Appendix A

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Committee of the Western Valley Parish Council

Thursday 28th August 2025 at 19:45, The District Centre, 1 Gentian Mews, Great Western Park

Public Session
None.

Members Present:

Chair	Cllr A Dearlove (AD)
Members	Cllr A Thompson (AT)
	Cllr T Williams (TW) [Substitute Member]
	Cllr S Peacock (SP) [Substitute Member]
	Cllr V Humphries (VH)

Officers Present:

Clerk to the Council	Mrs L White (LW)

Public and Press: At least 1.

Meeting Started **19:45**

25.06.1. Apologies & Substitutions [LGA 1972 s85(1)]

25.06.1.1. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Cllr Knowles & Durman.

25.06.1.2. To record councillor substitutions, allowed under the terms of reference of this committee.

Cllr Williams attended as a substitute member, replacing Cllr Knowles.

Cllr Peacock attended as a substitute member, replacing Cllr Durman.

25.06.2. Declarations of Interests [LA 2011 s31]

25.06.2.1. To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda

Cllr Dearlove declared a pecuniary interest in item 25.06.4.1.

25.06.2.2. To consider requests for Dispensations [LA 2011 s33]

None.

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25.06.3. To approve the minutes of previous meetings [LA 1972 Sch 12. Para 41(1)]

25.06.3.1. Meeting of 26th June 2025

It was agreed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed.

25.06.4. To consider applications and approve response to planning authority.

25.06.4.1. P25/V1495/FUL - Meadow View, Didcot Road, Harwell, OX11 6DW

Demolition of garage and carport and rebuilt with a reduced flat roof for office and staff facilities (previously approved as a conversion - P24/V0153/FUL). Retrospective.

In accordance with Standing Order 12b, Cllr Dearlove withdrew from the meeting, and left the room.

In the absence of a Chair or Vice-Chair, at was agreed by all present that Cllr Humphries would Chair the meeting for this item.

Discussion included:

- This is a retrospective application
- The original approved plans were for a converted garage and car port, in keeping with the area, not a replacement building of an entirely different style and massing.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to submit the response NO OBJECTIONS, with comments:

Whilst we have no objections in principle to the replacement building, this Council is disappointed that a retrospective application has been sought for this flat-roofed, rendered design with utilitarian appearance, which fails to respect the character and visual appearance of this residential area. Its proximity to 2 Barberry Drive, and industrial materials used, are contrary to Core Policy 37, Part viii, that being developments should be "visually attractive and the scale, height, density, grain, massing, type, details and materials are appropriate for the site and surrounding area". Were an application made for this in advance of the building of this office, this Council would likely have objected and asked that the materials and style were in keeping with this residential location.

Cllr Dearlove rejoined the meeting and continued to Chair the meeting.

25.06.5. To note applications not consulted on

All of the below were NOTED.

25.06.5.1. P25/V1036/DIS - Land to the West of Great Western Park (Valley Park) Didcot - *AMENDED*

Discharge of condition 23 (Foul water drainage strategy) & 24 (Surface water drainage strategy) on planning application P14/V2873/O (Phase 1Pa only (P24/V0733/RM) (Additional information received 11 August 2025).

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25.06.5.2. P24/V1099/RM - RM1b - Phase 2 Valley Park Didcot – *AMENDED*

Reserved matters for access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale pursuant to outline permission reference P14/V2873/O relating to Phase 1b Phase 2. As amended 31st July.

25.06.5.3. P25/V1590/NM - Phase 1P Valley Park Didcot

Non material amendment on application P23/V0667/RM to amend footpath and associated landscaping details (Reserved Matters submission relating to phase 1P pursuant to outline planning permission P14/V2873/O, comprising 172 dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping)

25.06.5.4. P25/V1615/DIS - Didcot Extra Care Greenwood Way Didcot OX11 6GD

Discharge of condition 18 (BREEAM) on planning application number P21/V0303/FUL Variation of condition 2

25.06.5.5. P25/V1531/DIS - Phase 1Pa, Valley Park Didcot

Discharge of condition 14 (Tree Protection Plan) on application P14/V2873/O

25.06.5.6. P25/V1373/S73 - Zulu Farmhouse, Didcot Road, Harwell, OX11 6DN

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans), 8 (Car Parking), 9 (HY17 - (Closure of Existing Access), 11 (boundary details) and 12 (bike parking) on Planning Permission P23/V2693/FUL.

25.06.5.7. P25/V1351/DIS - Dahlia View (Phase 2Tb) Valley Park, Didcot

Discharge of condition(s) 23 (Foul Water Drainage Strategy) & 24 (Surface Water Strategy) on application ref. P14/V2873/O

25.06.5.8. P25/V1300/DIS - Parcel 1P Land to the west of Great Western Park (Valley Park), Didcot

Discharge of condition(s) 5 PART (Noise Compliance Report) on planning application P23/V0667/RM.

25.06.6. To note decisions of the planning authority.

All of the below were NOTED.

