

EAST HAGBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DULY CONVENED AND HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY 2026

1. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:

Present were Chairman I. Duff, Vice Chairman P. Dixon, Cllrs C. Gover, N. Milner, D. Rickeard and C. Shaikh, and District Councillor C. Topping.

Apologies were received from Cllr R. Jaboor and County Cllr J. Hope-Smith

In attendance was L. Lloyd (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

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

2. PUBLIC FORUM AND QUESTIONS:

MOP1 voiced concerns on the recent extensive clearance along footpaths in East Hagbourne parish, noting that it appears contrary to Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) nature recovery ambitions. MOP1 has emailed OCC and cc'd the Parish Council. It was suggested that clearance of this extent had not occurred before.

C. Shaikh reported speaking with an OCC clearance crew working on Footpath 19, who advised they were clearing to a specified width; however, the crew were unaware of other extensive clearance works taking place elsewhere.

C. Topping commented that works of this scale, undertaken without communication with the Parish Council, were unacceptable. Concerns were raised that the clearance appeared significantly wider than required for a bridleway.

D. Rickeard confirmed he had already circulated an email to councillors, J. Hope-Smith and C. Topping, expressing concerns and recommending that OCC be asked to explain:

- why the works were undertaken at this time
- why no communication with the Parish Council took place; and
- whether further maintenance is planned that could impact sensitive works previously undertaken by the Parish Council and HUGS.

C. Topping confirmed that he would contact J. Hope-Smith to seek further information. Councillors agreed that the works appeared excessive. It was agreed that the parish council would make further enquiries with OCC regarding the works.

3. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:

I. Duff confirmed receipt of the County Councillor report and noted the useful additions in bold for Parishes to consider advertising or acting upon. It was agreed that the upcoming Rail disruption should be publicised. Please see attachment 4 for the full report.

C. Topping highlighted key points on the District Councillors' report, including:

- Planning training sessions (which he has attended and recommended to councillors). P. Dixon confirmed he is planning to attend.
- Neighbourhood Planning event on 28th January.
- Inspectors of the JLP have asked for a Procedural Meeting to discuss arrangements to move forward with the examination.
- Disabled Facilities Grants for residents of up to £50,000.
- The Thames Water reservoir proposal and associated safety issues raised by District Council correspondence.

Please see attachment 5 for the full report.

4. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11TH DECEMBER 2025: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th December 2025 were approved by Council and signed by I. Duff.

5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- a) **To discuss and agree in principle the use of CIL funds for improvements to Footpath 12 (final stretch from FP25 junction towards the church), footpath 30 (Village Hall), footpath 8 (Bakers Lane to The Croft), footpath 13 (Parsonage Lane), and footpath 9 (Shoe Lane), and a kerb access slope to footpath 4 (Wilcher Close), and to agree next steps for obtaining quotes and progressing the works:**

Councillors discussed the use of CIL funds for improvements to the following:

- FP12 (FP25 junction towards the Church): Requires aggregate suitable for heavy vehicle use and landowner approval.
- FP30 (Village Hall): Previous minor repairs have been non-durable; a more comprehensive solution is required, potentially including cambering to prevent pooling.
- FP8 (Bakers Lane to The Croft): Would benefit from some aggregate infill, but not full resurfacing
- FP13 (Parsonage Lane): Has a tarmac surface but remains a footpath; repairs required to the path surface and stream-edging.

- FP9 (Shoe Lane): Tarmac surface requires attention. It was also noted that there is still a post hole at the Main Road end of the path that needs to be filled.
- FP4 (Wilcher Close): Improved mobility access required; options include a contractor-installed slope or lower cost rubber/plastic kerb ramp.

It was agreed that C. Shaikh would seek initial guidance from SCS Oxon Ltd on all proposals. Three quotes will be required for works where appropriate. It was agreed that specifications, and time to discuss proposed works would be needed ahead of any meeting decision. D. Rickeard also noted that FP10 (Church towards West Hagbourne) should be considered in future planning.

6. ITEMS FOR DECISION:

- 2026/27 Budget Approval:** Councillors considered the revised draft budget, noting the approach taken to protect the real value of CIL funds and avoid reliance on uncertain future interest returns. The total precept requirement increases from £35357 to £36868 (4.27%). With a 2.4% increase in the tax base, this equates to a 1.85% increase for Band D properties, below current inflation. Councillors resolved to approve the 2026/27 budget as presented. See attachment 2.
- Precept decision:** In accordance with the approved budget, councillors resolved to set the precept for 2026/27 at £36868. The clerk confirmed that, although the submission deadline was the date of the meeting, the Precept Team had agreed to accept submission on 16th January.
- To ratify budgeted expenditure made between meetings: Defibrillator pads (3 sets, £171.50 ex VAT):** Councillors ratified the expenditure.

