

**Kennington Parish Council
Oxfordshire
Minutes of the meeting held on
16 January 2025 at 7:30pm in the Village Centre**

Present: Cllr. Andrews Cllr. Brown Cllr. Cobb Cllr. Cuddy Cllr. Douglas Cllr. Feather
Cllr. Gamble Cllr. Jempson Cllr. Johnston Cllr. Locklin Cllr. Powles Cllr. Russell

In Attendance: District Councillor Diana Lugova and Anne Feather (Clerk)

410.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None

411.24 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC – None

412.24 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS – None

413.24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Parish Council resolved to sign the minutes of the meeting on 12 December 2024 as a true record.

414.24 REPORT OF THE CLERK - New issues

New Issues

- A** Received email from District Councillor Diana Lugova - *Need help to stop Radley Large Wood deforestation.* Forwarded email sent by Radley Parish Council to the Bursar of St Hilda's, together with his reply. The Forestry Commission has visited the wood and will report back with its findings.
- B** Clerk reported damaged street sign outside St Swithun's Church, requesting it be replaced.
- C** Resident at 49 Playfield Road is concerned about the amount of Christmas trees that are piled up in the Playfield Road car park, on the other side of his hedge. He feels that it is a fire risk and would request that these trees are not collected here next year.

ACTION FOR CLERK – To acknowledge resident's concerns – will keep under review for next year.

Same resident explained that over the years, balls have gone onto his property with near misses to vehicles parked in his drive. He would request a high fence, the same as the fence at the property on the opposite side of the car park, be provided to prevent future damage. Both these issues were reported to the Village Warden. With regard to the high fencing the Warden suggested the resident make records of future incidents to enable him to formally request to the council.

Continuing issues

- D** Completed and returned the 2025-26 precept request form to Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC). Received confirmation of same receipt together with: **'As your precept exceeds £140,000 you will need to provide a summary of expenditure and income which will be published on the council's website in March after the council tax is agreed. I've attached an example to guide you. (You may also be asked to explain why the precept has increased by over 29% but I will email if and when).'**
 - E** Reported damaged/rotten seat to St Swithun's Church – needs repair.
 - F** Responded to resident who suggested that Kennington be changed to Kennington on Thames.
 - G** Informed owner/user, via letter on the windscreen, that overnight parking is not permitted in Forest Side car park and requested they make alternative arrangement. Driver telephoned Clerk same day as letter was stuck on the minibus, explaining that he had forgotten about this stipulation but also explained that he felt it was making life much easier for others, as he could park it on the road in Forest Side instead of in the car park. Thought it was OK tucked away in the corner of the car park. Requested this be reported to the councillors at their next meeting.
- 415.24 It was agreed that** the council would write to owner/user of the minibus reiterating the regulations and requesting that although the council is sympathetic unfortunately it must request that the minibus is parked elsewhere. The council may have to hire a company to enforce its regulations in the future.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Write to the owner/user of the minibus as per council's decision

Cllr. Powles arrived

- H** Contacted resident explaining that VoWHDC has been made aware of their concerns surrounding the Christmas lights etc in Poplar Grove.
- I** Informed residents of Bagley Wood Road that the council believes a tree which falls within their boundary fell into Playfield Road playing field, asking for their intentions are in respect of this. Resident contacted Clerk explaining that he will arrange for the tree to be cut up and left at the side for people to take for fire wood. The remainder of the tree will be taken away with larger machinery. (Asking for access into the field – when the weather is better). Informed Clerk that each year he and a Tree Surgeon walks his boundary checking the state of the trees. He asked if it could be made known that this wood will be available for firewood.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Include the collection of fire wood in next month's Kennington Chronicle

- J** Informed Kennington WI of the £250 grant that had been agreed and prepared payment for next month. Received a thank you letter from the Secretary of Kennington Women's Institute
- K** Informed St Swithun's Church of the £500 grant for The Community Larder, that had been agreed and prepared payment for next month. Received a thank you letter from Rev'd Samson Kuponyi and Mrs Caroline Knighton of St Swithun's School
- L** Received confirmation from FixMyStreet – the sign indicating where Playfield Road playing field is, is fixed
- M** Amended the following reviewed documents and updated them on the website. Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technology Policy and the Financial Committee Terms of Reference.
- N** Thanked Oxford Tree Surgeons for their quote but explained that council decided to leave the tree at The War Memorial and monitor it again in the spring.
- O** Reminded the Village Warden to include picking up the rubbish in and around the Village Hall play area when he empties the litter bins.
- P** Returned completed VoWHDC's Deep Cleanse service form in readiness for their visit in January 2025.
- Q** Received email from Rosey Hollinrake: ***'Just wanted to share with you attached photo. Snowdrops out at War Memorial. I planted a special variety a few years ago, which starts flowering early. Thanks for all your support'.***
- R** Received further email from concerned resident regarding the installation of a parcel box collection unit outside laundrette. Clerk wrote to the enforcement team of the Planning Department, who are investigating this site together with the collection point outside Best One at 80 Kennington Road (both sites are being triaged). Received following response: ***'The enforcement case at this site VE24/405 and VE24/406 is currently under investigation, and an officer will be in touch with you on the outcome. We cannot share updates in the meantime for the data protection reasons'.*** Clerk Informed concerned resident of current situation.
- S** Requested the Village Warden to cut back the right hand bush where the electricity box can be found, in readiness for a new smart meter electric box to be installed on 20 January 2025
- T** Collected £124.52 for the Friends of Kennington Library at December's Carols around the Tree. Clerk is awaiting Returns from to be signed by auditor before sending it off to the Street Collection Permit group at VoWHDC.
- U** Operations Manager of Oxfordshire County Council's Highway operations contacted Clerk regarding the future protocol for closure of Kennington Road in times of flooding, suggesting a further meeting *'early in the new year'* to confirm some of the finer details, to ensure it is correct before sending it out. Clerk responded requesting some times and dates so a meeting could be arranged. Sent reminder email suggesting some dates.
- V** Contacted concerned residents, after maintenance work along Cow Lane had been carried out during December, asking if the lighting along the lane has improved. Received response: ***'It looks like the contractors have cut back vegetation up to around head height, but the tree growth around the lamps***

