

## EAST HAGBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DULY CONVENED AND HELD ON THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

#### 1. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:

Present were Chairman I. Duff, Cllrs C. Gover, R. Jaboor, N. Milner, D. Rickeard and C. Shaikh, and County Cllr J. Hope-Smith.

Apologies were received from Vice Chairman P. Dixon and District Cllrs C. Topping and A-M Simpson.

In attendance was L. Lloyd (Clerk).

I. Duff indicated there is 1 vacancy for a parish councillor.

#### 2. PUBLIC FORUM AND QUESTIONS: None

#### 3. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS: I. Duff confirmed receipt of the County Councillor report (Attachment 1) and District Councillors' report (Attachment 2).

J. Hope-Smith highlighted the ongoing issue of potholes and the need for sustained investment to make meaningful progress, noting that temporary repairs, particularly those completed in wet weather, are often not durable. He advised that issues should be reported via FixMyStreet, but that any urgent matters can also be referred to him directly. I. Duff noted that the ongoing priority for East Hagbourne is Main Road between the cemetery and Coscote.

D. Rickeard requested a response from OCC regarding questions raised following the path clearance works carried out in January. C. Shaikh reported that she is also awaiting feedback concerning vegetation left in the drainage ditch along FP19, which is compromising the drainage channel cleared as part of OCC's flood management programme.

Concern was raised regarding the recently installed security lighting at 6 Great Mead (OCC-owned), which was considered very bright and potentially not compliant.

Councillor Priority Fund: J. Hope-Smith advised that he is willing to share funds between his parishes where appropriate and encouraged the Parish Council to submit a funding request, noting that benches for the recreation ground (Item 6e) would meet the criteria.

#### 4. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 were approved by Council and signed by I. Duff.

#### 5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- a) **To consider ways to improve public engagement:** N. Milner opened the discussion, having circulated ideas to councillors in advance of the meeting, with a focus on being proactive rather than reactive in engagement. The possibility of establishing a Parish Council Facebook page was discussed. While it was acknowledged that this could lead to increased complaints, it was noted that effective responses and visible actions could create a positive impression of the Parish Council. Blewbury operates both a village page and a Parish Council page, and it was agreed to speak with Blewbury Parish Council to seek their views. Councillors were keen to review levels of interest in the Parish Council website. Visitor tracking could be introduced at a cost of £40 per quarter via the web host, however, N. Milner volunteered to review Google Analytics data initially. It was noted that the website is not currently well promoted and that Facebook and the website serve different purposes. Alternative engagement suggestions included displaying councillor photographs on the noticeboard to promote approachability, considering alternative Parish Council events and working with local groups. The Chair's surgery was cited as a positive example, although it was agreed that further initiatives could be explored. It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting in April should focus on encouraging community engagement, including actively inviting opinions and broader attendance. The anticipated outcomes of these initiatives would be improved community engagement and attendance at Parish Council meetings, alongside a better understanding of, and confidence in, the Parish Council. N. Milner agreed to continue developing the ideas presented, with support from other councillors as required.

#### 6. ITEMS FOR DECISION:

- a) **To instruct the Council's web contractor to carry out an accessibility review at a cost of the website at a cost of £168.00 to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.2 Level AA:** Councillors resolved to instruct Dark White Digital to undertake an accessibility review at a cost of £168.00.
- b) **Training Courses:**
- i) **To ratify: OALC Leading Your Council – I. Duff £65.00 (paid after the January meeting):** Councillors ratified the expenditure.
- ii) **To approve: Breakthrough Communications Data Protection Part 1 Foundations & Theory & Part 2: Accountability Lawfulness – Clerk £70.00:** Councillors approved the expenditure.

