

BIX AND ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council meeting convened and held on Monday 10th November 2025
at Bix Village Hall

<https://www.bixandassendon-pc.gov.uk>

Present: Cllrs K Duthie (Chair), J Montagu-Williams, P Bradford, R Borton

Apologies noted: W Murdoch, Cllr Jo Robb, District Councillor; Cllr Ben Higgins, County Councillor

In Attendance: Clerk – Denise Corney.

11 Members of the public were in attendance.

The meeting opened at 7.30pm

	<p>Public Participation – 15 minutes</p> <p>A robust discussion took place regarding concerns with the adoption of land without permission -extension of the boundary at the Old Chilterns, Lower Assendon. Many residents were concerned that the property owner had taken land without permission. The Parish Council confirmed that it was following up the issue and continued to research who owned the land. Item 8 on the agenda. Residents were particularly concerned with the increased risk of flooding and access for OCC to clear the ditches and carry out the necessary maintenance.</p>
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Quorate</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted. The meeting was Quorate.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of personal and prejudicial interest</p> <p>Cllr Duthie drew attention to being Church Warden. There were no further declarations of interest.</p>
3.	<p>To Approve and sign minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2025. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair. The Clerk would upload scanned minutes to the website.</p>
4.	<p>To receive reports from County and District Councillors</p> <p>Report from Cllr. Ben Higgins – a full report can be found on the BAPC website.</p> <p>Summary of key items:</p> <p>Local Government Reorganisation – ahead of the November deadline, all 3 of the proposed options were published with their draft proposals. One unitary proposal - https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/local-governmentreorganisation-and-devolution/one-oxfordshire Two unitary proposal - https://twocouncils.org/home Three unitary proposal - https://www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils</p> <p>Oxford Congestion Charge – Update</p> <p>The congestion charge is now live! I would encourage all residents to apply for permits if you have not done so already. It's too early for detailed feedback on its impact, but my personal anecdotal take is that congestion on the busy Abingdon road which I use when travelling in for meetings at county hall is much improved.</p> <p>Cowley Branch Line</p> <p>Last month, we celebrated the opening of the Cowley Branch Line when the government announced £120 million of funding to reopen the line to passengers, including two new stations at Oxford Cowley and Oxford Littlemore.</p> <p>Oxfordshire works</p> <p>In October I was proud to present my first item to formal cabinet for approval – the Oxfordshire Works Plan. We are fortunate in Oxfordshire to have the highest overall employment rate in England, and therefore the task is less about lifting general employment levels but more about addressing entrenched inequalities, improving access, and tackling the</p>

