

Minutes for the Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 28th January 2025 at 8.00pm

Present:

Councillor Tim Banister
Councillor Phil John (Chairman)
Councillor David Sullivan (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Peter Gorman
The Clerk
Residents and Public – 4

Welcome and introductions

Members are reminded that this is a meeting in public, not a public meeting, and all points, questions and comments should be addressed through the Chair.

Apologies for Absence Received from District Councillor Chris Brant, District Councillor Phil Chapman

Declarations of Interest *Members are asked to declare any personal interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.*

1180 Minutes of the meeting held 26th November 2024 (previously circulated) and Matters arising. The minutes had been circulated in advance of the Meeting. It was agreed that there were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

1181 Clerks Report
Financial Statement

The Clerk reported that 9 cheques had been raised in the period November to December 2024

772	Thomas Fox	Grass cutting 13	323.60	In Budget
773	Thomas Fox	Grass cutting 14	323.60	In Budget
774	CDC	Dog bin emptying	308.88	In Budget
776	DM Payroll	Payroll Services	50.00	In Budget
777	SLCC	Annual subscription	110.00	In Budget
778	KallKwik	Mollington Matters	87.00	In Budget
780	S Dean	Wooden Posts	93.50	In Budget
781	Clerk	Salary	754.50	In Budget
782	HMRC	Salary	169.20	In Budget

There was £469.37 VAT outstanding at the end of December 2024 which has not been claimed.

Taking the above into account, the expected bank balance is £24,609.09 which is reconciled to Bank statement sheet No.237 at 30th December 2024. This balance contains the remaining reserves of £2857.50 for Orchard Piece Community Play Area.

The General Fund at the end of December 2024 stands at £21,749.59.



Cheque numbers 75 and 79 were both spoilt.

Resolved: To accept the financial report

1181 Appointment of Internal Auditor

It was recommended to appoint Elaine Anstee as Internal Auditor.

Resolved: To accept Elaine Anstee as Internal Auditor

1182 Budget and Precept Request for 2025-2026

A) The Parish Council are required to submit a precept demand to CDC for the next financial year based on the likely parish expenditure and income, including grants and reserves.

Resolved: to authorise the Clerk to submit the 2025-2026 Precept Requirement notification to Cherwell District Council for the sum of £17,346 by 13th January 2025

B) The budget proposal, including a 5% increase in the precept, was previously circulated and approved by the Parish Council. This increase represents the Parish Council's commitment to the continued upkeep of the two play areas, and to improving the appearance and safety of the village with further tree and hedge cutting work. According to the Clerk's contract, the salary must also increase annually.

1183 Consultations

Request for Church Funding Update

In Spring 2023, it was reported that All Saints Church required a great deal of repair work to be done to its tower and that fundraising was underway. Following a change to the law in late 2023, Parish Councils were allowed to consider contributing to the ongoing maintenance of buildings belonging to the Church of England, and other religions.

Mollington Parish Council was subsequently asked if they would donate a single amount, or an ongoing sum, to help with the restoration fund and ongoing maintenance.

As any money donated would ultimately come from the income derived from the precept, it was felt that residents should have a chance to voice an opinion, with a slip in the Mollington Matters delivered to every household in Mollington Parish at the end of October 2024. This would offer guidance for the Councillors' response to the request for funding.

Responses were asked to be posted through the doors of any Councillors, or by email to the Clerk.

A delivery to every door in a clearly marked edition of the Mollington Matters was felt to be the fairest way to include every household, as not everyone subscribes to social media, and this is a very unreliable way to gauge a response. Equally, knocking on doors, or inviting to a public meeting, would exclude a number of people who might be unavailable.

Social media was only used to remind people to respond by the advertised deadline.

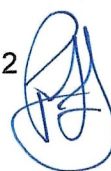
Despite this being an emotive subject for some, the Parish Council was surprised to only receive responses from 16% of households, and it was concluded that at this time the request did not receive support to provide funding.

Resolved: Not to provide financial support to the Church restoration fund at this time, but to continue to support and advertise their fundraising

Councillor Vacancy

There is currently a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. Details are on the website, and the appropriate notice has also been displayed on the noticeboard.

The Clerk and Councillors can be contacted for further details, but it is hoped that the vacancy will be filled by co-option by the AGM in May.



1184 Planning matters

Applications

- **25/00033/TCA Hilltop House OX17 1BL** Ash(diseased) down to 2m *It is recommended that MPC does not object to this proposal*
- **24/03162/CLUE Barn Point to Point Farm OX17 1QU** Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use to regularise the existing use of a dwelling house *As this is not a planning application, no response is needed at this stage, though MPC will monitor CDC's response*
- **25/00135/TEL** Proposed Upgrade to Existing Radio Base Station Installation at CS_107364_24, Vodafone Shotteswell (1311), College Farm, Warmington Road, Mollington OX17 1BP *It is recommended that MPC does not object to this proposal*

Decisions

- **24/02959/F The Old School OX17 1AZ** Retrospective – extension of existing sunroom by enclosing car port and rebuilding connecting wall to include house sign *Permitted*
- **24/03341/TCA Rosebank OX17 1AZ** Tree work *Permitted*
- **24/02824/TCA March House OX17 1BP** Tree work *Permitted*
- **24/02145/CLUP 9 Orchard Piece OX17 1DP** Certificate of Lawfulness Proposed - removal of an existing shed and replace with a garden office *Refused*

1185 Councillors Reports

Councillor Banister

Councillor Banister covered the update on the planning matters under the previous agenda point. He separately reported that he was planning for the next edition of Mollington Matters to be issued around the end of April. At this stage he envisaged, in addition to the normal topics, that the focus would be on the village fete and an update on village maintenance, particularly covering trees.

