

Annual Village Meeting of Drayton St Leonard

Minutes of the Annual Village meeting on Thursday 12 March 2026 held at the Drayton St Leonard Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs M Beardmore, G Farrant, E Hayter (Chairman), D. Hinde, and Clerk.
Cllr R Jones & 6 members of public.

1. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 25 March 2025.

It was resolved that the minutes be signed with no amendments.

2 Parish Chairman's Annual Report 2025-26 – Cllr Edward Hayter

Cllr Hayter summarised the written annual report below and will circulate the annual report after the meeting.

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting: 12 March 2026

Introduction:

This report aims to summarise, for all DSL residents, Parish Council actions and involvement in village affairs, for the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026.

The PC exists to represent the village on a range of matters such as local planning, floods, roads, drains and rights of way, litter, traffic calming, playgrounds and environment. Where appropriate, the PC can also support local community activities within the financial limit of its precept and other resources.

Parish Council and Government

1. Parish Councillors

Edward Hayter (*Chairman*), Charles Wellbelove (*Vice Chairman*), David Hinde, George Farrant and Mark Beardmore. The Parish Clerk is Cassie Pinnells, whose salary of £1,616.40 (excluding expenses) is paid from PC funds.

Details for all Parish Councillors can be found at:

<http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx?ID=226&LS=1>

Details of minutes, agendas, financial records relating to PC meetings were placed on the village noticeboard and the village website. See:

<http://www.draytonstleonard.org.uk>

Parish Councillors were elected for a 4-year term on 4th May 2023. Anyone wishing to join the PC should apply in the first instance to Cassie Pinnells, Parish Clerk (or to any Parish Councillor).

2. South Oxfordshire District Councillors

Robin Bennett, SODC Councillor (Green party), represents Drayton St Leonard within Berinsfield Ward, and is Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for economic development and regeneration.

Details for all SODC Councillors can be found at:

<https://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=4665>

Robin submitted regular reports to the PC, which were posted on the village noticeboard, and the village website.

Most of South and Vale's operations continued to take place at offices at Milton Park and Abingdon. The plans to develop a new HQ are on hold following the announcement that Oxfordshire County Council's cabinet voted unanimously to be placed on the Government's fast-track programme of restructuring to reduce the number of councils in Oxfordshire with the creation of one or two unitary authorities.

3. Oxfordshire County Councillors

Robin Jones (Green Party), who is a Parish Councillor in Dorchester was elected as the County Councillor to represent our village (Berinsfield and Garsington Division) on Oxfordshire County Council at the elections on 1st May 2025. Robin is Oxfordshire Mental Health and Wellbeing Champion.

More detail on Robin's responsibilities can be found at:

<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=12972>

The minor changes to the boundaries of the Parliamentary Constituency of Henley were made in 2023 and the constituency renamed as Henley and Thame. The seat was first contested at the General Election in July 2024. The sitting MP John Howell (Conservative) stood down before the General Election and Freddie van Mierlo (Liberal Democrats) was elected.

4. Overall Challenges

Drayton St Leonard continues to face a number of local issues which the Parish Council and others have been actively engaged in on behalf of residents. Issues include proposals for major housing developments, pressures from traffic, minerals extraction, through to SODC's Local Plan 2034, and major developments through the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan (see below).

Admin/Progress During the Year:

The 2025/26 year has seen the full gamut of village events and activities, including the Church Fete, the Tennis Tournament, Litter Pick, Beer Festival, Quiz Night, Burns Night Supper and Ceilidh, Wine Tasting, Gin Tasting, Village History Society meetings and Film Nights. There was also the ever popular Bonfire Night and Fireworks display which is sponsored by the Parish Council along with generous donations from local residents and businesses.

Controls/governance:

All the documents pertaining to the financial and risk controls and governance arrangements for the Parish Council are available for inspection through the village website or contact with the Clerk or one of the councillors. These tools enabled the PC to fulfill its statutory obligations with full transparency.

Insurers:

Clear Insurance continued as PC insurers, under the favourable terms negotiated by the Parish Clerk.

General Management:

Cassie Pinnell's exemplary management of meetings, internal and external communication continued. The Parish Council is very grateful to Cassie for her support and hard work during what has been a particularly busy period.

Financial Statements of Accounts

On file for inspection; future budgets were discussed as alternatives, and the 2026/27 budget set by agreement including another small reduction in the precept for the second year in succession. This process was managed by the Parish Clerk according to strict rules of compliance and

constituted a major piece of work. Good management dictated that a substantial sum be put aside as earmarked reserves against repair and maintenance, operational costs and election costs etc.

Road Infrastructure: Road infrastructure improvement is underway with the HIF1 project in development including a bridge over the Thames near Clifton Hampden.

Major Housing Development for Berinsfield:

Following the adoption of SODC's Local Plan in 2021, we await news of the next stage of the plans to develop ca.1700 on the land to the East of Berinsfield. It was expected that planning would be applied for in the Autumn of 2025 but this has been delayed again. The Parish Council has continued to engage actively with the Site Promoter and their advisors following the petition in the Spring of 2024. The main concern relates to the likely increase in the volume of traffic through the village should the Berinsfield development go ahead as planned.

