

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2025
At 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr T Suter, Chair, Parish Council
Six members of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk
Six members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 May 2024 were approved and signed.

Parish Council – Chairman’s Report

All seven parish Councillors submitted themselves for election in May 2024, and were duly elected to serve.

Tim Suter was re-elected as Chairman of the Parish Council at the Annual Meeting following the election. Mrs Jen Webster resigned from the Council in November 2024. Notice of a casual vacancy was posted and Hamish Blythe duly co-opted as a member of the council in January 2025.

The precept was held at the same level for 2025-26, the council being aware of increasing pressures on the cost of living across the parish.

The Council concluded that the “Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning”, piloted under the last government, had run out of steam, and was anyway unlikely to provide the protection that a full Neighbourhood Plan would offer, so it was resolved to convert the work already undertaken for the Priority Statement into a Neighbourhood Plan, to be undertaken over the coming months.

Other issues that have been discussed and actioned by the Council include:

- **Flood mitigation** – prompted by the appalling treatment by Thames Water, despite active representation from the Parish, District and County Councils, two households at the south-western end of the village suffered from flooding. The council invested in flood protection material that could be distributed at a time of serious flooding. The underlying problems, compounded by over-development at the bottom end of the village, remain un-addressed.
- **Speed control** – having successfully argued that the village should be covered by a 20mph speed restriction, the council remains concerned that cars still speed through the village. We have been considering further measures to encourage motorists to slow down – including speed activated signs, and gates at the entry to the village. A survey of parishioners in Spring 2025 showed some enthusiasm for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money to be spent on further measures.
- **Local plan** – aware of the renewed emphasis on national planning policy under an incoming Labour government, the council responded to the Combined Local Plan consultation in the autumn, adding its voice to support for the proposals adopted, and in particular the continued exclusion of the Chalgrove development which councillors were concerned would place an unacceptable strain on local resources.

We have reviewed and agreed the priorities for current future CIL money; re-energised the project for deciding how to spend the Public Art funding to which we are entitled; and reviewed the planning applications from across the parish, covering a wide range of projects from the renovation of major Grade 1 stately homes, to the installation of shepherds’ huts for local tourism.

I pay tribute to the energy and commitment of the parish councillors – all volunteers determined to do their best to enhance and support the local community; to the members of the community who attend our meetings and raise issues for us to address; to our District and County Councillors who have kept us fully informed of developments at District and County level, and argued our cause when

appropriate; and above all to the Clerk, Andrea Oughton, who cheerfully and efficiently keeps us on the right track.

Responsible Financial Officer's Report

2023-24 Accounts

Internal Audit

From a financial point of view the internal audit of the 2023-24 financial accounts was undertaken by Mr Dick Heinrich between 22 April and 23 May 2024 following the Scope of Work agreed by the Parish Council.

The internal audit concluded that the control objectives had been achieved throughout the financial year and the Income & Expenditure account and the Balance Sheet were a fair reflection of the financial position of the Council for year ended 31 March 2024.

This is the third year that Scribe software has been used and by using additional functionality within the software, the quality and transparency of all financial matters continues to improve.

External Audit

Due to income receipts being over the £25k threshold set by the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, the Parish Council completed and submitted Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) with a requirement to submit all accounting information to Moore, the Government appointed external auditor for Oxfordshire.

Following conclusion of the external audit on 7 September 2024, the auditor reported that the submitted Annual Governance and Accountability Return was 'in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met'.

Expenditure for 2024-25 (unaudited accounts) ended 31 March 2025

Total expenditure was £16,874, typical annual expenditure items include council administration, grass cutting (just over £4k), dog waste bin emptying, accounting software, annual play inspections, subscriptions and insurance. Other one-off expenditure included biodiversity work in Millennium Wood and the Recreation Ground and a new three-year contract with Smith of Derby to service the church clock (£665). The Parish Council continues to support charitable organisations including Citizen's Advice along with annual grants to the Village Hall and a contribution to St Peter's Church towards the cost of grass cutting the churchyard.

Income

Total income was £21,056 made up primarily of the Precept (£16,400), the amount of income the Parish Council requests from the District Council to include in the Council Tax that home owners pay each year, bank interest was a heady £621 for the year and grant funding of £3,800 received from Trust for Oxfordshire Environment and SODC (flood mitigation).

