**Minutes of the meeting of Fringford Parish Council,
held on Monday 12th May 2025 at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Ginny Hope (Chair), Les Harris, Phil Davids-Austin, Hayley Ryder, Max Todd, Robert Gue, Ros MacKenzie

**Also present:** R. Damerell (Clerk) and 6members of the public.

1. **Appointment of Chair**
* Cllr Harris proposed Cllr Hope as Chair of the Parish Council, seconded by Cllr Todd and unanimously approved.
1. **Appointment of Vice Chair**
* Cllr Hope proposed Cllr Harris as Vice-Chair of the Parish Council, seconded by Cllr Mackenzie and unanimously approved.
1. **Appointment of Councillor for Internal Financial control**
* Cllr Hope proposed Cllr Davids-Austin as Councillor for Internal Financial control, seconded by Cllr Gue and unanimously approved.
1. **Appointment of Village Hall Representative**
* Cllr Hope proposed Cllr Gue as Village Hall representative, seconded by Cllr Mackenzie and unanimously approved.
1. **Appointment of Staffing Committee**
* It was agreed to move the appointment to the staffing committee to the June meeting.
1. **Apologies for absence**
* No apologies were received
1. **Requests for Dispensations and Declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality**
* Cllr Harris declared an interest in planning application: APP/C3105/W/24/3363162 - Land Adjoining The Cottage, The Green, Fringford
1. **Public participation**
* No questions were raised.
1. **Updates from County & District Councillors**
* Cllr Wood attended in person and updated on the pathway towards unitary authorities within the county and neighbouring counties is moving forward. The District Councils must submit their proposals by November 2025.
* South Oxfordshire Council and Vale of White Horse are in conversation with West Berkshire with a view to possibly create a unitary council away from Oxfordshire.
* The current population target to establish a unitary authority is 500,000, however there is a suggestion that this may be rounded down to 300,000.
* There are also suggestions that Oxford City is looking to expand its boundaries to push near the 300,000 mark to create a unitary of their own. This would require the absorption of Kidlington and Abingdon.
* Cherwell and West Oxfordshire have always had a close relationship and there is a school of thought that they may unite to create a North Oxfordshire unitary.
* Current timescales could be delayed due to the ongoing conversations. It is likely that the earliest election date for a shadow authority will be May 2028.
* If the current plans continue this may mean the cessation of the County Council as an entity.
1. **To approve the Minutes** **of the last Parish Council Meeting**.
* The minutes of the April 2025 Fringford Parish Council meeting were approved as a true record of the meeting.
1. **Finance**
* **To receive the finance report for 2024/25 -**
* **Financial Spreadsheet** – Councillors received the monthly reconciliation.
* **Invoices to pay** - invoices were reviewed and approved by the Parish Council.
1. **Parish Matters**
* **Chair’s report for 2024/25**
* Very sadly we lost Cllr David McCullagh who had been a member of the Parish Council for many years. David is greatly missed for his contribution to the work of the Parish Council, his dedication, enthusiasm and generous support to the community.
* In March 2024, we welcomed a new councillor, Max Todd, who has thrown himself in to things admirably.
* The Parish Council met 11 times between April 2024 and March 2025. No meeting was held in August due to councillor holidays.
* As always, a wide variety of topics have been discussed as reflected in the minutes which are displayed on the Parish noticeboard and on the Village Website.
* Several significant topics have featured in the activities of the Parish Council this year, some of which have been ongoing since the previous year:

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| Helped alert traffic to slow down when entering the village  | √ Village gates were installed on Stratton Audley Road and Fringford Road. |
| Improved the Village Green and surrounding area | √ Improved the verges – project completed summer 2024. |
|  | √ Improve parking areas - project completed summer 2024. |
|  | √ Tidying up the pond area - project completed summer 2024. |
|  | √ Mowed and tidied children’s play area  |
|  | √ Erected the iconic village sign positioned on The Green. |
| Better environment | √ On going management of trees with landowners or on land owned or leased by the PC. √Installed 1 new dog waste bin by Jubilee bridal way. |
| Village Hall | √ Closer working with the Village Hall Committee to manage the use of the excellent facilities, maximizing the income to ensure the hall is well used and well maintained for the benefit of villagers.√ Obtained a 50% funding grant to replace the village hall roof on the original part of the building. Work completed in Spring 2024. |
| Help support more social events | √ supported the delivery of successful events such as family quiz night, jazz night, cinema nights, VE 80th celebration.√ supported pop up events |
| Planning  | √ Objected to the proposal for a gypsy traveller site within the ward of Fringford.√Responding to the Appeal against the refusal for a 10-house development land on land adjacent to The Cottage and off Rectory Lane site off Crow Lane.√ Provided feedback to ensure that Fringford is re-categorized as a smaller village in Cherwell District Council housing strategy. |
| Better communication | √ Produced the Fringford Village Plan 2024 in November√ Continued to fund The Village Voice bi-monthly newsletter and be a major contributor.√ Continued to use the village mutual support Whatsapp group as a communication tool. |

**Finance**

* I am pleased to report once again that the Parish Council finances remain in a very good state with adequate reserves, only a small amount of which will be required for the two village green projects as costs have increased since the grants were awarded but the Parish Council has successfully managed to mitigate against large increases in costs. Responsible Financial Officer has produced a written report for the minutes Appendix B.

**Village groups and organisations**

* On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank many villagers for their contribution to the community…
* The Village Hall Committee for their work to keep the amazing asset of the hall very well maintained and accessible. For helping to organise and run village events and professionally promoting the use of the hall and ensure its safe running as a publicly accessed building.
* Fringford Friends – for the coordinator and handful of volunteers supporting villagers when they need assistance.
* The members of the Cricket Club for maintaining the beautiful ground and keeping the tradition of cricket thriving in the village and growing the next generation of budding cricketers with the youngster’s programs.
* The Butchers Arms Pub – for trying hard to keep our village pub alive.
* Aunt Sally team running the time-honoured village tradition alongside the pub and the cricket club.
* The Editorial team and sponsors of the Village Voice for keeping us up to date with village events.
* Administrators of the Fringford Mutual WhatsApp group – a very useful communication tool.
* The Church PCC and volunteers for looking after the church and churchyard and keeping it available to the community.
* Fringford School and Shelswell Pre-school – for providing excellent, local educational establishments for families.
* The group of volunteers for continuing to undertake the village litter picks and others who take the time to keep the village tidy.
* The Sewcial – for a creating and craft & chat group in the village.
* The Village History Society – for looking after the historical information of the village and keeping the important memories of our village alive.
* The farmers who keep our hedges and verges in good shape.
* All these people make a real difference and make Fringford the positive and attractive community we all enjoy. All these groups depend on individuals, and all are keen to attract more support so please, if you are interested, join in, and do your bit.
* I would personally like to thank all the Parish Councillors and Bobs, the Parish Clerk for their time, effort, and commitment. The Parish Councillors all give up their time to attend meetings, read many documents, carry out planning consultations and undertake many other tasks. All the Parish Councillors are volunteers and make no claims for expenses on travel or other costs. So far, we have an excellent track record of attending meetings along with a commitment to and undertake projects in the background, all for the benefit of Fringford.
* **Parish Council Website**
* Cllr Mackenzie updated that there was no further update to report currently.
* The Clerk noted a request from the public to make the section for the Annual Parish Meeting more accessible.
* **Tree Survey report**
* The Council noted the suggested actions raised in the Tree Report.
* The Council has received a quote for £2,050 for the works. The Council approved the quote with a date of 29 June 2025 for the works to be carried out.
* Cllr Hope to inform the school and pre-school and villagers of the date of the works.
* **Village Pond**
* The Council expressed concern about the grass encroachment in the pond and whether there is anything the Council need to do to protect the pond.
* Cllr Ryder to enquire with the surveyors who carried out a survey on the pond and ensure the Council carries out the most environmental and ecological action.
* Post meeting action agreed for Cllr Ryder to contact TOE for more information and a pond surveyor.
1. **Planning**