- iii) **To approve: OALC Parish Pros – C. Gover £60.00:** Councillors approved the expenditure.
- c) **Pavilion Car Park: To note the advice from SODC and appoint the Clerk to apply for a Certificate of Lawful Development once the project drawings are available:** Councillors noted the advice and agreed to appoint the Clerk to apply for a Certificate of Lawful Development.
- d) **To consider indicative solutions and cost estimates received for improvements to Footpath 13 (The Causeway), Footpath 9 (Shoe Lane) and Footpath 30 (Village Hall) and to agree next steps:**  
C. Shaikh reported that she had spoken with SCS Oxon Ltd for indicative solutions and cost estimates to help progress potential works and circulated the information to councillors prior to the meeting to aid discussion.  
**Footpath 13 (Parsonage Lane):** Three indicative options with cost estimates were presented, ranging from resurfacing and repairing the existing path to raising the full length of the path by approximately 10cm. This would result in a more robust resurfacing and potentially alleviate flooding. D. Rickeard raised concerns regarding the potential impact of increasing path height on water flow and surrounding land.  
Councillor decisions:
- To treat FP13 as a priority project for CIL expenditure.
  - To undertake further investigation of specifications, drainage implications and environmental impact.
  - To engage with OCC to clarify technical requirements and necessary consents before progressing to formal quotations.

This staged approach was agreed to enable informed decisions at each subsequent stage.

**Footpath 9 (Shoe Lane):** Decision: To confirm specification, seek three quotations and engage with OCC regarding consent for the proposal.

**Footpath 30 (Village Hall):** Decision: To clarify the specification including a potential land drain and the impact on adjacent properties, seek three quotations and engage with OCC regarding consent for the proposal.

- e) **To consider the use of CIL funds for the installation of picnic benches at the recreation ground and to agree locations:** C. Gover noted that the supplier of the benches at Butts Piece is no longer in that business; an alternative supplier has been found and comparative quotes are needed. Locations need to be considered and D. Rickeard confirmed that consultation with the football club would also be necessary to ensure that the locations do not restrict other rec ground use.

Decisions:

Agreement in principle to install two 4-seater wooden picnic benches, subject to obtaining quotes and clarifying locations for approval.

To apply to OCC's Councillor Priority Fund to cover the project costs.

- f) **To consider planning applications received since the last meeting:**

P26/S0001/HH Willowbrae Barn, Main Road, East Hagbourne – Construction of a four-bay open-sided car port. I. Duff noted that neighbours have raised concerns over the ridge height and emergency vehicle access to 3A. It was agreed that the Parish Council would object to the current plan, but should the plans be resubmitted with a lower ridge height and improved access, the Parish Council would rescind their objection. Additional planning applications received since the agenda was posted:

P26/S0307/HH 43 New Road, East Hagbourne – Proposed double storey side and rear extension, the insertion of a new dormer window, rooflight and changes to the fenestration. *Extension granted to allow a Parish Council response after the March meeting.*

P26/S0348/HH 7 The Crescent, East Hagbourne - Erection of a two storey side and rear extensions. Removal of chimney. *Extension granted to allow a Parish Council response after the March meeting.*

P25/S3788/FUL 89 New Road – 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to plans (parking and access)

## 7. ITEMS FOR REPORT:

- a) **Recreation Ground and Pavilion:** D. Rickeard reported that he has completed an inventory of contents for the pavilion. The specification drawings for the car park resurfacing are nearly ready, and it was noted that the Parish Council will need to follow procurement guidelines due to the anticipated cost.
- b) **Cemetery Committee:** R. Jaboor reported that follow up questions with contractors are underway to clarify the potential ditch remediation works. Following recent rains, the cemetery has suffered again with surface water flooding, leading to concerns raised on Facebook. The Clerk has submitted a request to Ridgeway Education Trust (leaseholder of the playing field land from OCC) for permission to complete the full works, and provided a template to send to the adjacent landowners to meet their lease obligations.
- c) **Employment Committee:** Nothing to report.
- d) **Butts Piece Allotments:** Nothing to report.
- e) **Community Speedwatch and Traffic Monitoring:** I. Duff reported that J. Beale of OCC will be the lead officer taking this forward and will be in a position to conduct a site visit in March to confirm suitability of locations. R. Jaboor reported that he has updated the proposal with 6 location options for VAR, and a preference for off-grid signage. There is a new volunteer for Community Speedwatch who needs to undertake training.
- f) **Public Art Project:** I. Duff reported that the steering group met with Linda Benton and Julie Grose on 19<sup>th</sup> January and artworks for the bus shelter and recreation ground gates are now being drawn up for approval. The S106 application for the sculpture project will be ready to submit shortly.