Minerals Extraction:

"Parishes Against Gravel Extraction 2020" is the Action Group of three Parishes of Drayton St Leonard, Newington and Stadhampton & Chiselhampton. Edward Hayter Chairs the Group and is the local representative member of the Committee. Julia Wiblin is the Secretary to the Group and David Wiblin is also a member. The PC continued to be led by PAGE in its response to OCC's minerals extraction consultations. The selection of Nuneham Courtenay as OCC's preferred site for extraction, has been rescinded due to insufficient reserves being found to be present to meet the need. As a result, a new phase of evaluation of sites has begun and PAGE has engaged the services of a professional planning consultant to ensure that the DSL sites of SG 09 and SG 59 are not selected.

Village Matters: 2025/26

Play Area and Equipment:

Following successful completion of the new Play Area in 2019, and the award to the village of a Community Green Flag in 2020 following an inspection, the play area continues to be maintained through the voluntary efforts of members of the Parish Council and others.

The Catherine Wheel Pub: In 2016 the pub was designated an "Asset of Community Value" through a submission from the PC. This expired in 2021 and a new application was submitted by the Parish Council in 2022. This was refused on the grounds of insufficient evidence of use by the Community as an Asset under enhanced criteria since the Localism Act (2011) was first introduced.

Traffic:

The speed and volume of traffic through the village remains an issue which the Parish Council are very aware of and continue to work with the relevant authorities to mitigate wherever possible. Following a successful application for a 20mph speed limit to be introduced, the new speed limit was approved by Highways and signage was erected in the Autumn of 2024.

War Memorial:

The restored War Memorial continued to be maintained by committed volunteers, and with its algaecide-cleaned stone, shrub roses (Harness 'Remembrance') and protective chains and bollards, continues to receive praised for its respectful presentation.

Crime:

The village remained (relatively) a low crime area.

Communications:

The village Googlemail facility proved invaluable for its immediacy in internal communications (recycling, up-coming events, reporting council business, etc etc.).

Village Website:

The village website is now in its seventh year of operation thanks to Councillor Hinde, who continues to update it with village news, events and Parish Council activity.

The Parish Council have been chasing Gigaclear to provide fibre broadband for the village who sadly are not proceeding to connect from the cabinet to the village residents. A new build will be provided fibre broadband by openreach.

Village Newsletter:

The biannual village newsletter 'News & Views' has continued under the editorial hand of Diana Cavendish although with the departure from the village of Liz Rhodes, another willing volunteer is sought to support Diana.

Potholes:

Continued to develop, particularly during the winter months and with the high river levels that we have experienced this winter. The recurring problem of potholes developing at Haywards Bridge will need to be addressed through more substantial repair works to the threshold in due course and the Parish Council has been assured that this has been scheduled for the Summer of 2026 although the date for these works has not been promulgated. We are told that repairs to the raised walkway to the bridge will be undertaken at the same time as the road will be closed for a period.

Cllr Beardmore the village superuser advised that potholes are set to a strict criterion by Oxfordshire County Council those that are over 40mm repairs will be repaired immediately otherwise they are take 28 days for repairs to take place. Monitoring of potholes can only take place by the Superuser within the 20 miles hour area due to insurance and personal safety.

DSL Public Rights of Way:

Steve Cox has handed over his responsibilities as Public Path Warden for the village to Philip Haynes who kindly responded to the call for a volunteer. The Parish Council would like to record its gratitude to Steve for his vigilance and excellent works in carrying out this role over the past few years.

Litter:

"Tidy DSL Day" took place on Saturday 7 March 2026 followed by refreshments at the Old Rectory. A very good turnout of volunteers this year, thank you again to all who attended.

Regular Village Events, Clubs, Societies

The village groups and societies are all in full swing thanks to the volunteers who manage them. They include the Investment Club, the Film Society, the Walking Group, the History Society and at least two book groups.

Conclusion

We remain very ever grateful to be resident in our village with its strong sense of community and mutual support, and to all those villagers who lead the wide variety of community related activities for the benefit and enrichment of others.

3 Public Forum – Questions from Electors

The Parish Council discussed **congestion charges** in Oxford and concerns from villagers who wish to cycle safely into the city. Residents highlighted the **lack of cycling infrastructure** between the village and Oxford, and asked whether pressure could be applied to Oxfordshire County Council to support sustainable travel. Cllr Jones noted a potential scheme being explored to link Berinsfield to Oxford via the Garden Steering Village Group. The current congestion charge is expected to end once the Botley Road works are completed.

The Council also considered the issue of **road naming** within Drayton St Leonard. The Parish Council has no formal position, though village emails show divided views. Residents agree that names should not be based on individuals, and two unnamed roads—leading to Waterside House and to the Ford—are causing delivery problems. Some field-based names have been contentious. It was agreed that residents living on the affected roads should propose names and bring a consensus to the Parish Council. Concerns were raised about whether naming both roads would affect the postcode. The Parish Clerk will obtain naming criteria from South Oxfordshire District Council and share them with residents.

Cllr Edward Hayter will email to the village with an update regarding road naming and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm.

Signed:

Cllr Edward Hayter
Chairman

Date: 11 March 2027