PSI-0949495 Cemetery bin October	C Shaikh / C Gover	£57.55	£11.51	£69.06	22/11/2023
Laura Lloyd	**November salary and 50% backpay from April	C Shaikh / C Gover	£959.20	£0.00	£959.20	30/11/2023
Hagbourne Village Hall	INV 1705 Car park lighting - electricity costs Nov 2022-Nov 2023		£101.70	£0.00	£101.70	
Hagbourne Village Hall	INV 1712 Meeting room hire Q1 - Cemetery Committee meeting 06/11/23		£6.00	£0.00	£6.00	
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV 7081 November bin emptying Butts Piece		£13.00	£2.60	£15.60	

Payee	Item	Online Payment/ Cheque No	Amount	VAT	Total	Date
Dark White Digital	INV 001405 December web hosting		£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	
EHSRC	INV 231104 Meeting room hire 09/11/2023		£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	
Laura Lloyd	December salary and 50% backpay from April		£959.20	£0.00	£959.20	

b) Receipts since last meeting

From	Item	Amount	Date
Redwood Bank	Interest on 35 day notice account November 2023	£223.74	30/11/2023
	Total	£223.74	

c) Accumulated Account Balances (reconciled online 06/12/2023)

Unity Trust Bank - T1 current account	£78,036.17
Unity Trust Bank - Instant access account	£72,154.91
Redwood Bank - 35 Day Notice Savings Account	£85,000.00
Total	<u>£235,191.08</u>

d) The Special Project Balances (as of 06/12/2023) are:

Community Infrastructure Levy Fund	Received 24/04/19 so requires spending by 23/04/24	£1,788.07
	Received 30/04/21 so requires spending by 29/04/26	£1,517.73
	Received 27/10/21 so requires spending by 26/10/26	£3,307.90
	Received 27/04/22 so requires spending by 26/04/27	£3,035.45
	Received 28/10/22 so requires spending by 27/10/27	£2,127.82
	Received 28/04/23 so requires spending by 27/04/28	£55,413.82
	Received 27/10/23 so requires spending by 26/10/28	<u>£106,843.63</u>
	Total CIL money	£174,034.42
Community Projects Reserve Fund		£4,712.91
Planned Development Support Fund		£5,303.15
Cemetery		<u>£14,957.04</u>
Total		<u>£199,007.52</u>

e) General Reserve (as of 06/12/2023) £36,183.56

b) Review and approval of pending payments: The Council reviewed the pending payments and approved those without prior minuted/regular payment approval.

c) Unity Bank change of signatory: L. Lloyd confirmed that one of the forms of ID was deemed too old to validate and N. Milner is currently sourcing an alternative document.

d) Progress with opening Nationwide Instant Access Savings Account: L. Lloyd confirmed that the initial application has been received and some additional documentation has been requested.

11. Items for report and inclusion on the January agenda:

Budget 2024/25 Precept for 2024/25
Climate Strategy and summary approval

The meeting closed at 9.30pm. The next meeting will be held on 11th January 2024 at the Pavilion, Great Mead, East Hagbourne.

Signed.....Dated.....

ATTACHMENT 1: ACTION LIST

Action No	What	Who	Status
2023-03-01	Deanfield Homes Car Park Land Transfer	LL	With OCC Legal team
2023-06-02	Parking and Traffic Management on Main Road	NM	On hold
2023-06-03	Footway repairs in the parish	ID/PD/RJ	Prioritise potential repairs for OCC to review
2023-07-01	Kingsholm Close dropped kerb request	LL	OCC to complete at their cost
2023-10-01	Disabled Parking spaces in the village car park	LL	Research options and costs
2023-10-02	Japanese Knotweed at the allotments	PD/LL	Instruct SE Environmental
2023-10-03	Weed management on Main Road	LL/ID	SODC/OCC to progress
2023-12-01	Footpath 4 surface improvements	LL	Apply for TOE funding
2023-12-02	Footpath accessibility – FP10	LL	Contact WH clerk to discuss options
2023-12-03	Footpath accessibility – FP12	LL/CS	Contact field owner
2023-12-04	Footpath accessibility – FP13	LL	Chase quote from OCC Highways, investigate obtaining comparison quote
2023-12-05	Footpath accessibility – FP14	LL	Contact WH clerk to discuss aggregate
2023-12-07	S101 agreement for grass cutting	LL	Liaise with OCC to have formal agreement drawn up
2023-12-08	Climate and Biodiversity Strategy	NM/DR	Draw up summary document
2023-12-09	Community Speedwatch	RJ/LL	Contact local clerks with active speedwatch groups

ATTACHMENT 2:

Title	District Councillors' Report
Councillors	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson & Cllr Ben Manning
Parish	East Hagbourne Parish Council
Date	7 December 2023

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

Preparation is underway for the next stage of South & Vale's Joint Local Plan

A preview of the Joint Local Plan consultation materials is available on both the [South Oxfordshire District Council website](#) and the [Vale of White Horse District Council website](#)

Innovative new planning policies to help South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse reach full potential and address challenges we face, are on the local agenda – and you'll soon be able to have your say.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are preparing to launch a second round of consultation early next year to develop our new Joint Local Plan to 2041.

The Joint Local Plan will help the councils determine planning applications, set out how and where new housing developments should take place, set standards for developments such as carbon and energy efficiency requirements, and guide what infrastructure is needed across the districts.

The next public consultation will ask for people's thoughts on proposed approaches across various policy areas, from reducing carbon emissions and nature recovery, to protecting and enhancing local heritage, meeting community infrastructure and transport needs, affordable housing, jobs and economic opportunities, and more. New policy areas

which previous local plans haven't covered include policies to protect valued landscapes, tranquil places and dark skies.

