

Place and Assets Working Group – Meeting notes

Time and place : 2025-07-16 10:30 Tilia House, Goring

Present: Cllr Toby Thurston (TT), Cllr Robin Williamson (RWil), Cllr David Bermingham (DB)
(Mr Roger Wood (RNW) had updated Cllr Thurston the day before)

1 Review of previous actions

- Organize a road / public sign cleaning day using Oxfordshire Together method (RWil and TT) – planned for 2025-07-23
- Draw up a log of the maintenance state of GPC buildings (RNW) – carry forward
- ~~Find alternative suppliers for electrical maintenance contract (DB, RNW)~~ – supplier appointed at full council on 2025-07-14
- Continue to develop IT strategy and agree with Clerk (TT) – carry forward
- ~~Survey street lamp columns for damage and nuisance hedges (TT, RNW)~~ – report included below
- ~~Ask Assistant Clerk for list of recent hedge correspondence (TT)~~
- ~~Organize WEEE disposal of old IT assets in OJFS (TT)~~
- Organize a volunteer leaf clearing day in November with support from SODC (RWil) – carry forward
- ~~Organize a volunteer weeding day in June or July and/or agree spraying plan with Clerk (DB)~~ – report below
- ~~Draw up a slide for village meeting to explain No Mow May (TT)~~
- ~~Contact local schools to see if they want anything from OJFS (DB)~~
- ~~Organize OJFS yard sale for 19 July (all)~~
- Book a skip for OJFS waste (RNW, in coordination with Clerk) – planned for 2025-07-28
- ~~Discuss benches policy with Clerk and draw up proposal to establish a maintenance budget to be presented to Full Council (TT)~~ – report below

2 Discussion

2.1 IT assets and requirements

On hold, but planned to be ready for Sept once TT has read up on the new NALC guidance that must now be included.

2.2 Street lamp upgrades

RNW and TT walked round the village on 1 July (and 2 July) to survey the street lamps that belong to the Parish Council. Enerveo are currently in the process of upgrading the lamps and painting the columns. On the days of the survey 152 out of the 209 lamps were now LEDs; the remainder are expected to be done in the next two months.

Twenty-four of our lamps are mounted on brackets attached to telegraph poles or buildings, one is on a bollard (Farm Road alley), one is on a concrete post (in Cleeve Down), and the remaining 183 are on steel columns. Of these, there are eight heritage columns on the bridge, which are currently thought unsuitable for attachments of any weight (see below).

Of the regular steel posts, there are 95 thinner 4” posts, and 80 fatter 8” posts. Both types are suitable for hanging baskets if they are solid and vertical. But only the fatter ones are likely to be suitable for attaching defibrillator boxes. There were 31 posts (16 thinner, 15 fatter) that were obviously not vertical. Following the advice from the selective survey none of these should be used for hanging baskets or any other extra load, but only two of them were actually loose in the ground:

- Elmcroft No.2 – Grid: SU 60230 80273, <https://w3w.co/hopeless.acrobat.complies>
- Lycroft Close No.4 – Grid: SU 60514 81185, <https://w3w.co/radically.opera.bake>

Both of these are near the end of quiet roads with very little pedestrian traffic, so they do not present any acute danger to pedestrians, but we should ask Enerveo to dig them up and re-fix them in the ground in the next six months.

Action: TT to
arrange with
Clerk

Lamp columns for defibrillators

It is suggested that only the larger 8” posts should be considered for any new defibrillator boxes. There are about 65 of these that are in good condition and look vertical. They are fairly evenly distributed round the village.

Bridge columns

RNW and TT also had a meeting with the OCC bridge engineer on Tues 1 July, and we inspected the bridge columns together. Unfortunately he still cannot find any drawings for the brackets or the columns, nor did he think he was suitably qualified to do any engineering calculations himself. We agreed in discussion that the weak point of the columns would be the welds on the brackets that attach them to the bridge; he took careful measurements, and will try to get one of his colleagues to help him to do some strength calculations, but he could not commit to any time table for this to be done. In the mean time it remains the case that OCC do not think it is safe to attach anything heavy to the columns.

2.3 Litter bins

Litter bin emptying by Shield is now up to three days per week, but we are still having full bin problems on busy weekends because Shield are not able to empty bins on weekends or bank holidays.

