

BLACKBIRD LEYS PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 27th January 2026, at 7.00 pm held at the Leys Leisure Centre

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- MEMBERS PRESENT:** **Parish Councillors:** Imade Edosomwan (Chair), Natalie Webb (Vice-chair), David Newman, Dan Wadsworth, Melissa Latchman, Gill Taylor, and Brian Lester.
- OTHER COUNCILLORS:** **City Councillors:** Linda Smith and Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini.
County Councillor: Imade Edosomwan.
- OFFICERS PRESENT:** **Clerk to the Council:** Emma Kearney
- OTHERS PRESENT:** **Members of the Public:** 3
Oxford City Council Director of Communities and Citizens: Helen Bishop
Oxford City Council Leys Locality Manager: Shabnam Sabir.
Peabody Development Manager: Alice Arden-Barnett
- APOLOGIES:** The following apologies were received:
Parish Councillors: Anthony Church
City Councillors: Simon Ottino and Lubnar Arshad.
Oxford City Council Regeneration Manager: Karoline Soisalo de Mendonca.
Peabody Development Manager: Kris Hall
- FC0112/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION**
None
- FC0113/25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to accept the minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th November 2025 as a true record.
- FC0114/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
A member of the public was invited to speak by the Chair regarding a grant enquiry. The Clerk advised the Chair there was no agenda item for this matter, so the request could not be considered at this meeting. After the presentation the Clerk provided contact details and offered support so the matter could be addressed correctly. There were no further members of the public wishing to speak.
- FC0115/25 REGENERATION UPDATE**
An update was received.
- FC0116/25 COUNCILLOR UPDATE**
Councillors present gave their reports.
- FC0117/25 PRIDE IN PLACE**
- a) The Director of Communities and Systems at Oxford City Council, gave a presentation on the Government's Pride in Place Programme. The council was informed that Greater Leys had been selected for the programme, which would provide approximately £2 million per year over 10 years, overseen by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). An initial capacity building payment of £150,000 was expected imminently. The programme would be community-led through a Neighbourhood Board, with Oxford City Council acting as the accountable body for financial and legal matters. Questions were received and answered.
The council considered the appointment of a parish councillor representative and alternate to engage with Oxford City Council on Pride in Place matters in accordance with the Representative Protocol.
 - b) It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Wadsworth as the parish council representative and Cllr Newman as the alternate.

FC0118/25 COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The following update was received

1. Planning Committee

The Vice Chair reported that the Planning Committee had met on 20th January 2026 and agreed to raise no objections to three planning applications: 26/00017/FUL and 26/00018/FUL (Old Station Yard) and 25/03223/FUL (land at Watlington Road, underground high voltage cable to support a solar farm).

2. Event Committee

The Events Committee Chair reported that the committee had met on 12th January 2026 and made the following recommendations:

- i. The council considered a proposal to change the Events Committee meeting schedule from the second Monday to the third Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve the change of meeting schedule.

- ii. The council considered the risk assessment for the community engagement event on 31st January 2026 at Blackbird Leys Bowls Club. Councillors were reminded of the importance of attending. The risk assessment was noted as straightforward.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve the risk assessment.

- iii. The council considered a proposal for a second community engagement event in Greater Leys with a budget of £1,500. Following discussion, the date was changed from 21st February to 14th March 2026 at The Barn. It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve the second community engagement event on 14th March 2026 at The Barn, with a budget of £1,500.

3. Neighbourhood Working Group

The Neighbourhood Working Group Chair reported that the group had met informally on 16th December 2025 and made the following recommendations:

- i. The council considered a proposal to approve the Community Engagement Stall Proposal, enabling the council to run stalls at community events throughout the year to promote the Neighbourhood Plan and gather resident feedback.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve the Community Engagement Stall Proposal.

- ii. The council considered a proposal to approve the community survey to be used at community engagement events.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve the community survey.