7. ITEMS FOR REPORT:

- Planning Applications:**
 - P25/3622/A Wayfinding signage around Didcot** Councillors had no comments to make on the plans.
 - P25/S3788/FUL 89 New Road** 2 x 3-bed semis in front of bungalow. This follows an earlier approved application (P25/S0541/FUL) for a single 3-bed bungalow on the same land, which the Parish Council did not object to, but noted that it was considered overdevelopment. Councillors agreed to object, citing overdevelopment, parking and access issues. Clarification to be sought on whether a PC objection automatically triggers planning committee consideration should the planning officers recommend approval.
 - P25/S1361/FUL 6 Blewbury Road** Drainage and energy information has been added to the application documents as requested; no further PC comment required.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation:** Closing 10th March. Councillors agreed to circulate initial views by email and decide whether to include on the February agenda.
- Attendance at planning training sessions confirmed:** P. Dixon 26th Feb, I. Duff 3rd March.
- Recreation Ground and Pavilion:** D. Rickeard reported on the ground inspection on 9th January relating to the grasscrete surfacing, to inform the tender specification. Glanville has carried out initial investigations into contractors.
 - D. Rickeard noted that statutory responsibilities under the newly agreed MoU between EHPC and EHSRC should be clarified; the Clerk will assist.
 - Advice has been sought regarding planning permission for resurfacing. SODC advised reviewing permitted development guidance and submitting a Lawful Development Certificate application once the specification is agreed.
- Cemetery Committee:** P. Dixon reported that three quotes have been received for drainage works. Clarification questions have been issued to enable accurate comparison.
- Employment Committee:** C. Gover reported that an informal meeting had been held to check in with the Clerk. Pension Regulator compliance will be submitted ahead of the 6th May deadline.
- CIL Project Progress:** I. Duff advised that potential expenditure items should progress to formal discussion. C. Gover asked councillors to review previously circulated signage information ahead of further email discussion.
- Butts Piece Allotments:** P. Dixon reported that SODC has requested evidence of grant expenditure. The Clerk will forward the BGG invoice to support the response.
- Flood Management:** Update received on recommendations from the East Hagbourne Section 19 Report from OCC on flood management, which councillors were invited to update.
 - OCC Flood Warden Scheme – Ric Avery has volunteered to become an OCC Flood Warden; P. Dixon will pass the flood fork to Ric. Councillors thanked Ric for volunteering, noting that Flood Wardens are independent but liaise with the Flood Group and Parish Council.
- Community Speedwatch and Traffic Monitoring:** I. Duff reported that speed survey results indicate significant speeding on Blewbury Road. Councillors agreed to consider proceeding with Vehicle Activated Signage (VAS) and to identify preferred locations/directions prior to the next meeting.
- St Andrews Crescent:** As Deanfield are not so involved in the site as previously and we do not get updates from them, it was agreed that this item be removed from future agendas.
- Public Art Project:** I. Duff reported that the steering group will meet on 19th January.
- Footpath Management:** (See Public Forum item)

C. Gover reported flooding on FP12 following recent rain. C. Shaikh will raise this with SCS Oxon Ltd as they were responsible for the drainage improvement works for the farmer.

D. Rickeard reported evidence of a culvert on FP17/18; a map will be circulated to councillors as it will help to understand the FP18 drainage discussion.

- I) Matters raised at the Chairman’s Surgery and OALC Councillor’s Forum:** I. Duff reported the following: There has been some conflict between trustees of sports facilities and Parish Councils; the EHPC/EHSRC MoU was deemed an appropriate way of proceeding when mentioned. Brief discussion on Unitary councils. Still awaiting feedback from the Government. Discussion on County and District Councillor attendance at PC meetings. Some parish councils seldom saw their district and county councillors, and others had problems stopping them from dominating the meeting.

8. CORRESPONDENCE: I. Duff noted a number of correspondence items:

I. Duff noted that he is attending the OALC course ‘Leading Your Council’ on 17th January and will report to councillors afterwards.

Report received noting that the Parish Council’s defibrillators were showing in the wrong locations on google maps. It is not clear where the information came from as they were not added by the Parish Council. D Rickeard and the clerk have corrected the locations and the clerk will attempt to claim ownership via google and update the information online.

Correspondence with OCC:

The slurry seal works along Main Road were done in non-ideal conditions and are being monitored – C. Stallwood has confirmed that damage repairs (snagging) will be completed this Spring.

C. Stallwood has confirmed that Blewbury Road has been scheduled for footway works in March and hopefully the Green Shutters footway stretch will be done at that time.

Following the continued multiple reports on FixMyStreet and requests from the Parish Council, Coscote Road has been marked up for pothole repairs this week; red marked potholes have been filled today (in wet conditions); the remaining holes marked white should be filled within 28 days. It was noted that it would be advisable to monitor how long it takes for these to degrade again, as it is patching work rather than a permanent solution.

Footpath 10 between East and West Hagbourne – Query - could CIL money be used to dog-proof the adjacent field boundary – confirmed this is not a justified CIL use as the fencing is adequate to contain the livestock; it is dogs off lead that are the concern in this instance.

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
Nest	Pensions Payment November 2025	DD	£66.55	£0.00	£66.55	11/12/2025
OCC	INV3920861599 Traffic Speed Surveys x 5	DR / CG	£950.00	£190.00	£1,140.00	16/12/2025
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV9638 Dog Bin and General Waste Bin collections November 2025	DR / CG	£201.49	£40.30	£241.79	16/12/2025
Dark White Digital	INV002041 Web Hosting December	DR / CG	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	16/12/2025
EHSRC	INV085-25 Community Room Hire 13/11/2025	DR / CG	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	16/12/2025
The Landscape Group Oxford	INV2148 Playground Gates Installation	DR / CG	£1,066.93	£213.39	£1,280.32	16/12/2025
Hagbourne Village Hall	INV1813 + INV1823 Meeting Room Hire Q1 and Car Park Electricity Nov 24-Dec 25	DR / CG	£136.06	£0.00	£136.06	16/12/2025
Grundon Waste Management Ltd	PSI-1397678 Cemetery Bin Collections November 2025	DD	£64.38	£12.88	£77.26	19/12/2025
Unity Trust Bank	Bank Service Charges	Auto-matic	£8.55	£0.00	£8.55	31/12/2025
Laura Lloyd	December Salary + WFH Allowance	DR / CG	£994.04	£0.00	£994.04	31/12/2025
Scribe Accounting	INV Accounting Software Monthly Fee December	DD	£35.00	£7.00	£42.00	02/01/2026
Hagbourne Parochial Charities	Butts Piece Lease 2025-26 January Payment	DR / CG	£461.80	£0.00	£461.80	02/01/2025
Hagbourne Parochial Charities	Rejected Butts Piece Lease 2025-26 January Payment	N/A	-£461.80	£0.00	-£461.80	05/01/2026
Nest	Pensions Payment December 2025	DD	£66.55	£0.00	£66.55	13/01/2025

Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV9748 Dog Bin and General Waste Bin collections December 2025		£201.49	£40.30	£241.79	
Dark White Digital	INV002070 Web Hosting January		£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	
EHSRC	INV094-25 Community Room Hire 11/12/2025		£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	
Hagbourne Parochial Charities	Butts Piece Lease 2025-26 January Payment (SECOND ATTEMPT)		£461.80	£0.00	£461.80	
HMRC	Q3 Employer NI contributions		£217.46	£0.00	£217.46	
Laura Lloyd	Expenses - Defibrillator pads x 3		£171.50	£34.30	£205.80	
Laura Lloyd	January Salary + WFH Allowance		£994.04	£0.00	£994.04	

b) Receipts since last meeting:

From	Item	Amount	Date
Moore	EROB CM089	£190.00	30/12/2025
Redwood Bank	Interest December 2025	£228.27	31/12/2025
Nationwide	Interest December 2025	£105.36	31/12/2025
NatWest Bank	Interest December 2025	£222.62	31/12/2025
Unity Trust Bank	Interest December 2025	£319.17	31/12/2025
West Hagbourne PC	CIL contribution for Cemetery bench and sign refurbishment	£213.12	08/01/2026
	Total	£1,278.54	

c) Accumulated Account Balances (reconciled online 14/01/2026)

Unity Trust Bank - T1 current account	£6,509.72
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	£82,805.31
Natwest - Liquidity Manager 95 Day Notice Account	£87,934.44
Total	<u>£324,179.67</u>

d) The Special Project Balances (as of 14/01/2026) 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	£8,330.18
	Total CIL money	£249,241.49
Community Projects Reserve Fund		£2,762.91
Planned Development Support Fund		£5,303.15
Cemetery Fund		£10,325.40
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		£8,200.00
	Total	<u>£290,756.68</u>

e) General Reserve (as of 14/01/2026)

£33,422.99

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

- c) **Bank reconciliations for October, November and December 2025:** P. Dixon confirmed that he had completed the internal control checks for Q3 with no issues raised; all documentation has been duly signed.
- d) **Q3 Budget Review:** Councillors reviewed the Q3 Budget monitoring report with observations which was circulated for consideration ahead of the meeting. No comments were made. Please see attachment 3.

10. ITEMS FOR REPORT AND INCLUSION ON THE FEBRUARY AGENDA:

Footpaths
Public Engagement

The meeting closed at 21.30pm.

Items for consideration for the February agenda must be received by the clerk no later than Wednesday 4th February.

The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on 12th February 2026 at The Pavilion, Great Mead, East Hagbourne.

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

ATTACHMENT 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
2023-12-09	Community Speedwatch	RJ/ID	New coordinator and team members needed to move this forward. 11/09/2025 Follow up two expressions of interest. 09/10/2025 One interested party not currently available
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 15/01/2026 Concern about debris in the drainage channel following recent footpath works – C. Shaikh to refer to L. Travers at SODC
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.
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
2025-03-01	Rymans Crescent Wildflower Area	LL	Assist with comms between SOHA and BGG if needed

ATTACHMENT 2: APPROVED 2026/27 BUDGET

	2024/25	Budget		2025/26		Budget	
	(Actuals)	2025/26	To 31/11/25	Est Dec-Mar	Total	2026/27	
Income							
Precept	32838	35357	35357	0	35357		
Lease Income	1465	1465	1465	0	1465	1465	
Wayleaves	54	55	62	0	62	60	
Allotments	801	805	881	0	881	810	Based on 95% occupancy
<i>Cemetery Contribution</i>		820					<i>based on 7.85% of staff costs and WFH allowance</i>
Interest	6731	7000	5367	2683	8050	5000	Best guess! This interest is not being factored into the income for determination of precept as it will maintain the value of the CIL fund in line with inflation
Pavilion insurance recovery	500	500	500	0	500	525	
Standing Order from PCC Gen	4	4	0	4	4	4	
Other	335		0	0	0	0	
OCC S101 Grass Cutting Agreement	838	838	838	0	838	838	
Total Income	43566	46844	44470	2687	47157	8702	
Expenditure-Revenue items							
Administration							
Clerk Remun.	-9160	-12450	-7543	-3676	-11219	-11100	Allowing for a 5% NJC payrise in April 2026. Employers NI and pension contributions are separate.
Employers NI Contribution	0	0	-312	-280	-592	-1080	
Employers Pension Contribution	0	0	-360	-200	-560	-610	
Payroll Management Costs	0	-400	-265	-400	-665	-420	Payroll and pension management. 2024/25 fee paid in April due to late billing
Bank fees	-80	-110	-72	-36	-108	-135	Unity Trust T2 Service and estimated Transaction Charges
Accounting software	-70	-420	-280	-140	-420	-420	
Subscriptions	-490	-520	-664	0	-664	-700	2026/27 Based on SLCC, OALC, ONPA, ICO, CFO and Parish Online Mapping
Website	-440	-590	-240	-220	-460	-620	£480 hosting fees plus allowance for ad-hoc works