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| **Ref No:** | **Location** | **Proposal** | **PC Comments** |
| [25/00979/F](https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/Planning/Display/25/00979/F) | Rose Cottage Rectory Lane Fringford Oxfordshire OX27 8DX | Two storey rear extension and replacement side extension. Removal of single storey lean-to and outbuildings in close proximity to rear of dwelling | Support – The Parish Council though did express concern that once the building work starts that the applicant, please ensures that contractors do not block Rectory Lane and take care of the verges |
| APP/C3105/W/24/3363162 | Land Adjoining The Cottage, The Green, Fringford | OUTLINE application for construction of 9 detached dwellings, formation of new vehicularand pedestrian access, associated landscaping, drainage and associated works with AllMatters Reserved except for Access | Please see appendix A |
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**Decisions**

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| **Ref No:** | **Location** | **Proposal** | **Decision** |
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**Appeals**

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| **Ref No:** | **Location** | **Proposal** | **CDC Decision / Comments** | **Parish Council Comments** |
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1. **Correspondence Received / AOB**
* **OALC – Monthly Update**
1. **Items for next Agenda**
* All items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by 6th June 2025.
1. **Date of next meeting:**
* The date of the next meeting is 16th June 2025 at 7.45pm.

**Appendix A**

REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF FRINGFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Appeal Reference: APP/C3105/W/25/3363162

Planning reference: 25/00018/REF

Land Adjoining The Cottage, The Green, Fringford OX27 8DY

1. The Parish Council submitted objections at the application stage (21/02553/OUT),

which was refused on 27 September 2022. In these appeal representations we do

not repeat the points made in the previous comments and make comments on the

new matters which have been raised in the appeal or occurred since the previous

comments were submitted.

2. The appellant has submitted a considerable body of new evidence and technical data

at the appeal stage, not previously seen by interested parties. Third parties have not

been given adequate opportunity to consider the new evidence.

3. We note that the Planning Inspectorate’s Procedural Guide: Planning appeals –

England says:

12.1.1. ... In general, appeals are determined on the same basis as the

original application. Therefore, the appellant’s submissions, including the

statement of case, should not normally include new evidence or additional

technical data not previously seen by the LPA and interested parties at the

application stage, such as biodiversity report, highways statement or

landscape and visual impact assessments.

4. The appellant’s appeal statement mentions “Wheatcroft principles”. We understand

that this case is related to amendments to a scheme, not to new evidence and

technical data.

5. Application 21/02553/OUT was refused on the grounds of detrimental impact on

open countryside as the proposal would be beyond the built-up limits of Fringford.

We respectfully request that the Planning Inspector views the appeal site from Hethe

Road to the north of the appeal site and from Jubilee Bridal Way to the west of the

appeal site to appreciate fully the visual intrusion which would occur. As well as

viewing the actual physical width available between the edge of the Crow Lane

carriageway and the protected oak tree (T18).

6. The Parish Council strongly objected to the appellants’ claim that the proposed site

is within the built-up boundary of the village. The appellant describes the appeal site

using phrases such as ‘adjoining’ Fringford (paragraph 4.3), a logical extension’ of the

village (paragraphs 740 and 7.46) and ‘self-contained’ (paragraphs 7.40 and 7.49). We

would call these phrases into question as a development site cannot be within a

village and adjoining it or an extension to it. Self-containment on the edge of a

settlement indicates separateness from it, rather than being a part of it.

7. Local plan policies for the location of housing include policy Villages 1 of Cherwell

Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1, which categorise Fringford as a Category A Service

Village. NPPF paragraph 11 (d) (ii) requires the proposal to be assessed against

framework policies taken as a whole, including those for directing development to

sustainable locations. It is worth noting that the emerging Cherwell Local Plan 2042

(due for submission to Government) states that Fringford has been re-categorised as

a Category C village, suitable for only very minor development.

8. The appeal site is not in a sustainable location and would be entirely dependent on

the use of private vehicles. The appeal proposal would not be a sustainable

development, and the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and

demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

9. The appellant’s appeal statement discusses an allowed appeal decision in respect of

a proposal for six houses at Wise Crescent in Fringford. The reason why that decision

was distinguishable from this appeal proposal was explained in the Parish Council

comments made at the application stage.

10. At the time that the appeal application was determined, the officer’s report stated

that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) was able to demonstrate a housing-land

supply for more than five years. According to the council’s AnnualMonitoring Report

2024 (February 2025), the LPA cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land

supply. That being the case, NPPF paragraph 11(d) is engaged as the local plan

polices for location of housing are out of date.