25.06.6.1. P25/V0317/FUL - Boundary Park Pavillion, Greenwood Way, OX11 6EY – *GRANTED*

Installation of: 1no. Artistic lectern, 1no. entrance paving stone for the pedestrian gateway, 1no. stone monolith, and 7no. distance markers along the circumference of the park.
WVPC Response: *SUPPORTS*

25.06.6.2. P25/V0711/LDE - 17 Ivy Close, Harwell, OX11 6DD – *CERTIFIED*

Sauna to rear (retrospective).
WVPC Response: *NO OBJECTIONS*

25.06.6.3. P25/V0890/LDP - 29 Eksdale Drive, Didcot, OX11 6AB - *CERTIFIED*

Erection of single storey extension on rear elevation.

25.06.7. Matters for future discussion.

None.

25.06.8. To confirm the date of the next meeting – 25th September 2025

Subject to there being applications to be discussed.

Confirmed.

There being no further business to be transacted, the Chair closed the meeting, **20:24**.

Cllr S Peacock
Chair of the Meeting 23 October 2025

Appendix B

Title	To approve Councillor liaisons / representation on other bodies
Author	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 13th November 2025

Disclaimer: The following list has been created with the knowledge the Clerk has from other parishes, these groups have not been approached. The idea being that we can approach these groups with a "here is a rep, IF you want one" please discuss together how you want to work together.

- Allotment Representative – once we have them
- Annual Footpath Walk Organiser
- Defibrillator Guardians – once we have some
- Residents Association Rep – although perhaps not if disbanded.
- OCC Public Transport Representative
- OCC Rights of Way
- RBL Liaison
- Sport Club Liaison – propose one single Boundary Sports Association rep, but could be split down in to more

Appendix C

Title	P14/V2873/O – Valley Park Deed of Variation
Author	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 13^{th} November 2025

A Deed of Variation to the legal agreement for Valley Park that has been drafted. In summary it covers the following changes:

- Updating wording in line with our more recent procedures in relation to how Affordable Housing is funded; ensuring any amendment applications are bound by the legal agreement; and, agreeing completion of the community buildings and pavilion.

- Changing the way that public art is provided so that it is delivered directly by the developers, rather than the District Council.

- Removing references to provide temporary buildings for the sports facilities as the permanent buildings will be delivered earlier instead.

- Changing the provision from 6 x tennis courts, to 2 x tennis courts, 2 x multi-use courts and 2 x padel courts. These changes are in line with what the Boundary Park Sport Association has asked for, who will be managing the facilities along with those at Great Western Park.

- Changing pitch provision from 1x 3G pitch and 2 grass pitches, to 2 x 3G pitch. This is inline with what has been requested by Boundary Park Sports Association. It is considered that the benefit of having an additional pitch useable all year round outweighs the overall loss of a pitch.

- Additional requirement to provide a Fitness Trail Strategy alongside a Fitness Trail Specification.

- Upgrade to the specification for the primary school. This has been worked up and agreed with OCC.

- Pushing back the delivery of the Didcot Road Junction works (Eastern Access) from 300 occupations to 600 occupations. This is due to timetable of delivering the HIF infrastructure, as OCC will be delivering this access. The developers submitted modelling evidence to support this change, which has been accepted by OCC.

Appendix D

Title	Western Valley Neighbourhood Plan
Author	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 13th November 2025

8.1. To receive an update on progress, including confirmation of the Area Designation

This has been approved as per the details in the previous meeting (see minutes) so the Neighbourhood Plan work can now commence.

8.2. To note decision made by the Clerk under s101 delegation, to appoint Breakthrough Communications first steps meeting, to investigate how best to engage the community through the neighbourhood plan process, budget £450 – 26th November

One of the most common reasons for a Neighbourhood Plan to fail at the examination stage, is lack of community engagement. Part of the Neighbourhood Plan process is consulting with the community, and documenting that communication and interaction as proof that it is the will of the community.

Further, this Council has previously asked the Clerk to consider putting on an agenda paying for Facebook advertisements and similar to try to extend the reach of our engagement in the community.

The Clerk has had the pleasure of meeting with the Breakthrough Communications team at both the summer OALC Talking Tables Day, and at National Conference just last month. In discussion of our needs with them, it was clear that just paying for Facebook adverts, is unlikely to have the desired effect of engaging with our community.

As a relatively new Council which is still relatively unknown in our fast growing community, after consultation with a quorum of Council members, the Clerk used s101 delegation to appoint Breakthrough Communications, for a fee of £450, for a one off meeting.

Should the Council consider their expert advice and help to be of benefit, the Council could make a future decision to enter into a contract with them for further work.

https://www.breakthroughcomms.co.uk/

8.3. To note decision made by the Clerk under s101 delegation, to invite ONPA to a first steps meeting, to detail how to go about a neighbourhood plan – 27th November

At the last meeting we approved to join ONPA. In a similar vein to above, the Clerk has invited the an ONPA representative to explain the process of embarking on a NP.