The 2024-25 accounts have yet to be audited and the internal audit is expected to take place in the next couple of weeks. As the income and expenditure is below the £25k threshold the Council can Certify itself exempt from a Government External Audit, however all the documentation and publication of accounts and related information and transparency remains the same.

Finally, I would like to thank the Parish Councillors for their support during the year and also my personal thanks and on behalf of the Parish Council to Mr Dick Heinrich for his continued support as Internal Auditor.

County Councillor's Report

The Chair welcomed Cllr Judith Edwards to the meeting as newly elected County Councillor for the Thame West & Chalgrove Ward. Cllr Edwards said she was looking forward to meeting councillors

and residents in the 10 parishes within the Ward and encouraged anyone to get in touch with any issues they want to raise.

District Councillor's Report – Cllr Heritage

I hope that throughout the year I have captured all news and SODC activity in my monthly reports, which are available online via parish council websites and in some local newsletters. I very much encourage residents to contact me via georgina.heritage@southoxon.gov.uk if they have any questions, concerns or suggestions arising from my reports.

For this annual report I am highlighting some of the bigger news items from SODC from the past twelve months:

Local Government Reorganisation In 2024 the Government released a white paper on local government reorganisation which will mean that two-tier authorities (like we have in Oxfordshire) will end, and instead we must form Unitary authorities serving at least 500,000 residents. Unitaries must then combine to form a Combined authority serving a population of around 1.5 million, likely to be overseen by an elected mayor.

Government will make the decision on the direction South Oxfordshire will take, however an initial proposal for "Ridgeway Council" has been submitted on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire Council, which would see the three areas combined. This has been developed due to the demographic and economic similarities and historic ties between the areas. Following the government's request that Oxfordshire authorities submit interim proposals together, the County Council has submitted an outline proposal for the Ridgeway Council and North Oxfordshire Council to the government, alongside two other options being developed in Oxfordshire which include a county-wide Oxfordshire proposal.

SODC Budget 2025-26 The council met in February and approved its 2025-2026 Budget. Diligent financial management ensured that SODC could deliver a balanced budget and marks the first time in nine years that the council has not needed to transfer funds from reserves. Major funding will be made available to support the purchase of more affordable housing across South Oxfordshire.

The budget also includes funding to secure the future of the council's Community Hub on an ongoing basis. This valued service provides practical support and advice for those with cost-of-living concerns or who are finding life difficult. The District Councillor grant budget will increase by 50%, to £7,500 per councillor, while the Capital and Revenue grant schemes for voluntary organisations will continue.

The District Council will continue to fund an ongoing programme to improve leisure centres, including major decarbonisation & refurbishment projects at Thame Leisure Centre, such as solar panels, a sauna and gym equipment replacement. Council tax for services provided by South Oxfordshire District Council were set at £151.24 for a Band D property. This means just £2.91 per week for a wide range of services including waste and recycling collections, community support, leisure services, parks and play areas, housing and planning services, environmental health and licensing.

Joint Local Plan South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils worked together to produce a Joint Local Plan (JLP), which aims to help meet their local communities' need for affordable housing, jobs and infrastructure while tackling the climate emergency. Following a series of public consultations, the plan was submitted to Government in December 2024 for the examination stage. If successfully adopted, the plan will replace the existing Local Plans for both councils. In the new Plan, the councils have shown that there are enough new homes in the pipeline already.

This means that there is no need to build on any extra new greenfield sites over the next 15 years, beyond what has already been allocated. Only one area of expansion has been earmarked, which is on the brownfield land owned by the Ministry of Defence at Dalton Barracks near Abingdon. A key government change is that all authorities must now demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply,

regardless the age of their local plan. This reversed the changes in the previous NPPF, which had withdrawn the 5-year land supply test for councils where their plan was less than five years old.

Haseley Trading Estate one of the major topics over recent months has been the announcement from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse councils that they are the new owners of Haseley Trading Estate and, subject to planning, the site will be used as a vehicle depot for waste and street cleaning fleet. This is something I was admittedly nervous about initially, particularly as I was concerned that local residents may assume the estate is intended to be a waste transfer station. It's very important to me that our residents can feel assured of transparency and our parish councils are fully informed.

With this in mind, I contacted Andrew Busby, Head of Development and Corporate Landlord, who made direct contact with parish councils in Haseley Brook. To clarify, the new site would be used as a depot for parking vehicles and for vehicle maintenance. There would be no storage or disposal of waste. The current vehicle depot in Culham is due to be redeveloped for new homes and the existing contract and lease expires in 2026, and the councils have spent a very long time searching for a suitable new location to ensure statutory waste collection services are not interrupted in any way.