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	<p>barriers that prevent specific cohorts from participating fully in the labour market.</p> <p>Funding The SODC councillor community grant scheme is open until 5th December. I have a ward budget of £7,500 and applications of under £4,000 to date so am keen to see more. Details here -https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/communitysupport/grants/councillor-community-grants/</p> <p>The Common Ground Resilience Fund was launched in September to support local places. Details are here - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-ground-award-prospectus/commonground-award-prospectus</p> <p>Report from Cllr Jo Robb – a full report can be found on the BAPC website.</p> <p>Summary of key items:</p> <p>Matt Gulliford – Tree Officer We were very sad to hear of the sudden death of Matt Gulliford, SODC’s tree officer, last month. Matt was a tremendous officer: he was responsive, friendly and professional. There are many trees in our ward that are flourishing because of Matt’s hard work to protect them. He was always at the end of the phone, and many of our parishes will remember him fondly as a true champion for trees in our district. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family and loved ones.</p> <p>Local Government Reorganisation The government’s plan to replace the current two-tier system in Oxfordshire (and across the country) with one or more new unitary councils, is gathering pace.</p> <p>Joint Local Plan update You will recall that two planning inspectors recommended South and Vale withdraw their Joint Local Plan from inspection because, they say, there was a failure in the duty to co-operate.</p> <p>Homeless Prevention The council has approved a new Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy, aimed at taking a proactive approach to preventing homelessness, and reducing the use of temporary housing such as BnB accommodation.</p> <p>Housing Allocations – How to Get on the Social Housing Register Following a public consultation, the council has now put in place an updated joint Housing Allocation Policy. This sets out the criteria on who can join the housing register and the rules for how social housing is allocated</p>
5.	<p>To Review: Refurbishment of Allotments Further to the resolution passed (item 5, meeting on 15th September 2025). Councillors rescinded the resolution and further resolved that Cllr Montagu Williams would inspect the allotments initially for discussion and agreement at the next meeting regarding basic improvements to be made. Councillors resolved to make use of CIL funding to carry out the suggested initial improvements with the intent that the allotments could be advertised to residents in Henley.</p>
6.	<p>To Review: Projects using CIL Funds Councillors agreed to ask for ideas from residents where CIL funding could be used and circulate a note on the BAG email list. The Clerk reminded how CIL monies can be used to support the development of the local area to fund: (a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or (b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area. Councillors resolved that a grant for the PCC footpath could be funded from CIL monies, along with a grant request to Cllr Robb from the SODC fund available.</p>
7.	<p>To Approve: Dates of 2026 meetings: Councillors approved. 2nd Monday – 12th January, 9th March, 11th May, 13th July, 14th September, 9th November 2026.</p>