Training Courses	-454	-750	0	-250	-250	-750	
Meeting Room Hire	-334	-420	-183	-140	-323	-450	Based on 12 PC meetings plus allowance for ad-hoc
Insurance	-1356	-1356	-1643	0	-1643	-2000	Will be asking for quotes in early 2026
Audit Costs-External	-630	-420	-420	0	-420	-420	
Audit Costs-Internal	-280	-295	-150	-145	-295	-325	
Legal Expenses	0	-1000	0	0	0	0	
PC Election Costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Loan Capital	-4735	-4776	-2377	-2398	-4775	-4859	Last 2 PWLB interest repayments for loan 505533.
Loan Interest	-188	-147	-84	-63	-147	-64	Last 2 PWLB interest repayments for loan 505533.
Parish Council Grants	-700	-1000	-3900	-100	-4000	-1100	£3,000 grant paid to Friends of Hagbourne Pool from general reserve. Increased grants budget by 10% for 2026/27
Other Admin	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Administration costs	-18917	-24654	-18493	-8048	-26541	-25052	
Office Costs							
Office Expenses & Clerks Travel	-495	-250	-122	-83	-205	-275	
Office Equipment	0	-500	0	-500	-500	0	Provision for new laptop in early 2026
Working From Home Allowance	0	-312	-208	-104	-312	-312	
Total Office Costs	-495	-1062	-330	-687	-1017	-587	
Ground Maintenance							
Car Park Maintenance/Repairs	0	-1000	-931	0	-931	-1000	Disabled Bays paid for in 2025/26. Provision for LED replacement/Drain clearance etc
Car Park Electricity	-45	-70	0	-70	-70	-150	ADJUSTED BASED ON 2024-25 INVOICE (NEW TARIFF)
Play Equipment Inspection	-90	-100	-92	0	-92	-105	
Recreation Ground/Play Equipment	0	-2130	-496	-533	-1029	-2250	Net bridge repair
Pavilion Expenses	0	-650	0	-650	-650	0	Building valuation as recommended for consideration by IA
Grass Cutting and Hedges (contract)	-1710	-3800	-1070	-720	-1790	-3990	Allowing for 14 cuts on a 2-3 week schedule. This figure includes the annual car park hedge cutting. Recreation ground and cemetery cuts are not included as paid for separately. This has been separated from the scheduled items on the contract for clarity
Trees and hedge trimming (ad hoc)	-550	-1700	-1115	-425	-1540	-1785	Battery replacement and 3 sets of pads required in 25/26 NB: Community Shop defibrillator out of warranty but still fully operational. Clerk to investigate grant options for a replacement
Defibrillator Costs	-254	-500	0	-500	-500	-175	

Dog Bin Emptying	-1239	-1352	-1121	-760	-1881	-2500	
Dog Bin costs	0	-35	0	-35	-35	-40	
General Waste Bin costs	0	-156	-104	-52	-156	-156	
Parks & Open Spaces	-491	0	0	0	0	0	
Butts Piece Lease	-895	-960	-462	-480	-942	-970	ADJUSTED TO REFLECT AN ESTIMATED RPI OF 4.5%
War memorial repair	0	0	-125	0	-125	0	
Other	-7002	-	0	0	0	0	FP4 grant expenditure in 2024
Warm Hub expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Ground Maintenance	-12276	-12453	-5516	-4225	-9741	-13121	
Allotments							
Allotment Costs (Water)	-105	-200	-390	0	-390	-210	Overpaid for water in 2025/26 at season end
Allotments Japanese Knotweed Treatment	-600	-600	-600	0	-600	-600	Last of 3 annual payments
Allotment Hedge Cutting	0	-450	-450	0	-450	-475	
Allotment Maintenance	-450	-500	-1359	0	-1359	-525	£1000 of the 2025/26 spend was the grant from SODC for clearance by Wilcher Close Gate
Total Allotments	-1155	-1750	-2799	0	-2799	-1810	
Total	-32843	-39919	-27138	-12960	-40098	-40570	
Non regular Revenue items							
Incomings-Village Grants	7650	0	0	0	0	0	
Incomings - Legal	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	7650	0	0	0	0	0	
Outgoings							
Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Annual Surplus/Deficit-Revenue	18373	-75	17332	-10272	7059	-36868	PRECEPT FIGURE TO BREAK EVEN BASED ON INCOME/EXPENDITURE PRESENTED IN THE BUDGET

Special Funds & Reserves	Closing balance	Opening balances			Closing balance	Opening balances
CIL Monies Received	119339		8330	0	8330	
CIL Expenditure	-23570		-28155	-25000	-53155	
CIL Fund	269803	269803	-19825	-25000	224978	224978
Cemetery Fees	5109		1508	923	2431	
Cemetery Expenditure	-6020		-5927	-1000	-6927	
Cemetery Fund	14700	14700	-4419	-77	10205	10205
Development Fighting Fund	5303	5303	0	0	5303	5303
Community Projects Income			0	0	0	
Community Projects Expenditure			-1950	-1800	-3750	
Community Projects Reserves Fund	4713	4713	-1950	-1800	963	963
Climate Change and Biodiversity Reserve		2500	0	0	2500	2500
Reactive Works and Emergency Reserve		4000	0	0	4000	4000
Asset Maintenance Income			0			
Asset Maintenance Expenditure			-1509	-5692	-7201	
Asset Maintenance Reserve		10000	-1509	-5692	2799	2799
Election Reserve		1000	0	0	1000	1000
S106 Public Art Project Income			10000			
S106 Public Art Project Expenditure			-1800			
S106 Public Art Project Fund			8200	0	8200	8200