**g) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation:** D. Rickeard reported that the proposed changes are significant in an effort to make it more robust. The consultation questions are technical and at a high level, however the proposed changes should not impact the existing Neighbourhood plan.

**h) Matters raised at the Chairman’s Surgery and OALC Councillor’s Forum:**

I. Duff reported that the following issues were discussed at the 16<sup>th</sup> January Chairman’s surgery:

- Ongoing speeding on Blewbury Road despite 20mph limit (supported by parish speed surveys). Potential measures discussed: VAS, Community Speedwatch, and possibility of a temporary chicane for evaluation.
- Tree works in the Conservation Area – the villager was informed that applications should be made to South Oxfordshire District Council (Tree Officer), often via the tree surgeon.
- Suggestion of inter-parish collaboration on footpaths linking East & West Hagbourne, Upton and Blewbury; Discussed liaising with path wardens, Ramblers and OCC Countryside Access.
- Suggestion to consider raising Parsonage Lane causeway to address flooding.
- Reports of broken drain covers on Main Road allowing larger items into the drainage system.
- Suggestion to extend brick edging on Main Road from The Fleur to Shoe Lane to prevent verge erosion.

I. Duff noted the main points of discussion at the OALC meeting in early February:

- Andrew Parsons from OPFA was a guest speaker at the meeting.
- The Local Government Consultation which is open from 5<sup>th</sup> February – 26<sup>th</sup> March.
- Encouragement to hold elections at Parish Council level in 2027 and to apply for General Power of Competence if eligible.
- Social media usage, noting that Freedom of Information requests apply to all forms of communication including WhatsApp.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE:**

Complaints via email, on FB and the East Hagbourne WhatsApp group concerning potholes – Residents are encouraged to continue reporting via FixMyStreet.

Resident raised concerns over contractor vehicles damaging the track surface outside Millennium Woods – The Clerk has contacted Didcot Town Council who have confirmed that their team will review this.

**9. FINANCE:**

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

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

Payee	Item	Auth	Amount	VAT	Total	Date
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV9748 Dog Bin and General Waste Bin collections December 2025	DR / CG	£201.49	£40.30	£241.79	19/01/2026
Dark White Digital	INV002070 Web Hosting January	DR / CG	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	19/01/2026
EHSRC	INV094-25 Community Room Hire 11/12/2025	DR / CG	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	19/01/2026
HMRC	Q3 Employer NI contributions	DR / CG	£217.46	£0.00	£217.46	19/01/2026
Laura Lloyd	Expenses - Defibrillator pads x 3	DR / CG	£171.50	£34.30	£205.80	19/01/2026
Grundon Waste Management Ltd	PSI-1408902 Cemetery Bin Collections December 2025	DD	£93.41	£18.68	£112.09	20/01/2026
Hagbourne Parochial Charities	Butts Piece Lease 2025-26 January Payment (SECOND ATTEMPT)	CS / DR	£461.80	£0.00	£461.80	21/01/2026
OALC	INV 5964 Leading Your Council training course	CS / DR	£65.00	£13.00	£78.00	21/01/2026
Laura Lloyd	January Salary and WFH Allowance	DR / CG	£978.44	£0.00	£978.44	30/01/2026
Unity Trust Bank	Service Charge	Auto Payment	£8.10	£0.00	£8.10	31/01/2026
Scribe Accounting	INV 15607 Accounting Software Monthly Fee February	DD	£35.00	£7.00	£42.00	02/02/2026
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV9853 Dog Bin and General Waste Bin collections January 2026		£201.49	£40.30	£241.79	
Dark White Digital	INV002097 Web Hosting February 2026		£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	
EHSRC	INV101-25 Community Room Hire 15/01/2026		£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	