The plan is to redevelop and retain one of the existing buildings and make improvements to the site, which will include improving the screening with planting, and managing the adjoining woodland which has suffered some neglect in recent years. They will also be reviewing their vehicle movements to keep the impact on the surrounding areas as minimal as possible. The new owners intend to be good neighbours and show respect to the surrounding villages. I am nonetheless highly conscious of and sensitive to the concerns of our local communities, and I will work with residents to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns are responded to.

Reports from Organisations in the Parish

Great Haseley Cricket Club (Chris Groves)

Season 2024

Following on from the successful experiment of Thursday evening T20 matches in 2023, an extended fixture list was prepared 2024. GHCC, rebranded as the "Haseley Millers", looked resplendent in their new custom designed shirts, sponsored by Morgan and Associates.

A Summary of Fixtures: - 8 Fixtures organised, 6 Completed, 1 Cancelled (Weather), 1 Cancelled (Availability)

Results: - 2 Wins, 3 Loses, 1 Tie, 22 Players involved

2025 Season Fixtures

Date	Host	Opposition
29-May	Haseley Millers	Bartlemas (A)
05-Jun	Haseley Millers	Bodleian (H)
19-Jun	Haseley Millers	Chalgrove (H/A)
22-Jun	GHCC	Great Milton (H)
26-Jun	Haseley Millers	Medicine (H)
03-Jul	Haseley Millers	Ewelme (A)
10-Jul	Haseley Millers	HQCC (H)
17-Jul	Haseley Millers	Chalgrove (H/A)

Match details can be found at the following link: <https://greathaseley.play-cricket.com/home>

Great Haseley History Group (Jane Simcox)

Little has taken place with the History Group during 2024. After all the efforts were put in for the plane crash memorial we ran out of steam! One or two projects have been suggested and these will be looked at to see if there is enough information to make the project worthwhile. The History Group has opened a bank account but unfortunately as we are not a registered charity, we are paying a service charge every month which will eventually deplete the whole account.

The one thing that the History Group has been trying to do is find a permanent home for its records and artefacts. The shed at the rear of the Village Hall that we have been using has a leaking roof which we understand will be repaired by the Parish Council. It has been suggested that the ideal site for the History Group along with other uses would be the Old Chapel which is the property of Great Haseley Horticultural Society. This building will shortly require some serious work on the roof for which there would be grants available. Unfortunately, the History Group is not eligible to try for these grants as we are not a recognised organisation and it is hoped the Parish Council would be able to help in this endeavour.

Anyone wishing to join the group is more than welcome and should contact me and I will keep you informed of meetings etc.

Great Haseley & District Horticultural Society (Louise Bird)

A garden quiz and a visit to Rousham House & Gardens have taken place. The annual show was well attended, thanks to local Women's Institute for stepping in to help. There are not enough people in the Society or younger people joining which members are trying to address. Traditional children's categories in the show encourages adults to attend. The show is always held on August Bank Holiday Saturday when a lot of people are away. This year the show will be held on Sunday 7 September as a trial and we will see how it goes. There will be a flower arranging class to prepare an exhibit for the show.

The Chapel belongs to the Society who store show related equipment and is also rented to a sculpture on a repairing lease. A few years ago, some roof tiles came off in a storm, the repairs were covered by insurance. There will come a point when the roof will need substantial renovation, plus the overall fabric of the building.

Under the Society's rules, if the Society folds the building will be sold and the proceeds of the sale given to a garden charity. The building has electricity but no running water. Is there a community use that would not compete with the village hall? Does the Society's constitution need to change? Need to be proactive and look at what to do now and set up a working party. Need to involve the History Group, Society members, the parish council and village hall committee.

Playing Fields (Chris Groves)

Activity 2024-25

44 Cricket Matches, 2 Helicopter Landings, agreement to improve surface of track to Recreation Ground, Mark Lowden is the new Treasurer, a Member of Cricket Team and Sports Club.