Included expenditure for FP18 drainage, cemetery drainage, bus shelter, minor path works and village sparkle for 25/26. 26/27 - Projects currently unconfirmed

Net Income/Expenditure-SF&Reserves	94858	0	-19503	-32569	247145	0
Net Position-Revenue/SF&Reserves	113231	-75	-2171	-42841	254204	-36868
General Reserve						
VAT	2444	8371	8371	0	8371	10000

estimated VAT refund for 2025/26 (will be refunded to EHPC in April/May 2027)

ATTACHMENT 3: Q3 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

East Hagbourne Parish Council - Quarter 3
(to 31/12/2025 - All Budgeted Cost Centres
and Codes)

12 January 2026 (2025
 - 2026)

Accumulative to end of 3rd quarter

				Ac- tuals	Bud get	Budg eted	Ac- tual	Receipts	Budg eted	Ac- tual	Payments		
				202 4/25	202 5/26	re- ceipts	re- ceipts	Variance	pay- ment s	pay- ment s	Variance		
Income													
1		Precept		328 38	353 57	35,35 7.00	35,35 7.00		(0 %)			(N/A)	
2		Lease Income		146 5	146 5	1,465 .00	1,465 .00		(0 %)			(N/A)	
3		Wayleaves		54	55	55.00	62.41	7.41	(13 %)			(N/A)	
4		Allotment Income		801	805	805.0 0	880.6 3	75.6 3	(9 %)			(N/A)	
5		Cemetery Contribution							(N/ A)			(N/A)	
6		Interest		673 1	700 0	5,250 .01	6,242 .18	992. 17	(18 %)			(N/A)	
7		Pavilion Insurance Re- covery		500	500	500.0 0	500.0 0		(0 %)			(N/A)	
8		OCC S101 Grass Cutting Agreement		838	838	838.0 0	838.0 4	0.04	(0 %)			(N/A)	
9		Standing Order PCC Gen		4	4				(N/ A)			(N/A)	
4 7		Grants Received		765 0					(N/ A)			(N/A)	
5 0		Other		335					(N/ A)			(N/A)	
Sub Total for Income				512 16	460 24	44,27 0.01	45,34 5.26	1,07 5.25	(2 %)			(N/A)	
Administration													
1 0		Staff Costs		916 0	124 50				(N/ A)	9,337 .50	8,501 .95	835. 55	(8%)
1 1		Payroll Management			400				(N/ A)		265.0 0	- 265. 00	(N/A)
1 2		Bank Fees		80	110				(N/ A)	82.49	80.40	2.09	(2%)

*Cemetery contribution is now allocated to staff budget directly from the cemetery fund on Scribe so not recorded as received income

*The Budgeted figure here includes the Cemetery contribution, NI and Pension so the comparative total staff cost is £9892.77

13	Accounting Software	70	420				(N/A)	315.0 0	315.0 0		(0%)
15	Subscriptions	490	520				(N/A)	520.0 0	663.9 9	- 143.99	(-27%)
16	Website Costs	440	590				(N/A)	442.4 9	270.0 0	172.49	(38%)
17	Training Courses	454	750				(N/A)	562.5 0		562.50	(N/A)
18	Meeting Room Hire	334	420				(N/A)	315.0 0	220.2 5	94.75	(30%)
19	Insurance	1356	1356				(N/A)	1,356.00	1,642.76	-286.76	(-21%)
20	Audit Costs - External	630	420				(N/A)	420.0 0	420.0 0		(0%)
21	Audit Costs - Internal	280	295				(N/A)	295.0 0	150.0 0	145.00	(49%)
22	Legal Expenses		1000				(N/A)	750.0 1		750.01	(N/A)
23	PC Election Costs						(N/A)				(N/A)
37	Loan Capital	4735	4776				(N/A)	4,776.00	4,775.38	0.62	(0%)
38	Loan Interest	188	147				(N/A)	147.0 0	146.9 6	0.04	(0%)
39	Grants Awarded	700	1000				(N/A)	900.0 0	3,900.00	-3,000.00	(-333%)
49	Other						(N/A)				(N/A)
79	Employers NI						(N/A)		312.34	-312.34	(N/A)
89	Employers Pension Contribution						(N/A)		359.89	-359.89	(N/A)
	Sub Total for Administration	18917	24654				(N/A)	20,218.99	22,023.92	-1,804.93	(-8%)
	Office Costs										
14	Office Expenses including Clerk Travel	495	250				(N/A)	187.5 1	121.9 2	65.59	(34%)
74	Office Equipment		500				(N/A)				(N/A)
75	WFH Allowance		312				(N/A)	234.0 0	234.0 0		(0%)