OALC	INV 6018 Data Protection Part 1 training course (Breakthrough Comms)		£35.00	£7.00	£42.00	
PATAS	IA/0214/25 Interim Internal Audit 2025-26		£165.00	£0.00	£165.00	
GeolIntegrity	INV 1660 CBR tests at East Hagbourne Pavilion car park		£1,625.00	£325.00	£1,950.00	
Laura Lloyd	Expenses - Google One Storage		£13.33	£2.66	£15.99	
Laura Lloyd	February Salary + WFH Allowance		£978.44	£0.00	£978.44	

**b) Receipts since last meeting:**

From	Item	Amount	Date
Nationwide	Interest January 2026	£104.47	30/01/2026
NatWest Bank	Interest January 2026	£196.59	30/01/2026
Redwood Bank	Interest January 2026	£273.66	31/01/2026
Hagbourne PCC	Standing Order	£4.00	02/02/2026
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£578.72</b>	

**c) Accumulated Account Balances (reconciled online 11/02/2026)**

Unity Trust Bank - T1 current account	£4,386.90
Unity Trust Bank - Instant access account	£26,930.20
Redwood Bank - 35 Day Notice Savings Account	£120,000.00
Nationwide - Instant Access Business Savings Account	£82,909.78
Natwest - Liquidity Manager 95 Day Notice Account	<u>£88,131.03</u>
Total	<u><u>£322,357.91</u></u>

**d) The Special Project Balances (as of 11/02/2026) are:**

Community Infrastructure Levy Fund	Received 28/04/23 so requires spending by 27/04/28	£14,728.78
	Received 27/10/23 so requires spending by 26/10/28	£106,843.63
	Received 26/04/24 so requires spending by 25/04/29	£4,165.09
	Received 24/10/24 so requires spending by 25/10/29	£115,173.81
	Received 25/04/25 so requires spending by 24/04/30	<u>£8,330.18</u>
	Total CIL money	£249,241.49
Community Projects Reserve Fund		£2,762.91
Planned Development Support Fund		£5,303.15
Cemetery Fund		£10,157.22
Climate and Biodiversity Reserve		£2,500.00
Reactive Works and Emergency Response Reserve		£4,000.00
Asset Maintenance Reserve		£7,423.73
Election Reserve		£1,000.00
S106 Funds		<u>£8,200.00</u>
	Total	<u><u>£290,588.50</u></u>

**e) General Reserve (as of 11/02/2026)**

£31,769.41

**b) Review and approval of pending payments:** Councillors reviewed the pending payments and approved those without prior minuted approval.

**c) To receive and consider the Interim Internal Audit Report (2025/26):** Councillors reviewed the report, and considered the following recommendations made by the internal auditor:

- Council may wish to develop a Statement of Control/Internal Controls Policy - Not a priority at this stage but it was agreed that it could be a useful tool particularly for new councillors to understand the process.
- Creation of a Tenders/Contracts page on the website – Councillors agreed – Clerk to action
- Add designated Cemetery and Allotment pages to the website and update information - Councillors agreed – Clerk to action
- Add Committee memberships and functions to Councillor/member information - Councillors agreed – Clerk to action
- Update the Clerk's title to include RFO – Clerk has already actioned

Additionally, guidance on compliance with Assertion 10 requirements was noted with thanks, and the Clerk is actively reviewing existing policies and procedures ahead of year end.

**10. ITEMS FOR REPORT AND INCLUSION ON THE MARCH AGENDA:**

None noted

The meeting closed at 21.34pm.

Items for consideration for the March agenda must be received by the clerk no later than Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March.  
**The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at The Pavilion, Great Mead, East Hagbourne.**

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

**APPENDIX 1: ACTION LIST (FOR INFORMATION ONLY: ITEMS WILL NOT BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING UNLESS FEATURED ON THE MAIN AGENDA)**