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8.	<p>To Review: Concerns with adoption of land without permission. Cllr Montagu-Williams had approached several solicitors to act on behalf of the Parish Council and provide advice. After review and discussion, Councillors RESOLVED to appoint Mercers to act on behalf of the PC, to establish ownership and to negotiate with the owner of the Old Chilterns. Ownership of the land continued to be in question. Henley Rural Council had owned the land at some point, but the Deeds were lost in the SODC fire.</p>													
9.	<p>To Note: Chair's Report, Clerk's Report and Village Hall Report Full reports can be found on the BAPC website.</p> <p>Chair's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is pothole season, with wet and cold weather working together to break up the road surface. Fix my Street Super Users have not been active in the last couple of months, but will be soon, please let us know if there are any you wish to be looked at. The speed sign is currently in Middle Assendon and will be moved back to A4130 in Bix shortly. The neighbourhood speed watch radar kit has been received, and Trevor, Ben and Kevin will train themselves and make the first use of it in the next couple of months. We are waiting to hear back from OCC Traffic Department, firstly the permanent radar speed sign at the north end of Middle Assendon, currently turned off, awaits modification to flag 20 rather than 30. Secondly, the left turn warning sign on the A4130 southbound, prior to the B480 turn off, to be fixed. Denise our Clerk; has been working hard and keeping the Parish Council website up to date: https://bixandassendon-pc.gov.uk. This is a great resource and will list key parish information such as upcoming planning. Please refer to it for all our documents and the reports from our Councillors, Jo Robb and Ben Higgins. Denise and I did a tree check on the stretch where the tree came down between the villages. Thanks to Sophie Roper who pointed out the dying trees on SODC land, we will be raising this with SODC and hopefully getting the dead wood and trees removed as soon as possible. During the walk, Sophie pointed out the slabs of bitumen that had been left in the stream. Dee is in conversation with Gigaclear, who did respond immediately, and we need to identify the locations for there team to come and clear up. If you have any information, please let us know. Finally, and possibly very importantly, we have CIL monies on the council which must be used for certain specified infrastructure projects in our Parish. Please let us know if you have any ideas of ways we could use these funds. Thank you for coming out on this cold Winter evening, I really appreciate all your input, help and support. <p>Clerk's Report</p> <p>Finance:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">closing balance at 31st March 2025</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12168.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receipts</td> <td style="text-align: right;">47313.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not cashed</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1650.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Payments</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-7989.52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance at 30th Oct 2025</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>53142.58</u></td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 5px;"> <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">53142.58</td> </tr> </table> </div> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Difference</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.00</td> </tr> </table>	closing balance at 31st March 2025	12168.50	Receipts	47313.60	Not cashed	1650.00	Payments	-7989.52	Balance at 30th Oct 2025	<u>53142.58</u>	53142.58	Difference	0.00
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	<p>Budget Variance – Additional funds from CIL Monies claimed 2025-26– Decisions and ideas for spend to be agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments- improvements. Worknest health and safety survey assessment, subscribe to National Allotment Society • Additional Path – Church to Village Hall • Improved cycle path to Henley • Draft budget – to be reviewed and agreed with review of precept. • VAT Claim completed and refund received. • Signatures required for changes to Barclays mandate (delete those councillors no longer with the PC). (email has been forwarded for electronic signatures). • Unity Trust Bank – process started for the changeover and setting up a new account for the BAPC. • Interim internal audit – process commenced for Clerk to review and complete. <p>Village Hall Report – no further updates.</p>								
10.	<p>To agree responses to planning applications submitted: P25/S3179/FUL Witness Bank Stables Lower Assendon RG9 6AW Proposed replacement stables, new tractor barn and extension of existing outdoor arena.</p> <p>Members of the public had commented online with objections and submitted historical evidence when a previous planning application had been refused by the planning inspector.</p> <p>Councillors agreed to submit an objection with concerns that the increase in buildings and infrastructure would set a precedent for over development and density within the vicinity of an area of outstanding natural beauty. Furthermore, there were concerns that the existing grazing land would not support more horses.</p> <p>P25/S2998/DIS Bix Underwood Bix RG9 6DD Discharge of condition(s) 3 (Schedule of Materials) and 9 (Ecology - Construction Method Statement) on application ref P25/S1998/S73 (Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application P24/S2467/FUL (Proposed replacement dwellinghouse and associated works and landscaping) - to replace timber cladding with flint and bricks to south-east and north-east elevations; ridge height increase; internal alterations and increase in footprint and discharge of condition 7(ecology enhancements)). No objections.</p> <p>P25/S3350/S73 West View House Rectory Lane Bix RG9 6BT Variation of conditions 2 (Approved plans) and 3 (Materials) on application P25/S1353/FUL (Erection of a self-build detached two storey dwellinghouse with attached double car-port together with associated external parking & manoeuvring space and amenity space. Creation of new vehicular access from Rectory Lane) - external alterations. No objections.</p>								
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Budget Variation Report - no significant variance against budget. CIL money received. ❖ To Review and Approve – Budget 2026-27 – Councillors RESOLVED to approve the budget for 2026-27 with a precept request of £13000.00. ❖ To Approve – Comet Bus contribution – Councillors RESOLVED to approve a contribution of £250.00. 																		
12.	<p>To note: payments made between meetings and to approve:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;">Payee</th> <th style="width: 30%;">£</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Clerk Salary – September and October salary</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£508.66</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">£508.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC inc Employer NI (in credit)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Comet Bus invoice contribution agreed</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£250.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>National Allotment Society membership</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£66.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Henley Town Council - mowing the triangle</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£420.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clerk Expenses – September and October</td> <td style="text-align: right;">46.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">31.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Payee	£	Clerk Salary – September and October salary	£508.66		£508.86	HMRC inc Employer NI (in credit)	0.00	Comet Bus invoice contribution agreed	£250.00	National Allotment Society membership	£66.00	Henley Town Council - mowing the triangle	£420.00	Clerk Expenses – September and October	46.30		31.00
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13.	<p>Items for report and inclusion on the next agenda: Approval of additional policies recommended in internal audit; budget review and preparation for 2025-26; updates on planning queries; allotment – project planning for improvements; agreement of emergency plan.</p>																		
14.	<p>Date of next meeting: Monday, 12th January 2026 at Bix Village Hall.</p>																		

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

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