*Includes Parish Online mapping and ICO Registration

*£3000 FHP Grant agreed to be spent from General Reserve

*Separate category to staff costs (basic salary) for transparency

*Separate category to staff costs (basic salary) for transparency

Sub Total for Office Costs		495	106 2				(N/A)	421.5 1	355.9 2	65.5 9	(15%)
Allotments											
3 4	Allotment Costs	105	200				(N/A)	200.0 0	389.5 4	- 189.54	(-94%)
3 5	Allotment Maintenance	450	500				(N/A)	375.0 0	1,359 .00	- 984.00	(-262%)
3 6	Japanese Knotweed Treatment	600	600				(N/A)	600.0 0	600.0 0		(0%)
7 7	Allotment Hedges		450				(N/A)	450.0 0	450.0 0		(0%)
Sub Total for Allotments		115 5	175 0				(N/A)	1,625 .00	2,798 .54	- 1,173.54	(-72%)
Ground Maintenance											
2 4	Car Park Maintenance/Repairs		100 0				(N/A)	750.0 1	931.3 5	- 181.34	(-24%)
2 5	Car Park Electricity	45	70				(N/A)	70.00	117.8 1	- 47.81	(-68%)
2 6	Play Equipment Inspection	90	100				(N/A)	100.0 0	92.00	8.00	(8%)
2 7	Defibrillator Costs	254	500				(N/A)	250.0 0		250.00	(N/A)
2 8	Pavilion Expenses		650				(N/A)				(N/A)
2 9	Grass Cutting and Hedges (Contract)	171 0	380 0				(N/A)	2,850 .00	1,070 .00	1,78 0.00	(62%)
3 0	Trees and Hedge Trimming (Ad-Hoc)	550	170 0				(N/A)	1,275 .00	1,115 .00	160.00	(12%)
3 1	Dog Bin Emptying	123 9	135 2				(N/A)	1,013 .99	1,311 .91	- 297.92	(-29%)
3 2	Dog Bin Costs		35				(N/A)				(N/A)
3 3	Butts Piece Lease	895	960				(N/A)	480.0 0	461.8 0	18.2 0	(3%)
4 0	Other	700 2					(N/A)		125.0 0	- 125.00	(N/A)
4 8	Parks and Open Spaces	491					(N/A)				(N/A)
7 2	Recreation Ground/Play Equipment		213 0				(N/A)	1,597 .50	496.0 0	1,10 1.50	(68%)

* Allotment water costs higher due to dry weather. Wasp Nest removal

*£1000 expenditure covered by SOHA Grant

*Disabled Bay markings completed in October

*New tariff higher than anticipated - adjusted for 2026/27 budget

*3x pads purchased to be paid in Jan clerk expenses

*Grass cutting less frequent due to dry weather

*Additional collection for x3 bins approved. Higher collection charge from 1st October so will be over budget this year.

*Main Road raised path weed clearance

7	General Waste Bin Emptying		156				(N/A)	117.0	114.8	2.17	(1%)
3								0	3		
Sub Total for Ground Maintenance		122	124				(N/A)	8,503	5,835	2,66	(31%)
		76	53					.50	.70	7.80	
	TOTALS	183		4427	4534	1075	(2%)	3076	3101	-245	(2%)
		73		0	5			9	4		

NET accumulative variance to END of Quarter 3

830

ATTACHMENT 4:

TITLE	COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT
AUTHOR	CLLR JOHNNY HOPE-SMITH
PARISHES	ASTON TIRROLD/UPTHORPE, CHOLSEY, EAST HAGBOURNE, LITTLE WITTENHAM, LONG WITTENHAM, MOULSFORD, NORTH MORETON, SOUTH MORETON, WEST HAGBOURNE
DATE	JANUARY 2026
CONTACT DETAILS	JOHNNY.HOPE-SMITH@OXFORDSHIRE.GOV.UK

Dear Parish Councillors and Residents,

Here are some updates and news I have gathered for you. Please provide any feedback, 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 Parishes to consider advertising or acting upon



Best wishes,

Johnny

Didcot – Oxford Rail Line Closure: Buses Replacing Trains (1–8 February 2026)

Major engineering work at Oxford Station means the rail line between Didcot Parkway and Oxford will be fully closed for eight days at the start of February. All services on this stretch will be replaced by buses.

Why is this happening?

Network Rail is demolishing and replacing the Botley Road railway bridge, installing infrastructure for Oxford's new Platform 5, and carrying out work required for the Oxford Station Enhancement Project.

- Closure dates: Sunday 1 February – Sunday 8 February 2026
- All trains between Didcot Parkway and Oxford cancelled
- Replacement buses will operate:
- 2 buses per hour non-stop Didcot ↔ Oxford
- 1 bus per hour calling at Radley
- CrossCountry will run buses Didcot ↔ Oxford ↔ Banbury
- Rail replacement services depart from the front of Didcot station and Becket Street long-stay car park in Oxford

What Parishes Can Do

- **Share the closure dates (1–8 February) with commuters**
- **Encourage residents to check National Rail journey planners before travelling**
- **Highlight that services may be busier than usual, with longer journey times**
- **Signpost the official engineering works page:**
<https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/engineering-works/didcot-parkway-oxford-20260201/>

Free Park & Ride Bus Travel Offer to Continue Until March 2026

Oxfordshire County Council has confirmed that free Park & Ride bus journeys will now continue until 31 March 2026. The scheme was introduced on 29 October 2025 alongside the temporary congestion charge and has seen a large increase in usage.

Why the extension?

The scheme has proven extremely popular, with over 179,000 additional Park & Ride journeys in the first two months compared with the previous year. Increased usage is helping to reduce traffic, speed up buses, and improve air quality. Income from the temporary congestion charge is being reinvested to fund the offer.

Key Details

- Free travel valid until: **31 March 2026**
- Who can travel free: Up to two adults and three children with a valid Park & Ride parking ticket
- Where it applies: On any Stagecoach, Oxford Bus Company, or Thames Travel bus that stops at an Oxford Park & Ride site
- Parking cost: £2.50 for up to 16 hours (bus travel element is free)
- Usage increase: Redbridge Park & Ride up 63%, others also showing significant growth

What Parishes Can Do

- **Share the extended free travel period (until 31 March 2026) with residents**
- **Encourage residents travelling to Oxford to use Park & Ride as the cheapest and fastest option**

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/free-park-and-ride-bus-travel-offer-to-continue/>

REMINDER - Consultation – Improving Oxfordshire’s Fire and Rescue Service

Oxfordshire County Council is consulting on proposals to improve how the Fire and Rescue Service responds to emergencies and delivers community safety. The aim is to ensure:

- More fire engines available during peak risk times
- Faster response to incidents across Oxfordshire
- Better alignment of resources to areas of greatest need
- Futureproofing the service for growth and sustainability

Why change?