11. The Fringford Village Plan (November 2024) states:

Fringford is an historic village, and this is reflected in parts of the village

street scenes and its rural in character nature. The village has had four

in-fill new build properties, and a further 4-bedroom property has planning

permission on a site on the corner of Farriers Close and Rectory Lane. A

development of six houses has planning permission and is underway on

land adjacent to Wise Crescent.

12. If Fringford had to contribute to the housing land supply of the Local Planning

Authority, the permissions already given, including at Wise Crescent, should fulfil

that.

13. Highway matters remain of serious concern to the Parish Council and villagers.

We respectfully request that the Planning Inspector looks at the proposed access

and the road, known locally as Crow Lane. Paragraph 4.2.4 of the appellant’s

highway appeal statement admits that refuse vehicles would cross the centre-

line of the access road and adjoining road. The highway authority has said

(highway authority comments on the appeal application, dated 22 May 2024) that

refuse vehicles (and presumably other large vehicles) must be able to manoeuvre

around the site without crossing the centre-line of both the access and the road.

The proposal does not show safe access can be provided.

14. The highway authority stated (highway authority comments on the appeal

application, dated 22 May 2024) that the turning head shown did not measure the

required 6m required. Access is not a reserved matter so whether vehicles can

enter and exit the site safely is a consideration at this stage and has not been

addressed.

15. There is an inaccuracy in Paragraph 2.4 of the appellant’s appeal statement states

that there are no tree preservation orders affecting the site. The oak tree identified as

T18 in the appellant’s arboricultural appeal statement is the subject of a tree

preservation order (14/2022).

16. The appellant’s arboricultural appeal statement acknowledges, at paragraph 3.27,

that there would be encroachment into the root protection area of T18. It also says,

at paragraph 3.5, that the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) makes a

preliminary assessment of potential impacts, and a more detailed AIA would be

required subsequently. Consequently, until such time as a definite proposal is put

forward, there remains uncertainty over the impact on the protected tree.

17. The Parish Council is aware that there was flooding at the pond near the Bakehouse

on 25 November 2024. An immediate neighbour has provided photographs as part of

their representations.

18. There is a further inaccuracy in Paragraph 1.2 of the appellant’s archaeological

evaluation that stated that planning permission was granted for application

21/02553/OUT. That application was refused and included an archaeological reason

for refusal. It is, therefore, possible that the appellant’s evaluation was based on

that incorrect assumption. The planning officer’s report comments that; ‘the current

application is similarly unsupported by any archaeological surveys, assessments or

evaluations, in light of which it is impossible to properly assess the likely impacts of

the proposed development on below ground assets.” Although the appeal is

accompanied by a field evaluation, there is no assessment of whether the proposed

development would have an adverse impact on archaeological interest.

19. We respectfully ask that the appeal submission is dismissed.

Fringford Parish Council 13 May 2025

Appendix B – Clerk’s Financial Report

The Parish Council is in a healthy position financially with the current finances standing at £40,101.30.

**2024/25**

2024/25 was relatively calmer terms of finances for the Parish Council. 2023/24 saw the completion of many projects including the repair of the Wall, repair of the Village Hall Roof, and improvements to the pond area. Whereas this year the most significant areas of one off spend was the designing and installation of the new Village Sign and the new village gates.

Grass Cutting continues to be the largest area of regular Parish Council spend and the Council is coming to the end of its three year long term agreement with Green Scythe in October. The Council will then have conversations about whether to continue with Green Scythe or look to explore other contractors.

**2025/26**

The Council at the January 2025 meeting approved its 2025/26 budget with an increase of 2.5% to the Annual precept to £16,492 down from the 5% in 2024/25 in line in the drop in inflation.

Moving forward as in previous years we will likely see an uptake in the grass cutting costs due to the increase in operational costs. The Council has also requested and received the tree survey for the trees it is currently responsible for and will be undertaking any recommended works to ensure these are safe particularly with the increase more extreme weather conditions.

The Council also this year included two new lines in its budget, which were monies to ensure the maintenance and repair of the Village Green verges and a fund to try and boost and encourage future events in the village.

Bobs Damerell

Clerk to Fringford Parish Council