Councillor John

Village Hall

It was reported that there had been various activities at the Village Hall with quiz nights and coffee mornings, additionally the Monthly Munch was again a successful event. The VH is starting up a bowls club and there has been a good uptake of interested parties. A quiz night is being planned for the 15th February. Further events are being planned and will be advertised throughout the village as well as on Facebook.

Maintenance

The Thomas Fox grass cutting plus ancillary works contract has been extended for another 12 months within the existing terms and conditions as per the live contract. They have completed the last round of grass cutting for this season and are undertaking various works within the Chestnut Vale Playing Fields as well as hedge cutting throughout village. On site visit / inspections with Thomas Fox has taken place to identify various additional works required and these have been quoted, assessed and approved.

Additional work within Orchard Piece Playing Fields relating to the cut back of trees and hedges have been contracted out and works completed to the satisfaction of the Parish Council.

A review regarding the adequate bark covering in areas where there is children's play equipment has taken place and will be further assessed in accordance with guidance specifications for the depth of bark covering. There is some concern about the cost of replacing this bark to the specified depths, and this may result in reducing the heights of the play equipment. The slide area within Orchard Piece play area is planned to be taken away due to safety concerns.

Significant correspondence and onsite meetings have taken place with OCC Highways in assessing the road conditions due to pot holes, and drain / gullies being blocked or requiring repairs / clear out. The OCC has confirmed that some work has been undertaken and further works will be completed within the next 2 weeks, as well as signage being erected to make motorists aware of the dangers etc.



Further meetings are scheduled for 6th February with the PCC Highways Engagement officer, as well as Councillors, to assess areas of concern within the village boundaries - focus will be on roads / trees along main roads / lanes. Discussions about the ongoing maintenance with all parties will be a priority.

Thames Water has confirmed that the continuous drainage issue on March Road is not related to their infrastructure and further steps are being taken with OCC departments to agree what needs to be done to resolve this longterm problem.

Additional road side boundary markers have been purchased for the area around Cow Lane.

Councillor Sullivan

Councillor Sullivan advised that he was aware of two issues with footpaths. The footpath leading from The Paddocks is overgrown, and the one leading from Ivy Lane appears to have been diverted. Both issues are being investigated.

There have been no reports of issues with Dogs.

There are no village maintenance issues apart from those that have been addressed in other reports.

Councillor Gorman

Nothing further to report that had not already been discussed

1186 Councillors Points of Interest:

Councillor Sullivan advised that he had attended the first meeting of the Church Fete Committee planning for the Fete to be held on 17 May 2025. The meeting was well attended, and all tasks were allocated. The Committee would appreciate any help in promoting the event and by volunteering, especially on the day.

1187 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 25th March 2025 Mollington Village Hall at 8.00pm

Parish Council meeting closed at 8.25pm

Chairman, Mollington Parish Council

Public Participation Session

District Councillor Chapman had reported via email that the draft Local Plan is out for consultation. A hard copy is available from the Clerk, or online from CDC.

The housing targets across Cherwell will be lifted driven by the new NPPF.

Mollington will be a C category village, as previously petitioned by the Parish Council

This designation will apply to most villages.

The Bourtons and Wardington will be B category. The draft Local Plan may be amended as it progresses due to the emerging NPPF guidelines.

The Parish Council has only recently been made aware of this document, which is now available online from CDC, and will look at its effect on Mollington reporting any concerns.

It was recommended that Bob Wadsworth was invited to attend the meeting with the Highways Engagement Officer on the 6th February – the Chairman will notify him.

The results of the consultation through the Mollington Matters regarding Church funding and the possibility of the Parish Council proposing a donation through an increase in the precept was discussed further, with questions regarding the number of the replies and how the consultation was conducted.



The Chairman repeated how disappointing the response had been, reporting that out of a total of 32 households replying, 14 supported the suggestion and 18 did not support it. A total of 207 houses had the Mollington Matters delivered.

As the precept is set per household, it was household responses that were considered, not per electorate, though it was suggested that this was not made clear in the article.

The Chairman repeated that the consultation had been conducted to give the Parish Council guidance on how to proceed with the request for a donation and that the Parish Council were satisfied that they had invited every household to respond. Although the difference was small, more responses were not in support.

It was suggested by a resident that a petition looking for support to ask the Parish Council to reconsider, was taken to every household.

The Restoration fund still needs to raise a further £14000, and is applying for new grants, as well as planning fund raising events, eg. the Fete, and selling raffle tickets. They are hoping to reach the final figure as soon as possible, as costs of building materials, etc are rising and pushing the final figure higher each year.

The Parish Council were again reminded that if the Church were to be closed, maintaining the graveyard would become the responsibility of CDC, who were likely to charge the Parish Council for its upkeep, funds which would ultimately come from an increase in the precept.

The increase in the precept request was questioned. It was explained that the known costs to the Parish Council continued to increase, and the commitment to keeping a well maintained and safe village for all, meant that costs for tree work, as well as maintaining the two play areas, was still high. Although the 5% increase is above the rate of inflation, suppliers have already indicated increases of over 5% to their costs.

It is recommended by CDC that one year's precept is kept in the reserves; the budget is calculated by adding the known costs, to the expected costs following estimates being raised for known projects for the next 12 months. Whereas the annual spend used to be around £12000 - £13000, it is now between £17000 and £18000.