- Currently, fewer firefighters are on duty during the day, when emergencies are most frequent, and more at night, when incidents are less common.
- This imbalance can lead to slower daytime response times and costly overtime.
- Changes projected to deliver £189k–£310k annual efficiencies by reducing overtime and fleet costs and allow reinvestment into prevention work and modern facilities
- Proposals are based on independent modelling and include reshaping prevention and protection work.

More locally, Impact on Rural Villages like ours (e.g., Cholsey, Wittenhams, Moretons, Hagbournes): positives.

- Faster daytime response: The main proposal forecasts 1 min 46 sec quicker arrival for the first fire engine during the day.
- More prevention work: Extra daytime capacity means more home safety visits and community risk reduction activities in rural areas.
- No change to the Didcot day crew and key hub station

More locally, negatives;

- Wallingford Fire Station Changes
 - If moved to Crowmarsh, this is positive for modern facilities, but it means construction disruption and possible longer travel for some staff.
 - On-call firefighters who mainly work during the day may face redundancy risk.
- While daytime response improves, night-time response remains vulnerable due to low on-call availability.
- Staff Morale and Recruitment - Changes to crewing models and relocation may affect morale and retention, especially for on-call firefighters in South Oxfordshire.

Key dates

- Consultation Closes: 20 January 2026
- Decision: Spring 2026 after Cabinet review

What Parishes can do

- **Encourage residents to read the consultation document and take the survey:**
- **Take part here <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/frs-consultation>**
- **Offer feedback on local priorities (e.g., rural coverage, prevention work)**

REMINDER - Your residents will need to book a visit to a household waste recycling centre from January

Oxfordshire County Council has agreed changes to how the county’s seven HWRCs will operate, following a public consultation with over 5,800 responses

Why the changes?

It is designed to improve recycling rates and traffic flow and ensure fairer costs for Oxfordshire taxpayers.

Key Details

- Booking system starts: 14 January 2026
- Residents to book up to two weeks in advance or 30 minutes before visiting.
- Customers must separate recyclable material from mixed waste before visiting.
- £15 charge for non-Oxfordshire residents per visit.
- Van/trailer permits reduced to 10 per year.

What Parishes Can Do

- **Share the booking system start date (14 January 2026) with residents.**
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/household-waste-recycling-centres/book-recycling-centre-visit>
- **Encourage sorting waste before visiting to comply with new rules.**
- **Inform residents about permit changes and charges for non-Oxfordshire users.**

REMINDER: Councillor Priority Fund – Supporting Local Projects

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>

INFO: Council Warns of Major Budget Challenges Following Government Funding Cuts

Oxfordshire County Council has published its draft budget for 2026/27, warning of significant financial pressures due to changes in government funding distribution.

Why this matters

A new funding formula redistributes money away from Oxfordshire, creating a £5.4m gap for 2026/27 and at least £14m more savings needed in 2027/28.

By 2028/29, grant funding will reduce by £24.1m, excluding a £3.1m ring-fenced increase for Families First Partnership.

The government assumes councils will raise Council Tax by 4.99% annually for the next three years.

Key Details

Budget setting date: 10 February 2026.

Options include:

- Use of reserves and bank interest income.
- Reduced contingency for pay inflation.
- Additional £1.5m savings from services in 2026/27.

Positive investments proposed for this FY:

- £4m drainage improvements over two years.
- £150k Wantage Market Place redesign.
- Library upgrades: £360k Wantage, £250k Goring (+£500k in 2027/28), £550k Didcot.
- £14m adult social care, £19m children's services.
- £400k park & ride ticket scheme continuation.
- £320k bus stop digital display maintenance.

ATTACHMENT 5:

Title	District Councillors' Report
Councillors	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson & Cllr Crispin Topping
Parish	East Hagbourne Parish Council
Date	15 January 2026

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

[South News](#) a monthly resident newsletter packed with the latest news, events, and consultations happening across South Oxfordshire.

Register for Neighbourhood Planning event on 28 January at 2pm Didcot Civic Hall

Event 2pm to 5pm on **28 January** at the **Didcot Civic Hall**, open to parish councillors and clerks with an interest in neighbourhood planning. The event will:

- help groups understand what recent and proposed national changes to the planning system mean for neighbourhood plans.
- introduce the **Neighbourhood Planning Guides and Templates** prepared by the council to support groups progressing neighbourhood plans, particularly in the context of withdrawn national funding.
- optional session at the end for Q&A for Local Government Reorganisation

How to Join:

RSVP before 11.59pm on Monday 26 January.

<https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/planning/e590ce70/>

If you experience any difficulties registering online, please contact planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk or telephone **01235 422 422**

Agenda

- Welcome and introduction at 2pm
- Understanding recent and proposed national planning changes and what they mean for neighbourhood plans
- The continued role and value of neighbourhood planning in an evolving planning landscape
- Q&A session
- Break and networking (refreshments provided)
- Introduction to a new suite of neighbourhood planning guides and templates
- Q&A session
- Local Government Reorganisation Q&A
- Close at 5pm

The event will include participation from the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Planning Alliance (ONPA), who will provide a community perspective on the value of neighbourhood plans and their role in shaping local places.