8.4. To approve budget for light refreshments for the meetings on the 26th and 27th November.

As described.

8.5. To appoint additional members to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

As described.

Appendix E

Title	Clerk's Report
Author	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 13th November 2025

9.1. To review the Action List Action List

See Action List

9.2. To note the price increase for Scribe from 1st April 2026.

NOTE: Formal Approval to continue with Scribe for 2026/2027 will be considered at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2026.

> I'm writing to let you know that from **1st April 2026**, your **Scribe Accounts** subscription fee will be increased, in line with your latest precept figure for 2025/26 of **£50,188.00** for Western Valley Parish Council.
>
> **Here's how your latest precept impacts your subscription:**
>
> - Your subscription will increase by **£13.60 per month**
> - Your new annual subscription for **Scribe Accounts** will be **£571.20**
>
> This change will apply from your next renewal **after 1st April 2026**. If your renewal occurs before that date, your current rate will remain the same until your next renewal.
>
> We're letting you know now so you can factor this into your **2026 budget planning**.
>
> **Why is this happening?**
>
> We review each council's **precept every three years** to ensure your subscription remains fair and proportionate to the size of your council and the level of support and resources you require. Now that your latest precept has been published, your subscription has been updated in line with this scheduled review.
>
> Please note: your subscription does **not** increase automatically each year, adjustments are only made as part of our three-year review cycle.
>
> This pricing model helps us continue to:
>
> - Deliver regular updates and improvements to Scribe
> - Provide expert, responsive support
> - Scale our services with your council's evolving needs
>
> If you have any questions at all, we're always happy to help.

9.3. To approve purchase of 1-off Edition 14 of Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration, £144 + £5.40 postage, and approve disposal of 1-off copy of the 13th Edition.

Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration has long been established as the guide to this specialist field of local government law. Among local councillors it is often referred to as 'the bible'. It is a complete statement of the law relating to parish and community councils through an extensive, though succinct, narrative accompanied by relevant statutory materials. It covers everything from parish and manorial history to the laws, both old and new, now governing local councils. All aspects are explored in a user-friendly style. It also includes appendices of relevant statutes and statutory instruments.

The 14th edition of this popular book has been comprehensively updated to cover the many changes to law and practice with direct application to local councils since the previous edition in 2022. This is a key text for parish and community councils, local authorities and solicitors practicing in local government and public/administrative law. The author, Roger Taylor, is a leading authority in this complex area of law, with over 40 years' experience. He is currently Consultant to the Town, Parish and Community Council team at Wellers Solicitors.

What's New

Fully updated to include the most recent and important developments in local government, including:

- Updated to take account of proposed local government reorganisation
- Clarification of council procedures
- Devolution with revised sections on Wales
- Updated section on Procurement
- New section on the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025.

9.4. To approve moving to Joint CCllr / DCllr surgeries, on a variety of days and times. To propose to Harwell PC, that they occur on alternate months in each parish. To ask other Parishes in the County Councillors area if they wish to also take part. To cover the cost from the meeting room budget code, maximum six surgeries per council year.

This item has been jointly proposed by the Harwell Clerk, as the County and District Councillor section of their meetings takes up a notable amount of their meeting time. After further discussions between Clerks, we wondered whether separating out the DCllr/CCllr part of the meeting to a separate day / time would facilitate better engagement with our community. Perhaps, holding it not on Thursday, perhaps occasionally at a weekend, or earlier in the day, may allow more people to attend. This would of course require the DCllr and CCllr to agree, and be subject to their availability, but should the Council agree to fund the sessions by hiring the meeting room, perhaps on a 6 month trial, in months were there isn't a full Council meeting, then should the District and County Councillors be available these sessions can be booked in as soon as possible. To also extend the invitation to Harwell Parish residents, perhaps subject to a reciprocal agreement being in place.

9.5. To consider proposals by the Clerk for entrance signs, agree actions, quotes to be brought to a future meeting.

To explain in the meeting.

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9.6. To consider proposals by the Clerk for regalia, agree actions, quotes to be brought to a future meeting.

Full description to be given in the meeting, as to what to seek quotes for but could include:

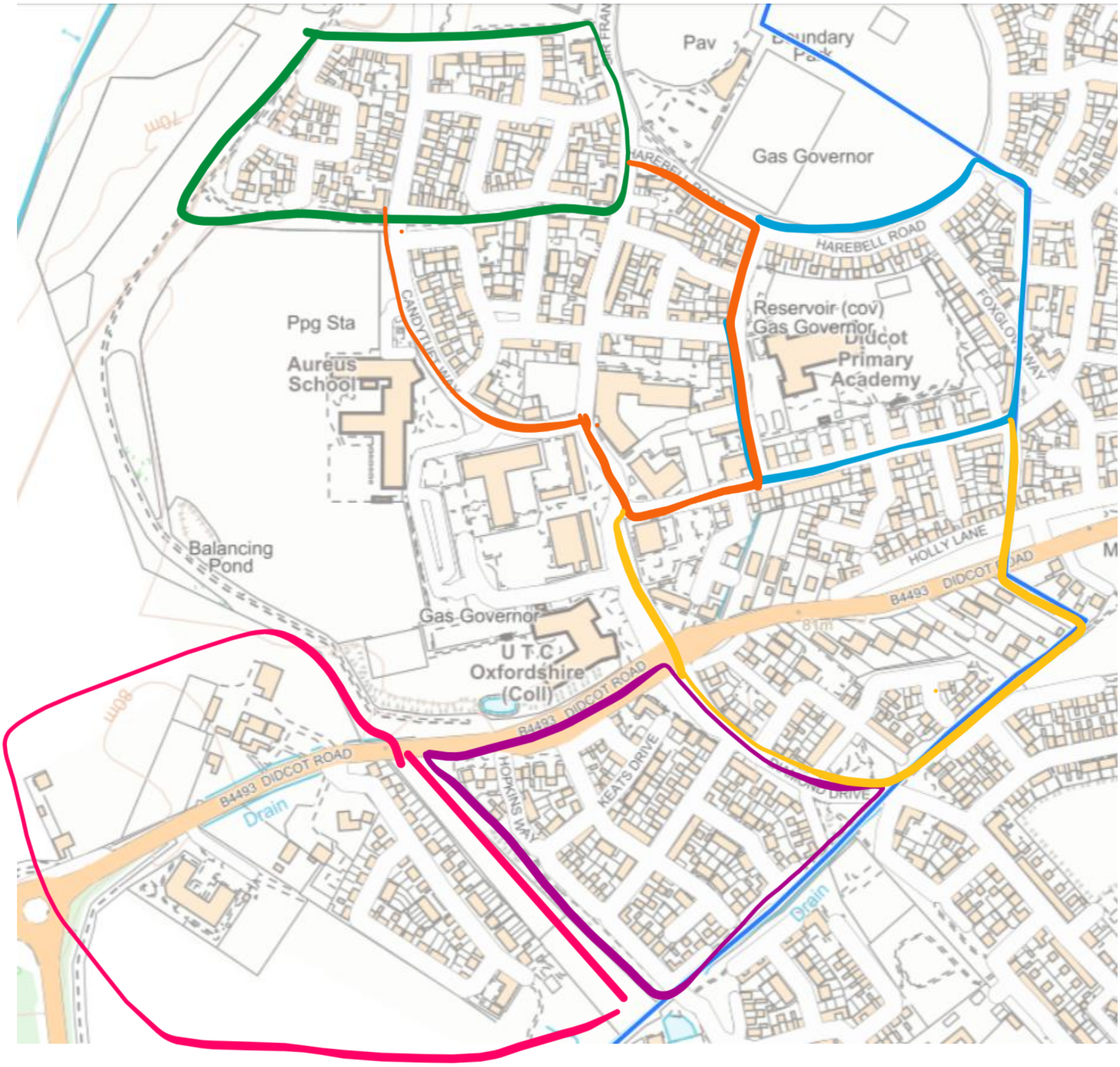
- Chairman's Chain of Office
- Previous Chair min badge
- Pin badge for current councillor.

Alternatively and/or consider official ID badge, particularly considering the below item.

Appendix E

9.7. To consider breaking the parish up on to zones, for each Cllrs to complete walkabouts to report on outstanding defects etc, whilst still awaiting formal adoption of the majority of the Parish. See appendix for proposed zones.

GWP



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VP

Appendix F

Title	Finance 2025-2026
Author	Responsible Financial Officer
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 13th November 2025