RWil to meet with the Clerk to discuss possibility of finding an alternative supplier who could empty bins at weekends – at least in the summer months. Action: RWil

TT to meet with staffing committee to discuss getting our own facilities team to empty the key bins (Ferry Lane, Manor Road, and Sheepcot) at weekends to supplement the Shield schedule. This would involve changing the bags and putting the full bags in a parish council commercial bin. TT to discuss possible positions of a bin at the Community Centre with trustees, and to meet with Clerk to discuss costs of getting a commercial waste bin from Grundon. Action: TT

New bins have been sourced for Bourdillon and RNW will be installing them by 23 July before the opening of the new playground. But replacement bins for Gardiner are still not available, can we find an alternative that *is* available. We discussed re-using the old “open” bins from Gardiner – recommend that one is re-sited at the far end of Manor Road and one in the Ferry Lane open space. Action: DB to follow up on both points with clerk

2.4 Street improvements

Weeding

DB reported that the volunteer weeding day had been reasonably successful despite a very low turn out of residents – just one turned up (although Whitehills Green did their own on the same day), but the councillors who joined in worked very hard, with able assistance from Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers. Action: TT to write to thank her

The spraying with the low-toxicity spray was reasonably effective, but it would be better to leave a slightly longer gap between spraying and manual clearance. It is currently planned to spray problem areas again in September. We discussed the need to create a regular schedule for future years. The general outline will be to spray in May and Sept, with a volunteer clearance day in June – we should invite Goring in Bloom to collaborate on timing and volunteers. Action: DB to present plan to council by Feb.

Sign cleaning

TT and RWil to do another round of road sign cleaning on Weds 23 July.

Vegetation clearance

We discussed clearing the overgrowth of ivy etc along the Reading Road footpath from the Farm Road alley steps upto the pillar box by Fairfield Road, as discussed the day before at the Travel and Transport committee. Agreed that we could organize a volunteer day following OCC method statement.. TT/DB to provide hi-vis vests, RWil to do before and after photos to send to OCC, green waste to be collected in large bags and taken up to skip at the burial ground. All volunteers to provide gloves and suitable tools. Planned day is Weds 20 August – start at 09.30. Action: TT to email councillors

2.5 Clearance of OJFS

We discussed the planned “Yard Sale” for the OJFS on Sat 19 July – TT, DB, and RNW to meet on Fri 18 July to prepare the building and sort out things to keep and things that need to go. RWil to put notice up on FaceBook etc. TT to produce posters for the village.

RNW to work with the clerk to get document waste sent for shredding, and to organize a skip for the remaining items. It is likely that we will need several skips. We will also have a fair amount of useful equipment left over that should not be binned. A small number of items may be moved to the office (like the antique clock); but everything else – like the spare shelving system and the two large marquee tents will need to be stored elsewhere.

Action: RNW to discuss suitable locations with clerk

2.6 Open space improvements

Green waste service for Gardiner

Following discussions in May with the cricket and croquet clubs, it has been agreed that we will establish a green waste collection service for them in order to manage the grass clippings that are produced from the croquet lawn and the cricket square. So far only the cricket club have signed up for the service. It will commence in August 2025. The council will provide the bins and a new lockable bin store, the clubs will pay a small fee for each bin collected.

We are also in discussion with Goring in Bloom about managing the green waste that is produced from the NW corner garden on the Gardiner field. The current plan is that the council will provide the garden with a wooden compost enclosure suitable for the gardening waste (and not to be used by the sports clubs for grass clippings). The council also plan to clear the old compost heap area that has been left unmanaged and has turned to noxious sludge. This area will not be used for compost again; it will be planted with hedging to blend in with the rest of the hedge, and may be needed for extended cricket nets in the future.

Care of the Jubilee Garden

DB raised the state of the Jubilee Garden, and it was agreed that it needs to be tidied up. RNW has said he would be happy to manage the current contractor if that would help. DB will present options back to next PAWG meeting.

Action: DB to discuss options with clerk

Wild flowers and long grass

TT reported on the No Mow May extensions. The four areas (in Ferry Lane, Rectory Gardens, Gardiner and Sheepcot) were supposed to have been left unmown for the whole summer; unfortunately the Contractor inadvertently mowed the areas in Rectory and Ferry Lane at the start of June, and the prolonged hot and dry weather has meant that there has been very little to see in the way of long grass or wild flowers. We agreed, in the light of the motion passed at council on 14 July about adding wild flower seeds, that we need a proper plan to be written up to be followed in subsequent years.

Action: TT to write up a plan for the clerk

2.7 Benches

TT reported that the benches policy was currently part of the Whitehills burial ground policy document. TT has worked with the burial ground clerk to establish ownership of the benches, and it was agreed that where an owner can be established the council will attempt to contact them when a bench needs replacement or repair. There are no funds specifically set aside from donors for maintenance. So TT proposed a motion at council on 14 July to establish a more active maintenance regime for benches in the village: it was agreed that the council would replace up to three benches and repair another eight as required.