Planning Policy

Joint Local Plan (JLP) Examination

Following our correspondence with the Inspectors on the subject of Duty to Cooperate (DtC), the Inspectors of our JLP have asked for a Procedural Meeting (PM) which will take place 12-2pm on 12th February at Abbey House Meeting Room 1, Abingdon, OX14 3JE to discuss arrangements to move forward with the examination.

This PM will:

- look at practical arrangements of resuming the examination of the Plan given the anticipated change in the law over DtC.
- be held in public with interested persons able to attend and live streamed
- allow for only Inspectors and Councils to participate in the discussion at this stage – Representors will be able to take part in relevant future hearing sessions

Follow the link for the recent [press release](#) and [latest news on JLP](#)

Oxford Growth Commission Interim report

[Neale Coleman's Interim Report](#) was published on 15 December. It identifies barriers to growth and sets out 47 recommendations to improve infrastructure and speed up development. The Commission will continue its work through 2026, with a final report expected later, within a year.

Planning Reforms

Government has released a raft of [new guidance](#), including details on the forthcoming 30-month process for preparing new-style local plans.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

A [draft revised NPPF](#) was published on 16 December 2025 for consultation until 10 March 2026. It aims to create a more rules-based system and accelerate delivery of 1.5 million homes this Parliament.

What this means for South and Vale

Although Government policy and the local plan system are changing, there is no direct effect on the Joint Local Plan. The JLP qualifies as a transitional plan, so it is being examined against the 2023 NPPF. For the JLP, we do not need to immediately meet new national policies, adopt the new housing numbers, or switch to the new plan-making system. Those changes will apply to a subsequent local plan. Where these changes impact on development management decision making, officers will set out the relevant weight to be applied in their reports.

Our Planning team sent a [letter](#) to the Town and Parish councils in December with a clarification and summary of the government's current proposals to reform the planning system.

Town and Parish Councils have been sent invitations directly (to the clerk – on 12th January) to send two representatives to attend a **Planning Training session at Cornerstone, Didcot on Tuesday 3rd March 6-7.30pm.**

Coming soon: Community Infrastructure Levy Grant

The second round of funding for the Community Infrastructure Levy Grant Fund will open to Town and Parish councils and not-for-profit community groups in South Oxfordshire early this year.

A total of £750,000 is being offered to support projects that improve or create new community amenities such as community centres, sports and cultural facilities, play areas, and open spaces.

Grants between £75,000 and £250,000 will be available for organisations to apply for to support projects in the district which are needed due to development in the area.

You can find out more in [our latest press release](#), please help us to spread the word to organisations that could benefit in your ward.

Thames Water funding for community flood prevention projects

Thames Water is offering local organisations funds to install small scale SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) schemes e.g. planting, paving removal, water butts etc like the rain gardens we have installed at Portway car park in Wantage. The funding will prioritise areas that are known flooding hotspots - [see this map](#).

Applications are open until **31 March**. There is a webinar on applying in January. Interested parties should get in touch with swmp.applications@thameswater.co.uk. Please help us to spread the word.

Arts Centres in Southern Oxfordshire launch new websites

Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot and The Beacon Arts, Entertainment and Community Centre in Wantage have launched new websites to make it easier for visitors to explore what's on offer.

- [Cornerstone Arts Centre](#)
- [The Beacon](#)

Thames Water Reservoir consultation

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse have submitted their consultation responses on Thames Water's proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO). Read more about the responses in our press releases: [South](#) / [Vale](#).

Thames Water launched a public consultation in October 2025 on the proposed reservoir, which ran until 13 January 2026, a deadline which has been [extended to 23 January](#). Thames Water will accept comments by email to sesro@jp-sos.com.

The feedback gathered will inform Thames Water's Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the government, expected in autumn 2026.

We've created a useful [FAQ](#) for Thames Water's proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) as we know this is an important topic for both council members and our residents.

Laptop donation to Aspire and SOFEA

The councils donated the older laptops which still work but are no longer usable for South and Vale to SOFEA and Aspire for their 'getting people online' programme and supporting local people. This included:

- 276 devices in total
- 154 laptops
- 89 Surface pros
- 33 desktops

You can also donate your unwanted laptops to help - [Put your old laptops to good use!](#)

Councils secure a high-quality and sustainable future for leisure facilities in uncertain time

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have secured the future of the districts' leisure services by extending their leisure contract for a further three years, unlocking savings, and securing fresh investment in facilities until 31 August 2029.

With the government planning to reorganise councils in Oxfordshire in the coming years, a short-term contract extension - rather than a new long-term deal - provides the greatest flexibility for the new unitary council that will be replacing the two districts in the next few years, whichever form it takes.

The councils current long term leisure services contract was nearing its end in August 2026. Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), who operate under the brand 'Better', has successfully delivered leisure services on behalf of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, since the award of a joint leisure operating contract in 2014 (and separately for both councils for several years before that). This covers leisure facilities - with seven in South Oxfordshire and four in Vale of White Horse, (including outdoor pools in both areas).

Changes within the new three-year extension contract offer significant financial benefits for both councils, generating cost savings without any compromise on service. There is further significant investment earmarked for facilities across both districts.

Both councils have invested significantly in sports and leisure facilities over the last few years, with further investment planned over the coming year. Investments will focus on quality, accessibility and sustainability.

Multi-million-pound major energy-saving decarbonisation projects across several sites, coming to fruition in 2025/2026 – such as installation of insulation, new windows, solar panels, air source heat pumps and external wall insulation - aims to reduce the councils' overall carbon emissions by more than 25 per cent.

The councils have also recently adopted Playing Pitch and Leisure Facility Strategies, which provide a road map for the future aspirations of leisure and sports provision.