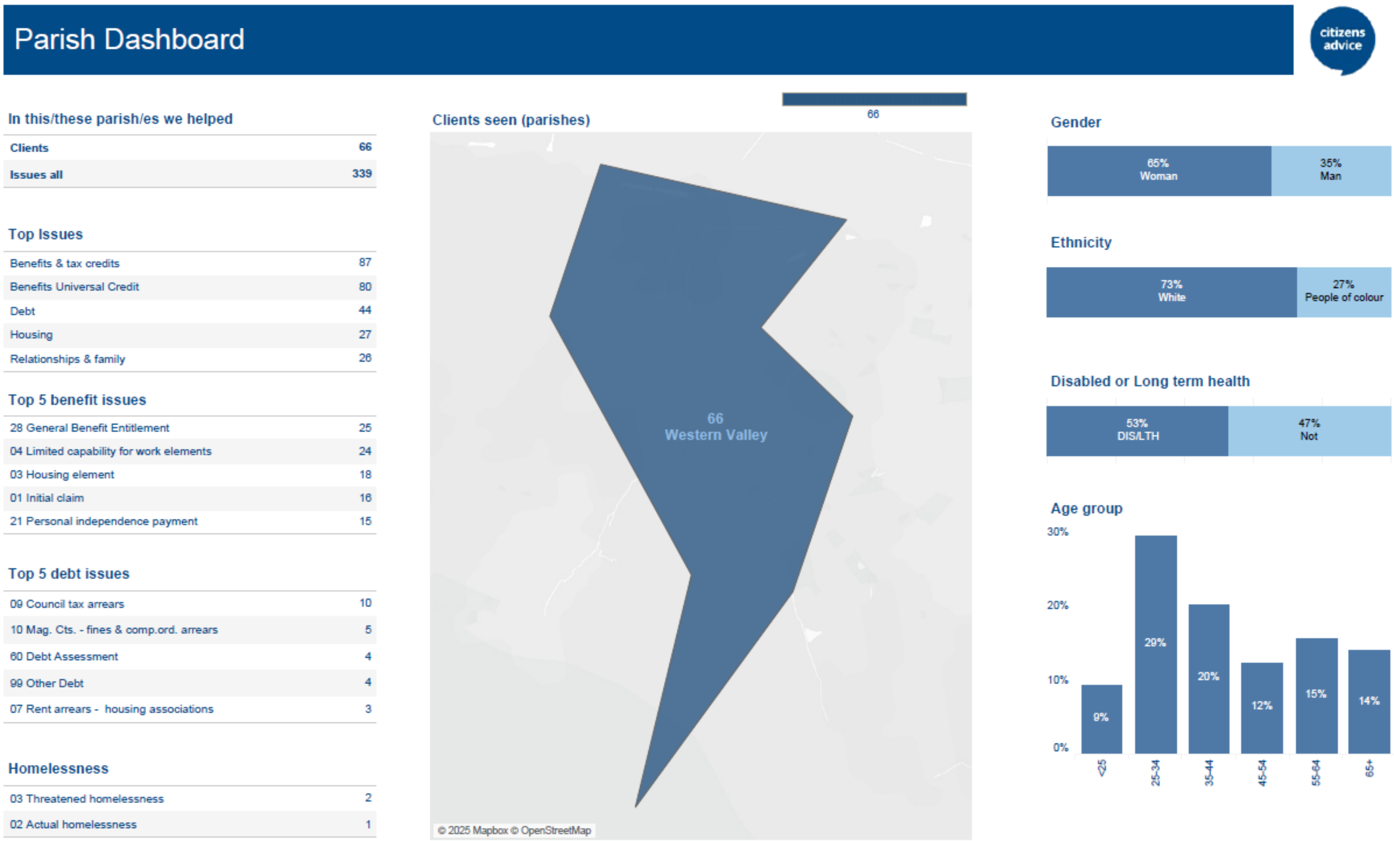
10.1. To consider and if suitable approve grant requests

For all three application, the reasons are similar to last year, in no particular order staying open, supporting families and a running a play day.

All have completed the forms correctly and completed evaluation forms for their previous grants. Summaries below.

- **Citizens Advice Oxfordshire, £800, LGA 1972 s142, 2A(a)**

Last year £750



The previous grant enabled us to continue to provide confidential and independent advice to the residents of Western Valley who are facing some of life's most difficult challenges. It also supported the training of new Volunteer advisers.

- **Oxfordshire Play Association, £1,000 LGA 1972, s137**

Last Year £500.

We were able to deliver our project / event FREE of charge to local Families / Service Users therefore ensuring an Inclusion for ALL

We estimate that around 500 Children, Young People and their Families attended the event. This was slightly lower that our target of 750 but the weather in the afternoon was quite wet / rainy which had a negative impact on our attendance numbers

This year's project cost is £5,000, other applications have also been made (unconfirmed if awarded)

- SODC = £1,500
- Didcot Town Council = £1,000
- SOHA Community Fund = £500
- Oxfordshire County Council – Councillor Priority Fund = £500

- **Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire, £2,000 LGA 1972 s137**

Last Year £2,000

Total Project Costs £12,902

81 families attended our Home-Start Baby & Me Group during the grant period (August 2024 - July 2025). The group helped parents/carers to connect with other parents and access support from our Group Worker. Babies have a warm/safe space to play, develop and socialise in with other babies of a similar age (up to 15 months). See separate grant report document.

Appendix F

10.2. To approve finalised payment list for September & October 2025

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
October						
58	31/10/2025	£6.00	£0.00	£6.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
57	28/10/2025	£47.00	£0.00	£47.00	ICO Registration	Information Commissioners Office
51	14/10/2025	£10.30	£2.06	£12.36	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
53	14/10/2025	£9.98	£2.00	£11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
55	14/10/2025	£26.00	£0.00	£26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
		£82.20	£0.00	£82.20	Total Staff Costs	
		£181.48	**£4.06**	**£185.54**	**Total**	
September						
43	30/09/2025	£6.00	£0.00	£6.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
37	15/09/2025	£26.00	£0.00	£26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
38	15/09/2025	£10.30	£2.06	£12.36	Microsoft 365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
39	15/09/2025	£9.99	£1.99	£11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
44	12/09/2025	£0.00	£60.00	£60.00	Domain Renewal	Cloud Next Ltd
45	12/09/2025	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Website	Eyelid Productions Ltd
46	12/09/2025	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Training Course	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
47	12/09/2025	£360.36	£43.24	£403.60	SLCC Conference	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
48	12/09/2025	£80.18	£0.00	£80.18	SLCC Membership	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
49	12/09/2025	£315.00	£63.00	£378.00	External Audit Fees	Moore
		£925.71	£0.00	£925.71	Total Staff Costs	
		£2,233.54	**£170.29**	**£2,403.83**	**Total**	