Action: TT to provide details to clerk

TT also reported that by a separate motion at council on 14 July it was agreed to install three new benches in and around Gatehampton Meadow. TT is working with the clerk to agree the sites and procure the benches, and the council has received a donation from MIGGS that will cover the cost of buying and installing the benches.

2.8 Problem hedges

TT further reported that as part of the street lamp survey he and RNW had drawn up an initial list of problem hedges. TT will work with the assistant clerk to draw up a register of hedges and correspondence about them. There is a local government duty to keep the highway (and footpaths) clear and accessible for all users; the body responsible for this is OCC Highways, but if they fail to take “proper proceedings” in a particular case, we can make a formal representation to them to force them to do the work. Although clearly it would be better to get hedges cleared co-operatively, it is useful to know that we do have legal means to enforce clearance when necessary.

Action: TT

2.9 Emergency planning

To be considered at a future meeting of the PAWG. Clerk has provided more up to date guidance from OCC for consideration.

2.10 Old phone box

The council has delegated restoration of the old phone box to the PAWG. Suggestions for use so far include: making it into a village information hub; making it into a planted flower display; installing an artwork in it.

We also discussed the possibility of relocating it away from the old Post Office so that any future redevelopment would not affect it. Possible locations would be outside the Arcade, or in the Rectory Gardens.

In the short term, TT will continue to work with the Assistant Clerk to get it cleaned up, mended, and re-painted.

Action: RWil to find suppliers

2.11 Placement of the old orientation plaque

The council has also delegated management of the old orientation plaque from the station to the PAWG. To be discussed at a future meeting.

2.12 Notice boards

The council has also delegated management of village notice boards to the PAWG. We discussed four sets of notice boards:

- The official parish council boards in the Arcade, at the station, outside Westholme Stores, and at the foot of Ickneild Road. We agreed that we would clean these boards as part of road sign cleaning.
- The “community” boards in the Arcade, at the village hall, and at Tesco. The only one of these that the PC manage is the one in the Arcade – this one needs a new laminated notice at the top explaining that it is for community events, not for commercial advertisements.
- The three village maps, originally provided by Ron Bridle in 2012, located at the station, the Wheel Orchard car park, and on Lock Approach. Ron originally provided the maps and notice boards; TT reported that he and the assistant clerk recently met with Ron to discuss replacing the maps with more up to date information. After the meeting TT wrote to Ron to say that he (personally) would support any application for a grant towards the cost of updating the village maps that he chose to make. And that if he decided that he did not want to update them himself, that the PAWG would be interested in taking them over from him.
- Welcome signs for the five open spaces. TT has drafted an outline of a possible welcome sign for Bourdillon, but the playground committee have not agreed the design or the wording yet. The group reviewed TT’s ideas, and agreed that we need some professional design to make a good job of them. TT and RWil to find contacts for other good examples, then TT to work with clerk to draw up a plan of work.

Action: RWil to
arrange with
assistant clerk

3 Date of next meeting

Weds 17 September 2025, 10:30 at Friar’s Ford

Meeting closed at 12:28

See over for summary of actions Ÿ

4 Summary of Actions

- Organize a road / public sign cleaning day using Oxfordshire Together method (RWil and TT)
- Draw up a log of the maintenance state of GPC buildings (RNW)
- Continue to develop IT strategy and agree with clerk (TT)
- Organize a volunteer leaf clearing day in November with support from SODC (RWil)
- Write a weed control plan and agree it with clerk (and council if necessary) (DB)
- Book skip(s) for OJFS waste (RNW, in coordination with clerk)
- Arrange for Enerveo to replace two broken lamp columns (TT)
- Meet with clerk to discuss bin collection at weekends (RWil)
- Meet with staffing committee to discuss getting facilities team to empty bins at weekends (TT)
- Ask clerk and Community Centre about possible locations of large bins to support weekend litter bin collection (TT)
- Meet with clerk to expedite new hooded bins for Gardiner and relocation of the old open bins (DB)
- Write to Cllr Filipova-Rivers to thank her for her help on the weeding day. (TT)
- Organize vegetation clearance day (RWil)
- Meet with clerk to make plan for future storage of useful items from OJFS (RNW)
- Meet with clerk to develop options for improvement of Jubilee garden, and present back to next PAWG (DB)
- Write up a No Mow May plan for future years and agree with clerk (TT)
- Provide clerk with details of benches to be mended and/or replaced (TT)
- Work with assistant clerk to improve management of problem hedges (TT)
- Find suppliers able to transform old phone box (RWil)
- Replace GPC sign at the top of the Community Notice board in the Arcade (RWil)

Note: even if not explicitly stated above, all the actions here need be done in collaboration with the clerk team; at the very least please keep Sarah and/or Mike informed as appropriate.