Activity for 2025-26

47 Cricket Matches Scheduled

Team	Match Type	# Fixtures
Haseley Millers/GHCC	Friendly T20	5
Tiddington III	CCL Div 7A	9
Tiddington IV	CCL Div 9A	9
Tiddington Vixens	Home Counties	1
Tiddington Boys U19s	OCB Comps	2
Tiddington Boys U15s	OCB Comps	5
Tiddington Girls U13s	OCB Comps	5
Holton	Friendly	7
Bodleian	Friendly	4

St Peter's Church (Toby Garfitt)

In both 2024 and 2025 the year began with an evening service of choral Compline for Epiphany. On Easter Eve now we celebrate the Great Vigil of Easter, lighting the Paschal candle from a firepit in the churchyard and then spreading the light throughout the church. In May we continued the tradition of holding our Rogation service in the farmyard at Field Farm, followed by the beating of the bounds. In June we again took a party of over twenty to St George's Chapel, Windsor, for Evensong, where our silver Communion set was on display. In October we held our Harvest Festival Family Service in the barn at Peggs Farm. In December the Carol Service featured a large choir singing an exciting repertoire. All of these were well attended, and are being repeated this year. They show that the church is in good heart, as we plan for an interregnum following the coming retirement of Simon Cronk as Rector at the end of October.

Our main fund-raising event last year took the form of a midsummer tea party with traditional games, held at Latchford Farm on a glorious day in June. Quite a few families with children joined in the fun, although shortage of manpower restricted what we could do. A major new source of funds opened this year with the letting of the church for musical recording, for a total of fifteen days.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) invested in a digital visitor guide system called Info Point. It works on a mobile phone or iPad, with a local wi-fi network. Rather than paying the firm to develop the material, we created our own interactive tour which showcases village and church history and architecture using text, photos, audio tracks, a children's trail, and puzzles. Take-up has so far been fairly slow, but we hope visitors and residents will increasingly use it and appreciate this remarkable village resource.

We also have a dynamic new website, hosted by the national service A Church Near You, and featuring regular new items. The address is <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/128/>

We are now using a new Contractor, Richard Taylor, to mow and strim the Churchyard. He also mows the Millennium Wood for the Parish Council. The Churchyard has been divided into different areas and each area has different mowing height intervals. One area is to be cordoned off from May to allow wildflowers to grow and set seed before a late summer cut.

In February some remedial tree work was done in the Churchyard including the felling of a Sweet Chestnut which was deemed to be dying and therefore a Health and Safety risk. The Clock has recently been repaired as the spindle of the clock hands needed re-engineering.

Other matters discussed by the PCC have included the repair of the west window tracery, the possible replacement of the kissing gate at the far end of the churchyard and the possible installation of a properly surfaced path to the south porch, and a heating audit of the building.

We are awaiting a faculty for the installation of an excellent second-hand pipe organ from a Church near Worthing, dating from about 1950.

Village Hall (Paul Woodrow)

A busy year of monthly pop-up pubs which are still a better fundraiser than one off events and relatively well supported. The Apple Picking Day was a great success and fun for all the families.

We were pleased welcome Bridget Strange as secretary, Martin Fordham as treasurer and Carys Lindsay but are still actively looking for the next generation to help us too. As you can see we are still struggling financially though a little better than last year. The grant from the parish council still falls well short of the running costs of the hall. We were pleased to have the grant raised this year but it is still a struggle which is one of our major concerns with the possibility of the parish council taking on the Chapel.

We need more weekly rentals to keep funds coming in, as the fitness classes seem to have tailed off, though we have monthly 'Gong Bath' sessions which are proving to be extremely popular.

We have decided to get on with the audio-visual works with the Community Infrastructure Levy funds ahead of the main works so we can hopefully get more interest from hirers and in time for next year's World Cup!

Planning permission was granted for the front entrance and the architect is now drawing up a plan to obtain quotes for the whole of the work. We are also looking at improving the website.

Open Forum – Questions from Electors / Public Discussion

Can the parish council publish the yearly budget on the website together with a six-month budget vs actual report? This was agreed.

Can the latest Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Report be published on the website. This was agreed. The Clerk added that the Parish Council is required to submit an annual report showing receipt and expenditure related to CIL to the District Council who publish the reports on their website.

Can the 'Lest We Forget' silhouette be removed from the war memorial and perhaps replaced by a bench instead located on Rectory Road? It was agreed to look at this, the bench maybe something that can be incorporated into the public art project.

The Chairman thanked all those involved with local groups, the reports provided a portrait of the vibrant community in which we live.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm

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Chairman
11 May 2026