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10.3. To approve payments list for November 2025; December 2025 & January 2025

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
November						
64	06/11/2025	£362.83	£0.00	£362.83	Salary	Laura White
65	06/11/2025	£450.00	£90.00	£540.00	Training Course	Breakthrough Communications and Strategies Limited
66	06/11/2025	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	ONPA - Membership Fees	ONPA
67	06/11/2025	£118.43	£0.00	£118.43	Meeting Room Hire	Vale of White Horse District Council
52	14/11/2025	£10.30	£2.06	£12.36	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
54	14/11/2025	£9.98	£2.00	£11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
56	14/11/2025	£26.00	£0.00	£26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
63	14/11/2025	£471.02	£0.00	£471.02	Salary	Laura White
68	17/11/2025	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	Grant	Royal British Legion
69	17/11/2025	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	Grant	Homestart South Oxfordshire
70	17/11/2025	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	Grant	Oxfordshire Play Association
71	17/11/2025	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	Grant	Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South & Vale
72	17/11/2025	£150.00	£10.20	£160.20	Training Course	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
73	17/11/2025	£150.00	£10.20	£160.20	Training Course	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
74	17/11/2025	£150.00	£10.20	£160.20	Training Course	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
75	17/11/2025	£17.48	£3.49	£20.97	Wreath	Amazon EU S.a.r.l., UK Branch
76	17/11/2025	£3.99	£0.00	£3.99	Wreath	Maxi-Retail
77	17/11/2025	£10.54	£2.11	£12.65	Wreath	Tanar LTD
59	30/11/2025	£6.00	£0.00	£6.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
December						
62	08/12/2025	£8.10	£0.00	£8.10	PAYE Deductions	HMRC
78	14/12/2025	£26.00	£0.00	£26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
80	14/12/2025	£10.08	£2.02	£12.10	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
82	14/12/2025	£9.98	£2.00	£11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
60	31/12/2025	£6.00	£0.00	£6.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
		As calculated in month			Staff Costs	

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January						
79	14/01/2026	£26.00	£0.00	£26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
81	14/01/2026	£10.08	£2.02	£12.10	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
83	14/01/2026	£9.98	£2.00	£11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
61	31/01/2026	£6.00	£0.00	£6.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
		As calculated in month			Staff Costs	

10.4. To note receipts in September & October 2025.

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Customer
5	30/09/2025	£649.56	£0.00	£649.56	Bank Interest	Unity Trust
4	05/09/2025	£25,094.00	£0.00	£25,094.00	Precept	Vale of White Horse District Council
		£25,743.56	**£0.00**	**£25,743.56**	**Total**	

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10.5. To note the reconciled bank balances, up to 30th September & 31st October 2025.

30th September 2025

	Bank Reconciliation at 30/09/2025			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025			91,350.57
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 30/09/2025			52,243.59
				143,594.16
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 30/09/2025			6,108.74
A	**Cash in Hand 30/09/2025** (per Cash Book)			**137,485.42**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	30/09/2025	0.00	
	Unity Trust Current	30/09/2025	5,560.45	
	Unity Trust Reserve	30/09/2025	131,924.97	
				137,485.42
	Less unpresented payments			
				137,485.42
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**137,485.42**
	A = B Checks out OK			

Image Shows:

Cash in hand equals the Adjusted Bank Balance, total £137,485.42

Unity Trust Current Account: £ 5,560.45

Unity Trust Savings Account: £131,924.97

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31st October 2025

	Bank Reconciliation at 31/10/2025		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		91,350.57
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/10/2025		52,243.59
			143,594.16
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/10/2025		6,294.28
A	**Cash in Hand 31/10/2025** (per Cash Book)		**137,299.88**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/10/2025	0.00	
	Unity Trust Current 31/10/2025	5,374.91	
	Unity Trust Reserve 31/10/2025	131,924.97	
			137,299.88
	Less unpresented payments		
			137,299.88
	Plus unpresented receipts		
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**		**137,299.88**
	A = B Checks out OK		

Image Shows:

Cash in hand equals the Adjusted Bank Balance, total £137,299.88

Unity Trust Current Account: £ 5,374.91

Unity Trust Savings Account: £131,924.97

10.6. To approve applying for a Unity trust debit cards, as soon as they are available.

As described, subject to them having zero fee.