- iii. The council considered a proposal to change the Neighbourhood Planning meeting start time from 7.30pm to 8.15pm, allowing all three committees to meet in sequence on the same evening.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve the change of meeting start time to 8.15pm.

- iv. The generic risk assessment template for Community Engagement Stall activities was **NOTED** as not yet finalised.

It was agreed that a risk assessment would be prepared once a specific event had been confirmed.

FC0119/25 700 BUS ROUTE

The council considered concerns raised about changes to the 700 bus route, which had removed stops on Pegasus Road and Knights Road previously used by elderly and vulnerable residents to access the Churchill Hospital. It was noted the change

had been made without resident consultation. The matter would also be raised at the next parish transport representatives meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to write to Oxfordshire County Council and the bus company to express concern about the impact of the route change on elderly and vulnerable residents and to seek an explanation for why the route was changed.

FC0120/25 ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The council considered the nomination of the Kassam Stadium as an Asset of Community Value. As a statutory consultee, the council was invited to make a representation to Oxford City Council.

It was **RESOLVED** by majority vote to support the nomination.

FC0121/25 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The council considered nominating a parish councillor to serve as the non-voting representative on Oxford City Council's Standards Committee. Cllr Newman was proposed and seconded.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to nominate Cllr Newman as the parish council representative on Oxford City Council's Standards Committee

FC0122/25 BUDGET AND RESERVES ALLOCATION 2026-27

The Clerk presented the draft budget and reserves allocation for 2026-27.

Following discussion, the council **NOTED** that an allocation for a Zoom account and councillor training also need to be added to the presented budget.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve the budget and reserves allocation for 2026-27.

Budget 2026-27	
Budget	Amount
Staff Costs	
Wages	£19,000.00
5 hours per week Increase (to be agreed)	£5,000.00
Pension	£6,200.00
HMRC	£6,400.00
Travel	
Mileage	£175.50
Councillor Mileage	£100.00
Hall Hire	
Full Council Meeting	£625.00
Planning Meeting /Events/NPWG	£750.00
Bank Charges	
Quarterly current account fee	£72.00
Monthly Credit Card Fee	£36.00
Insurance	
Clerk Mailbox	£65.00
Office 365	£80.00
Anti-Virus	£50.00
Dropbox	£200.00
Website	
12 mailboxes	£1,100.00
OALC Membership	£2,500.00
SLCC Annual Membership - Joint	£150.00
Information Commissioner Fee	£45.00

Parish Online	£500.00
Zoom	£200.00
Audit Fee	
Internal	£325.00
External	£375.00
Telephone	
Mobile contract cost	£180.00
Stationery	£300.00
Training	£2,000.00
Events	
Hosting Quarterly Events	£6,000.00
Annual Meeting	
Refreshments	£100.00
Printing	£100.00
Small Grants	£3,000.00
Expenditure	£56,528.50

Reserves 2026-27	
Budget	Amount
General Reserves	£3,000.00
Rebranding/name change/new website	£8,000.00
Neighbourhood Plan Year 1 of 3	£6,000.00
Promotional video	£6,000.00
Community Engagement	£5,000.00
Elections	£800.00
New Councillor Cost	£200.00
Insurance Excess	£3,000.00
Crisis Fund	£500.00
Staff Costs	£2,000.00
Training	£1,000.00
Events	£1,000.00
Grants	£1,000.00
Strategic Aims	£1,500.00
Legal Costs	£5,000.00
Appoint new staff members	£30,000.00
Total	£69,000.00

FC0123/25 PRECEPT REQUEST

The Clerk presented the precept request for 2026-27. The tax base for 2026-27 has been confirmed by Oxford City Council as 2,933.4, an increase of 99.5 Band D equivalent properties (3.51%) from 2025-26.

The Clerk recommended a 5% precept increase to £57,108.45, noting that this would raise the Band D council tax charge by 28p per year, from £19.19 to £19.47.