Action No	What	Who	Status
2023-03-01	Deanfield Homes Car Park Land Transfer	LL	19/06/2025 Transfer complete. Restriction removal still requires action.
2023-06-02	Parking and Traffic Management on Main Road	NM	13/11/2025 Two surveys to be drafted
2023-06-03	Footway repairs in the parish	ID/PD/RJ	4-5/12/2025 Slurry seal repairs completed along Main Road and Higgs Close. 11/12/2025 Follow up with OCC on damage/missed stretch of slurry seal 15/01/2026 Parts of Blewbury Road footways are scheduled for repairs in March 2026, the stretch outside Green Shutters will hopefully be completed at the same time. Snagging (damage repairs) will be completed on the Main Road slurry seal this Spring.
2023-10-03	Weed management on Main Road	LL/ID	01/07/2025 Referred to Johnny Hope-Smith for assistance
VARIOUS	Footpath accessibility: 2023-12-02 FP10 MFL to West Hagbourne 2023-12-03 FP12 Church Lane to Fieldside (FP25 towards Church last remaining stretch) 2023-12-04 FP13 Parsonage Lane 2024-01-01 FP1 West Hagbourne to Didcot 2024-03-02 FP15 Grange Footpath 2024-03-03 FP8 Bakers Lane to The Croft 2024-04-01 FP30 Village Hall 2025-11-01 FP9 Shoe Lane 2025-11-02 FP4 Wilcher Close	LL/CS/PD/ ID	03/10/2024 FP30 – Initial review of possible surface improvements undertaken by Chloe from the Highways Engagement team 05/12/2024 FP15 surface between Fieldside and the bridge would be better finished in tarmac to withstand flooding. This is under consideration. 17/07/2025 Volunteer labour available if required for FP8 10/10/2025 Surfacing options for FP12 stretch from FP25 towards Church need consideration. Rest of path and tarmac FP13 connecting slope now complete. 13/11/2025 Push for OCC review of FP9 Shoe Lane, speak to SCS Oxon about possible resurfacing works. 15/01/2026 Advice being sought from SCS Oxon Ltd on FP4 access, FP8, FP9, FP12, FP13, FP30 <b>12/02/2026 Agreement to move forward with FP13, FP9 and FP30 subject to permissions and quotes.</b>
2023-12-09	Community Speedwatch	RJ/ID	New coordinator and team members needed. <b>12/02/2026 New volunteer, needs to undertake training</b>
2024-02-04	Flood Management in the Parish	CS/DR/PD	26/02/2025 Leigh Travers and Carl Stallwood completed a walkabout to assess the rest of the watercourses in the parish with input from the flood group 29/04/2025 Leigh Travers visited the parish to meet with P. Dixon (cemetery) and Jane Bell (Flood Group) 15/01/2026 Ric Avery confirmed as an OCC Flood Warden <b>15/01/2026 Concern about debris in the drainage channel following recent footpath works – C. Shaikh to refer to L. Travers at SODC</b>
2024-03-06	From APM 2024: Main Road to Coscote road surface	OCC	An OCC matter as no agreement was made with the developer during the planning process. 03/12/2025 Further request for assistance sent to OCC Highways Engagement and C. Stallwood. The road has been reviewed recently but its condition will be reviewed again during the winter in poor conditions. 15/01/2026 A number of potholes have been marked up for repairs, red ones (urgent) have been filled today, white markings should be completed within 28 days. <b>03/02/2026 Further pothole repairs are being scheduled by OCC following a FixMyStreet report concerning white markings washing away before repairs could be completed</b>
2024-04-01	CIL Projects Shortlist	ALL	09/10/2025 Progress being made with Footpaths and Village Sparkle, recreation ground needs consideration as has the potential to use a lot of CIL funds.
2024-10-01	Blewbury Road Drainage	CS/LL	Initial communications being followed up

## ATTACHMENT 1:

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>CLLR JOHNNY HOPE-SMITH</b>
<b>PARISHES</b>	<b>ASTON TIRROLD/UPTHORPE, CHOLSEY, EAST HAGBOURNE, LITTLE WITTENHAM, LONG WITTENHAM, MOULSFORD, NORTH MORETON, SOUTH MORETON, WEST HAGBOURNE</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>FEBRUARY 2026</b>
<b>CONTACT DETAILS</b>	<a href="mailto:JOHNNY.HOPE-SMITH@OXFORDSHIRE.GOV.UK">JOHNNY.HOPE-SMITH@OXFORDSHIRE.GOV.UK</a>

Dear Parish Councillors and Residents,

Here are some updates and news I have gathered for you. Please provide any feedback; or if its too much or not enough and of course any more information on a specific topic I can help with. I have put in **BOLD** the items which I think may be specifically appropriate for the Parish Councils to consider advertising or acting upon



Best wishes,

Johnny

### **POTHOLES**

Following recent emails received from residents, conversations on the streets and general posts read on here I thought it might be a good idea to outline the current situation with highways and, yes, the dreaded pothole(s). As a motorist, cyclist, pedestrian and parent, I'm dealing with the same roads as everyone else and I completely share the frustration.