10.7. To approve UPDATED Reserves Policy, and opening Redwood Bank 95day Saver account, and Depositing £85,000, interest to be transferred to Unity Trust Account each month.

See document following.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

RESERVES POLICY

1 Introduction

1.1 Western Valley Parish Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the Council. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council will determine and review the level of reserves.

1.2 Local Government Finance Act 1992 s32 & 43 require local authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. However, there is no specified minimum level of reserves that an authority should hold and it is the responsibility of the Responsible Financial Officer to advise the Council about the level of reserves and to ensure that there are procedures for their establishment and use.

2 Types of Reserves

2.1 Reserves can be categorised as general or earmarked.

2.2 Earmarked reserves can be held for several reasons:

a) Renewals – to enable services to plan and finance an effective programme of vehicle, equipment and infrastructure replacement and planned property maintenance. These reserves are a mechanism to smooth expenditure so that a sensible replacement programme can be achieved without the need to vary budgets.

b) Carry forward of underspend - some services commit expenditure to projects, but cannot spend the budget in year. Reserves are used as a mechanism to carry forward these resources.

c) Insurance reserve – to enable the Council to meet the excesses of claims not covered by insurance.

d) Other earmarked reserves may be set up from time to time to meet known or predicted liabilities.

e) General Reserves are funds which do not have any restrictions as to their use. These reserves can be used to smooth the impact of uneven cash flows, offset the budget requirement if necessary or can be held in case of unexpected events or emergencies.

3 Earmarked Reserves

3.1 Earmarked reserves will be established on a "needs" basis, in line with anticipated requirements.

3.2 Any decision to set up a reserve must be made by the Council.

3.3 Expenditure from reserves can only be authorised by the Council.

3.4 Reserves should not be held to fund on-going expenditure. This would be unsustainable as, at some point, the reserves would be exhausted. To the extent that reserves are used to meet short term funding gaps, they must be replenished in the following year. However, earmarked reserves that have been used to meet a specific liability would not need to be replenished, having served the purpose for which they were originally established.

3.5 All Earmarked Reserves are recorded on a central schedule held by the Responsible Financial Officer which lists the various Earmarked Reserves and the purpose for which they are held.

3.6 Reviewing the Council's Financial Risk Assessment is part of the budgeting and year end accounting procedures and identifies planned and unplanned expenditure items and thereby indicates an appropriate level of Reserves.

4 General Reserves

4.1 The level of General Reserves is a matter of judgement and so this policy does not attempt to prescribe a blanket level. The primary means of building general reserves will be through an allocation from the annual budget. This will be in addition to any amounts needed to replenish reserves that have been consumed in the previous year.

4.2 Setting the level of General Reserves is one of several related decisions in the formulation of the medium term financial strategy and the annual budget. The Council must build and maintain sufficient working balances to cover the key risks it faces, as expressed in its financial risk assessment.

4.3 If in extreme circumstances General Reserves were exhausted due to major unforeseen spending pressures within a particular financial year, the Council would be able to draw down from its earmarked reserves to provide short term resources.

4.4 Even at times when extreme pressure is put on the Council's finances the Council must keep a minimum balance sufficient to pay one month's salaries to staff in General Reserves at all times.

5 Opportunity Cost of Holding Reserves

5.1 In addition to allowing the Council to manage unforeseen financial pressures and plan for known or predicted liabilities, there is a benefit to holding reserves in terms of the interest earned on funds which are not utilised. This investment income is fed into the budget strategy.

- The Council holds £85,000 of held reserves in a 95 day access account with Redwood Bank. The interest is transferred to the current account each month, in order to be use for the day to day running costs of the Council.

5.2 However, there is an "opportunity cost" of holding funds in reserves, in that these funds cannot then be spent on anything else. As an example, if these funds were used to repay debt, the opportunity cost would equate to the saving on the payment of interest and the minimum revenue provision, offset by the loss of investment income on the funds. However, using reserves to pay off debt in this way would leave the Council with no funds to manage unexpected risks nor provide a mechanism to fund the planned expenditure for which the reserves were earmarked.

5.3 Given the opportunity costs of holding reserves, it is critical that reserves continue to be reviewed each year as part of the budget process to confirm that they are still required and that the level is still appropriate.

WESTERN VALLEY
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6 Current Level of Financial Reserves

6.1 The level of financial reserves held by the council will be agreed by the Parish Council during the discussions held regarding the setting of the budget for the next financial year.

6.2 The current level of operating reserves to be held by the Council is approximately 25% of the annual precepted figure, this fully covers approximately twelve months' expenditure of standard payments. This figure is current £15,000 for the financial year of 2025/2026.

6.3 The Current level of Earmarked Reserves, includes some s106 monies, passed from Harwell PC when the parishes were split, plus a build up of reserves for future projects. It is well documented that this parish is set to grow substantially over the next 5-10 years, this will require the parish to have an office, burial ground, future allotments, potentially take on land etc. Reserves are being built to allow the parish council to purchase all of these significant pieces of infrastructure.