It was **NOTED** that even with this increase, Blackbird Leys Parish Council would remain significantly below the national average Band D charge for parish councils of £92.22.

The increase is required to support growing demands on the council including the Neighbourhood Plan, Pride in Place, quarterly community events and potential local government reorganisation.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve a precept of £57,108.45 for 2026-27, a 5% increase on the previous year.

FC0124/25 GRANT REQUESTS

The council considered the following grant applications.

1. Assisted Reading for Children (ARCh)

ARCh is a registered charity providing trained volunteer reading helpers to primary schools, currently supporting up to 40 children in Blackbird Leys schools through twice-weekly reading sessions.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to award a grant of £500 to ARCh towards volunteer training and books, games and resources.

This grant was awarded under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. Agnes Smith Advice Centre

Agnes Smith Advice Centre is a registered charity providing free welfare benefits and debt advice to Blackbird Leys residents. In 2024/25 they supported 1,667 households, achieving financial gains of over £4.2 million. The grant contributes towards essential security alarm system costs.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to award a grant of £500 to Agnes Smith Advice Centre towards their annual intruder alarm and fire alarm system fees.

This grant was awarded under Section 142 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3. Oxford Play Association

OPA is a registered charity that has delivered successful Playday events in the Leys in 2022 and 2025. The grant contributes towards a free community Playday at Frys Hill Park on 21st July 2026, with a total project cost of £5,000 and confirmed funding from Oxford City Council, Peabody and other sources. It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to award a grant of £500 to Oxfordshire Play Association towards the community Playday event.

This grant was awarded under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

FC0125/25 FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Income

The council **NOTED** there was no income to report.

2. Finance Report

The council **NOTED** the finance report circulated by the Clerk, including the following budget update

	Hall Hire	Stationery	Bank Charges	Travel	Mobile	Office 365
SPENT	£1,416.25	£35.00	£87.00	£58.50	£130.44	£0.00
BUDGETED	£2,125.00	£300.00	£108.00	£325.00	£180.00	£80.00
REMAINING	£708.75	£265.00	£21.00	£266.50	£49.56	£80.00

	Memberships	Insurance	Info Cert	Audit fee	Grants	Salary
SPENT	£2,659.16	£554.58	£5.00	£678.00	£2,500.00	£14,112.6
BUDGETED	£2,650.00	£900.00	£45.00	£700.00	£3,000.00	£19,000.0
REMAINING	-£9.16	£345.42	£40.00	£22.00	£500.00	£4,887.40

	WFHA	Pension	HMRC	Com Engage Promo	Comm mapping	Exploring R place
SPENT	£216.00	£4,324.01	£6,896.79	£951.05	£0.00	£0.00
BUDGETED	£288.00	£5,200.00	£5,400.00	£1,000.00	£1,050.00	£850.00
REMAINING	£72.00	£875.99	£1,496.79	£48.95	£1,050.00	£850.00

	Learning about R com	Dropbox	Training	Improving the place	Annual Meeting
SPENT	£283.16	£199.00	£102.00	£0.00	£53.51
BUDGETED	£2,000.00	£200.00	£2,000.00	£2,600.00	£200.00
REMAINING	£1,716.84	£1.00	£1,898.00	£2,600.00	£146.49

	Mailboxes	CIL Fund	General Reserves	Grant	Rebranding
SPENT	£1,058.59	£230.40	£396.00	£5,000.00	£0.00
BUDGETED	£865.00	£63,995.16	£5,000.00	£10,000.00	£8,000.00
REMAINING	-£193.59	£63,764.76	£4,604.00	£5,000.00	£8,000.00

	Elections	New CIL costs	Ins Excess	Crisis Fund	Staff Costs
SPENT	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
BUDGETED	£5,000.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£1,965.00
REMAINING	£5,000.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£1,965.00

	Training	Events	Grants	Str.Aims	Legal Costs
SPENT	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
BUDGETED	£8,000.00	£2,300.00	£1,000.00	£5,000.00	£7,500.00
REMAINING	£8,000.00	£2,300.00	£1,000.00	£5,000.00	£7,500.00

3. Pension Increase and Back Pay

The council **NOTED** that following approval of the Clerk's pay increase in November 2025, the pension contribution had not been updated accordingly. The payment has increased from £55.89 to £57.65, a difference of £1.76 per month.