#### Key Details

- Long-term issue: national underfunding of roads. For more than a decade, councils nationwide have faced reduced road-maintenance grants, meaning less preventative resurfacing and more reactive pothole repairs.
- Recent weather has caused severe road deterioration. Heavy rain followed by repeated freezing temperatures is the worst possible combination for asphalt, causing rapid pothole formation across the whole country, not just Oxfordshire.
- Oxfordshire has more than doubled repair crews. The county council and its contractor now have twice as many teams out on the 3,000-mile network to tackle the surge in defects.
- Some repairs now require full structural work, not patches. Due to the scale of winter damage, many potholes can't simply be filled; larger failing sections need cutting out and resurfacing.

#### Links

- A good overview of the national, systemic problems behind this - BBC Panorama episode "The Pothole Problem" broadcasted on 8th December 2025 and on iplayer is worth a watch <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002nc89>
- Additional context from The Local Government Association <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/pothole-repair-funding-uk-has-reduced-more-majority-other-oecd-nations-lga-analysis>
- Additional crews link - <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/more-crews-repairing-potholes>
- Fix My Street Link - <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

#### **What Parishes Can Do**

- **Encourage Fix My Street submissions with photos, highlight the worst ones to me you are not getting suitable response times and action to with the FMS number. Highlight ones considered more hazardous.**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION**

A statutory government consultation on the future structure of local government in Oxfordshire has launched and runs from 5 February to 26 March.

#### Key Details

- There are three options being consulted on:
  - One Oxfordshire – a single countywide unitary council (Oxfordshire Council)
  - Two unitary councils – Oxford & Shires Council and Ridgeway Council
  - Three unitary councils – Greater Oxford Council, Northern Oxfordshire Council and Ridgeway Council

#### Links

- Consultation Link with links to the three proposals <https://oneoxfordshire.org.uk/>

#### What Parishes Can Do

- **Share the consultation link with residents and encourage participation.**
- **Consider submitting a formal parish council response, as parish-level feedback will form part of government's assessment.**

#### INFO - COUNTY COUNCIL SETS 2026/27 BUDGET

The FY 26/27 Budget was passed by Council on the 11th Feb

#### Key Details

- Central government will reduce Oxfordshire's grant funding by £27.2m by 2028/29, while assuming councils will fill the gap through the maximum 4.99% Council Tax rise every year
- Much of the extra Council Tax raised locally is immediately subtracted by the government through the new funding rules, meaning residents pay more but Oxfordshire receives less.
- Budget balanced for 2026/27 despite £5.4m shortfall, note that the council already knows it must find at least £15.5m in 2027/28, with more in later years due to continued grant cuts and demand pressures.

#### Links

- Budget Changes on OCC website - <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/about-your-council/council-tax-and-finance/new-budget-changes>
- General link on countrywide context - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gllzenpvpo>

#### INFO – PIZZA AND POLITICS AT WALLINGFORD TOWN HALL

On 6<sup>th</sup> February I attended the Pizza and politics youth engagement (secondary school) event, part Q&A, part workshop, lots of pizza.

#### Key Details

- The session was exceptionally positive - young participants came prepared with thoughtful, challenging and well-considered questions.
- Their contributions showed a deep understanding of issues affecting local communities, as well as a clear desire to influence decisions made at county level.
- The event demonstrated the importance of ensuring young people's voices remain at the heart of Oxfordshire's policy-making, particularly on themes such as education, transport, environment, and local services.