6.4 These levels of Reserves were agreed at the meeting where the precept was approved and each quarterly budget review, at the end of each financial year, any unspent monies are transferred to these EMR's.

7 Review of the Policy

7.1 This policy was reviewed by the Parish Council at its meeting on 13th November 2025 and will be reviewed periodically, but not less than once per council term (nominally 4 years).

Signed: S Peacock
Chair of the Council

Appendix G

Title	Finance 2026-2027
Author	Responsible Financial Officer
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 13th November 2025

11.1. To approve the Three to Five Year Long Term Plan — Appendix G1

<< To Follow>>

The Clerk asks the Council to approve examples or requests, to enable a plan to be drafted, believe the current aims of the council are

- To get working allotments
- To have a parish office in our growing community
- To set up a memorial garden for cremated remains.
- To support our growing community, make is a safer place to live and work
    - Bollards
    - Neighbourhood Plan etc.

11.2. To approve the budget for 2026-2027

Based on the items above, the Clerk proposes to keep the Precept at least static, if not increase slightly to reflect the growing numbers of residents in the village. One option would be to maintain the Band D cost, once the tax based is released, with all excess funds being used to bolster EMRs to support the approved items in the Three Year Long Term plan as detailed above.

Considering this the budget proposed as below:

	2025-2026				**2026-2027**	
	Receipts		Payments		Receipts	Payments
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget
INCOME / RECEIPTS						
Precept	50188.00	50188.00			50188.00	
Grants	0.00				0	
CIL	0.00				0	
Allotment Fees	0.00				0	
Grass Cutting Contribution						
Interest	2500.00	1278.96			4000	
	£ 52,688.00	**£ 51,466.96**	**£ -**	**£ -**	**£ 54,188.00**	

EXPENDITURE / PAYMENTS						
ADMINISTRATION						
Audit Costs			515.00	515.00		600
Bank Charges			72.00	36.00		72
Chairman's Allowance			350.00			350
Elections			0.00			0
Expenses - WFH			312.00	156.00		312
Expenses - Stationery			100.00			100
Hall Hire			1200.00	398.35		1200
Insurance			371.00	370.40		400
IT Support & Software			700.00	469.58		700
Office Equipment			0.00			500
Staff Costs (All Staff & HMRC)			8200.00	2394.97		8500
Subscriptions (OALC, SLCC)			1000.00	371.50		1000
Training			4000.00	460.00		4500
Website			350.00	209.94		350
	£ -	**£ -**	**£ 17,170.00**	**£ 5,381.74**		**£ 18,584.00**
ALLOTMENTS						
Set-up						
Water - Allotments						
	£ -	**£ -**		**£ -**		**£ -**
OTHER PROJECTS & GRANTS						
Grants (Including S137)			15000.00			15000
In year projects, undefined			5000.00			5000
	£ -	**£ -**	**£ 20,000.00**	**£ -**		**£ 20,000.00**
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN						
Grants (Income)	10000					
Staff Costs (Payments)			3000			From EMR
General Expenses (Payments)			7000			From EMR
	£ 10,000.00	**£ -**	**£ 10,000.00**	**£ -**		**£ -**
	£ 62,688.00	**£ 51,466.96**	**£ 47,170.00**	**£ 5,381.74**	**£ 54,188.00**	**£ 38,584.00**

Surplus (Ignore CIL)	£ 15,518.00		Surplus (Ignore CIL)	Surplus (Ignore CIL)	£ 15,604.00
	Original Budget				

Appendix G

Earmarked Reserves

	Start of Year	**Transfer**		**Proposed End of Year**	Proposed in year transfer	**Proposed End 2026/2027**
Operating Reserve	£ 13,000.00		<-------->	£ 13,000.00		£ 13,000.00
S106 from Harwell	£ 407.00		<-------->	£ 407.00		£ 407.00
Community Infrastructure Levy	£ -		<-------->	£ -		£ -
New Allotments Project	£ 21,239.01	**-£ 4,982.00**	<-------->	£ 16,257.01		£ 16,257.01
Training	£ 6,000.00		<-------->	£ 6,000.00		£ 6,000.00
Parish Office - Project	£ 25,000.00	**£ 5,000.00**	<-------->	£ 30,000.00	£ 7,802.00	£ 37,802.00
Burial Ground - Project	£ 25,000.00	**£ 5,000.00**	<-------->	£ 30,000.00	£ 7,802.00	£ 37,802.00
Noticeboard			<-------->	£ -		£ -
Office Equipment Renewals		**£ 500.00**	<-------->	£ 500.00		£ 500.00
Neighbourhood Plan		Any Remaining Budget				£ -
	£ 90,646.01	**£ 5,518.00**	<-------->	£ 96,164.01	£ 15,604.00	£ 111,768.01

11.3. To approve the precept request for 2026-2027

£50188.00 OR a value to maintain the Band D costs, and bring to a future meeting to formally approve. (an additional meeting could be held before a Planning Meeting for example)