The council **AGREED** the back payment of £12.32 and the update to the direct debit.

4. Student Loan

The council **NOTED** that student loan deductions have now commenced.

5. Training

The Clerk confirmed the following courses had been booked under delegated authority:

- Data Protection Part 1, 2 and 3 - Clerk - £35 + vat each
- Social media - Cllr Webb - 2nd February 2026 - £35 + vat
- Assertions 10

6. Payment made under delegated authority

The council **NOTED** that a settlement of £500 had been paid on 25th November 2025 under delegated authority (Financial Regulations 5.15 — Clerk in consultation with Chair). The payment was made in relation to Neighbourhood Plan video production work. The contractor had invoiced £750 but a reduced settlement was agreed reflecting concerns arising from the absence of an agreed specification.

All footage and materials have been received and archived.

It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote that no further video production work be commissioned without a written brief approved by Full Council.

7. Internal Financial Auditor

Cllr Edosomwan confirmed review of invoices against the January 2026 cashbook as correct.

8. Cashbook Payments

The cashbook payments for January 2026 were circulated before the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote to approve and pay the cashbook payments as presented.

Date	Payee	Description	Total
27/01/2026	Amazon 1	Magic White Boards Sheets	£23.95
27/01/2026	Amazon 2	Flip Chart Pad	£15.95
27/01/2026	Amazon 3	Easel Pads	£26.99
27/01/2026	Amazon 3	Sticky Pads	£5.99
27/01/2026	Amazon 3	HB Pencils	£5.49
27/01/2026	Amazon 3	Address Label Roll	£3.68
27/01/2026	Amazon 3	Flip Chart	£14.55
27/01/2026	Amazon 3	Xerox Paper	£8.95
27/01/2026	Amazon 3	Sticky Dots	£7.59
27/01/2026	Bowls Club	Venue Hire- January Event	£212.50
27/01/2026	CAS Insurance Services	Insurance policy amendment	£9.69
25/01/2026	Clerk	WFHA - Jan 2026	£24.00
27/01/2026	D Newman Expenses	Promotional Materials - Poster printing	£21.00
27/01/2026	D Newman Expenses	Promotional Materials - Facebook ad	£19.35
27/01/2026	D Wadsworth expenses	Display Materials - historical photos	£72.00
27/01/2026	G Taylor Expenses	Catering -January Event	£84.96
01/01/2026	HG3	Jan Mobile Phone Charge	£13.10
27/01/2026	HMRC	Employee Contributions	£1,999.81
02/01/2026	Lloyds Bank	Jan Corporate Card Monthly Fee	£3.00
27/01/2026	More Leisure	Hall Hire January	£66.25
27/01/2026	Oxfordshire Asso. Local Councils	Governance & Transparency - Clerk	£60.00
27/01/2026	Oxfordshire Asso. Local Councils	Data Prot 1 - clerk	£42.00
27/01/2026	Oxfordshire Asso. Local Councils	Social media - NW	£42.00
27/01/2026	Oxfordshire Asso. Local Councils	Data Prot 2 - Clerk	£42.00
27/01/2026	Oxfordshire Asso. Local Councils	Data Prot 3 - Clerk	£42.00
27/01/2026	Oxfordshire County Council	Pension back pay £1.76 x 7 (Apr-Oct)	£12.32
12/01/2026	Oxfordshire County Council	Jan Pension	£490.79
31/01/2026	Unity Trust	Bank Account Fee	£6.00
		Total	£3,375.91

FC0126/25 SIGNED: _____

Councillor Edosomwan

The meeting closed at 20.58