#### What Parishes Can Do

- **Consider inviting young residents to parish meetings or forums where appropriate, even if for a single agenda item - the quality of their questions and engagement shows they can add real value.**

#### REMINDER INFO - Nearly 70,000 Gullies Cleaned Since April

Oxfordshire County Council is on track to clean every highway drainage gully in the county by March 2026, as part of a £2.6 million programme to improve drainage and reduce flooding risk.

#### Key Details

- Target: Clean 145,000 gullies and manholes in 12 months.
- Progress: 67,000 gullies cleaned by end of October; 17,000 in October alone.
- Investment: £1.5m additional funding approved in the 2025–26 budget.

Minutes February 12<sup>th</sup> 2026

- Delivery: Crews doubled from 6 to 12, working day and evening shifts for efficiency.

Benefits:

- Reduces surface water and flood risk.
- Protects roads by preventing potholes caused by standing water and freezing.
- Technology: Tankers use asset management software to log cleans and schedule revisits.

#### **What Parishes Can Do**

- **Report blocked drains via Fix My Street:** <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>  
<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/nearly-70000-drainage-gullies-cleaned-since-april/>

#### **REMINDER: Councillor Priority Fund – Supporting Local Projects – HALF NOW ALLOCATED**

The Councillor Priority Fund has reopened, offering each Oxfordshire County Councillor £10,000 to support community projects within their division. This funding is designed to help deliver local priorities and strengthen community initiatives.

Parish councils, community groups, and local organisations are encouraged to apply for funding to support projects that benefit residents. Examples might include:

- Improvements to community facilities
- Local environmental initiatives
- Activities that promote wellbeing or inclusion
- Smaller-scale projects are especially encouraged, as the fund is modest and intended to support a wide range of communities across Oxfordshire

Key details:

- Applications must be submitted by 30 November **2026**
- Grants are typically paid within 28 days of approval
- Applicants must register for an account to apply and track progress
- Monitoring and reporting are required for successful projects

To ensure your project meets the funding criteria, please read the guidance document before applying.

#### **What parishes can do:**

- **Identify local projects that could benefit from modest funding**
- **Collaborate with community groups to develop proposals**
- **Submit applications early to allow time for review and payment**

Keep records and be prepared to report on outcomes

For more information or to apply, visit the Councillor Priority Fund page.

<https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund>

## ATTACHMENT 2:

<b>Title</b>	District Councillors' Report
<b>Councillors</b>	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson & Cllr Crispin Topping
<b>Parish</b>	East Hagbourne Parish Council
<b>Date</b>	12 February 2026

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

[Latest news](#) including draft budget press release (Full Council Meeting for budget is Thursday 12 February 6pm)  
[South News](#) a monthly resident newsletter packed with the latest news, events, and consultations happening across South Oxfordshire.

### **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

**Action** – [Respond to Government consultations on LGR](#)

[The Two Council proposal](#) is supported by South Oxfordshire District council, three other district councils in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Council).

### **Planning Policy**

**JLP Procedural Meeting Thursday 12 February 2026, 12 noon.**

**Action:** [view recording online](#)

For more information please go to the [JLP Examination webpage](#)

### **Neighbourhood Plan Templates**

**Action:** view our new neighbourhood planning templates available under our [Neighbourhood planning Resources webpage](#)

### **Didcot Garden Town**

**Action:** Pass by or through Didcot Parkway Station and stop to enjoy the colourful, inspiring artwork up in the glass windows at access/exit points and find out what is coming next with this [innovative project for the Cow Lane underpass](#).

### **CIL Grant Funding**

**Action:** Consider if there are any projects you wish to bring forward under [this scheme](#).

Scheme is now open and closes 5pm 30 March 2026.

### **Half term activities**

**Action:** Find out more on [Fun, theatre and family days out](#)

### **New Garden Waste Permits**

**Action:** Help communicate sale of [garden waste permits for 2026/2027 when the scheme is launched mid-February](#) .

### **Joint Taxi Licensing Policy**

**Action:** Respond to [consultation](#) by 10 March 2026.

Updates include topics such as card payments, enhanced safety measures and revised emission targets.