Backed by extensive feedback gathered in 2022, as well as a suite of new studies and the latest industry research, the councils are proposing to reduce the number of new houses needed each year, improve minimum standards for water and energy efficiency, increase biodiversity and the number of affordable houses developments need to deliver, and more.

The first Joint Local Plan consultation received over 2,500 responses through a new interactive platform, for which the councils were announced a finalist in a national award for creating an interactive, digital-first approach in planning.

This innovation will continue in the new consultation, where the councils will be using a new digital engagement platform for people to read easy-to-understand summaries and share their feedback, or delve into the details of the draft policies. This will be as well as holding events and providing paper copies in libraries for those who prefer to get involved in more traditional formats.

The next consultation is scheduled to launch to the public in January 2024.

A direct link to the Joint Local Plan Consultation document is <https://jlp.southandvale.gov.uk/>

A direct link to the Emerging Policies Map is <https://jlp.southandvale.gov.uk/pages/policies-map>

Change to Household Support Fund 4 - referral scheme opening soon

Support will soon be available again for residents finding it hard to cope with the rising cost of food and energy bills when the Household Support Fund reopens, but note that **the process has changed**.

The fund is available to all eligible households including residents who have previously received funds through the scheme. Previously residents could apply directly to the scheme, this time local organisations already supporting a South/Vale resident **submit a referral** to our Community Hub on the resident's behalf.

We've changed the approach to help a wider range of agencies refer residents. It also complements the help available through **Oxfordshire County Councils Resident Support Scheme** and the wider package of support that has been offered by central government.

The fund closes on **31 March 2024**, or sooner if it is fully allocated.

For more information contact our Community Hub team 01235 422600, email communityconnectors@southandvale.gov.uk

Get into the Christmas spirit at Cornerstone

Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot is gearing up for a festive celebration with a variety of events suitable for all ages:

- On **8 December**, DJ Strange hosts the Cornerstone Christmas Party for £10 per ticket, which includes a free drink!
- On **14 December**, the adults-only Hundred Watt Club: A Burlesque Christmas Special takes the stage with their vaudeville inspired spectacular.
- **15 December** offers "The Flight Before Christmas" for children under 4 during the day and in the evening a free jazz night by Fleur Stevenson and Hugh Turner.
- Finally, the family Christmas show, Heart of Winter, starts on **18 December**, telling the story of Sally and her quest to find snow and the true meaning of Christmas, celebrating family and friendship. The show runs until Christmas Eve.

Find out more about what's going on at [Cornerstone Arts Centre](#) in December.

Solar power in Wallingford

Earlier this month, Wallingford Sports Trust officially opened its new solar panels and batteries installation thanks in part to more than £40,000 of our grant funding.

Following a huge increase in electricity costs which threatened the future of the Sport Park, they took urgent action. This has resulted in the installation of 130 solar panels, eight batteries and an enormous reduction in energy consumption, expected to save them between £25,000 to £50,000 per year in the future. The energy created by the solar panels is enough to power five houses every day and is expected to make carbon savings of 28 tonnes per year!

We were very pleased to be able to contribute to this major energy-saving project to help keep the sports park going for years to come. You can find out more about this fantastic project, and other case studies, on the [South Oxfordshire improving energy efficiency webpage](#)

National Landscapes

Last week, all designated “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (AONBs) in England and Wales have been renamed as ‘National Landscapes’. The new name reflects their national importance and the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis.

This means our local AONBs will now be known as the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and The Chilterns National Landscape. You can find out more about the name change and the National Landscapes’ vision on the [National Landscapes website](#)

Developer contributions

In October, our two districts transferred and released over more than two-and-a-half million pounds in infrastructure funding to provide a boost to our communities.

South transferred £908,127 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions to town and parish councils to help support new development in the area. Since April, a further £115,557 of Section 106 funding has been released to relevant council departments, town or parish councils or local organisations towards improving community facilities for the benefit of current and future residents of the district.

To find out more about CIL spending and S106 please visit our website

National Planning Fee Increases

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities has advised that planning fees will increase on 6 December 2023. The Government expects the fee increase to result in increased investment in the planning service and lead to an improved service.

The new regulations will do the following:

- Increase planning application fees by 35% for applications for major development and 25% for all other applications.
- Introduce an annual indexation of planning applications fees, capped at 10%, from 1 April 2025.
- Remove the fee exemption for repeat applications (the ‘free-go’). An applicant will still be able to benefit from a free-go if their application was withdrawn or refused in the preceding 12 months, subject to all other conditions for the free-go being met.

If the Council does not determine non-major applications within 16 weeks (was 26 weeks), the applicant can seek a refund of their fee.

Plans to support the community of Berinsfield approved

A range of projects have been announced that will help support Berinsfield towards becoming a prospering garden village.

South Oxfordshire District Council has pledged more than £550,000 to fund the Berinsfield Delivery Plan.

The various projects focus on community health and wellbeing, sustainability and the environment, regeneration and development, community infrastructure, active travel, and governance and legacy.

The plan will support the progression of improved facilities in the existing village to reflect the communities needs and aspirations, which will also feed into the wider development of Mount Farm.

The plan also goes beyond just buildings. Other projects include a grants scheme and a health and wellbeing project, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, other partner agencies and local voluntary and community organisations.

The aim will be to help plan to meet the future needs of the community and to encourage healthy living. This will include improving people’s access to activities, services, and information around wellbeing.

The Community Delivery plan can be viewed on our [Berinsfield Garden Village webpage](#).