has not been attended to; maybe the operatives didn't come equipped to deal with vegetation at this height. Currently it doesn't affect light output, but once the trees are in leaf again the same problems will recur'.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Contact BGG asked them to cut back the trees (get price first)

- W** Received an email from SSE in relation to the complaint logged with them back in July 2024. Email received requesting additional information, which was forwarded.
- X** Published the Notice of Casual Vacancy for a parish councillor as a result of Sylvia Buckingham's recent resignation. Vale of White Horse District council will contact Clerk on 29 January to let the council know if a poll has been called or whether the council can proceed with co-option. On behalf of the council, the Chair wrote a letter thanking Cllr. Buckingham for all their support and help to the council over the years as councillor.

Continuing issues

- Y** Overhanging trees at the beginning of Kennington, at the bottom of the slip road and opposite Upper Road turning, have been cut back.
- Z** Copied in on following email from one of the groups who campaigned for a children's crossing near St Swithun's School: ***'Back in the summer, OCC granted approval for a much needed zebra crossing on St Swithun's Road with crossing planned for installation at end of August. That was then delayed to October and half a job done. Are OCC and / or their contractors competent in project management ? It is obvious a zebra crossing will require beacon lights ordering on a timely basis as part of works. I understand the lights are outstanding due to delayed ordering! The work done to date has resulted in Keep Clear markings being tarmacked over and parking obscuring visibility for those of us crossing at the junctions making an increased safety hazard. This is ironic given intention is to improve safety. If I do not receive a response from you by end of Wednesday 15 January 2025 5pm then I will submit a formal complaint in terms of conduct of OCC on the matter. Furthermore, a post implementation of the yellow lines is required as a bollard needs installing on the wider pavement crossing point opposite the bench in between Grundy Crescent. Vehicles are repeatedly mounting the pavement and blocking safe access for pedestrians. Thank you in anticipation of your prompt action to resolve matters and bring the work to conclusion'***. Formal complaint raised on 15 January.
- AA** Concerned resident contacted Clerk regarding noise from manhole outside 18 Kennington Road – resident is very unwell and cannot sleep as the noise from vehicles driving over the manhole cover starts early morning, sometime 5.30 am to late evening 11.30pm and they are finding it quite difficult to have a full nights sleep. Resident reported via FixMyStreet, with Clerk adding more comments – this report has since been closed as OCC has identified as a Thames Water manhole and has informed them of such. Clerk has reported this issue as a fresh as it is a highways issue. (Ref No: 6978876) Thames Water customer services has also been contacted by Clerk.
- AB** Village Warden repaired the wooden fence at Forest Side play area.
- AC** Clerk included the following into February's Chronicle article: ***'There will be two of your parish councillors at Apple Café on the following Saturdays during 2025 to listen to any concerns or issues you may have, regarding the village of course. 8 Feb 8 March 5 April 3 May 7 June 5 July 2 Aug 6 Sept 4 Oct 8 Nov and 6 Dec.'***

ACTION FOR CLLR. POWLES – Send dates to all councillors requesting they sign up to available months. Cllr. Powles will then liaise with Apple Café

- AD** Village Warden's recent inspection reports on The Links play area were discussed.
- 416.24** **It was agreed that** the council would carry out the necessary maintenance and replacements, with prices being sought for the more expensive items.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Liaise with Mick Herring and schedule necessary works involving the Village Warden as and when necessary

417.24 CORRESPONDENCE AND REQUEST FOR GRANT AID

Requests for grants

A Age UK Oxfordshire – more information as requested by the council in relation to a request for a donation: **‘Thank you very much for getting back to us and for considering our Phone Friends service for a donation. I have checked our records and we have been providing one lady in Kennington with a weekly call for over 8 years, since 2016. That’s over 400 friendly and motivating conversations! During this time, she’s been supported by three of our wonderful volunteers. With additional funding we will be able to expand our reach and so hope that we can support other Kennington residents in the near future. We could share some information with you so that local older people could be provided with details of the befriending service. You can view our accounts etc via this link AGE UK OXFORDSHIRE - 1091529. Please note that while a number of our services are funded or commissioned, Phone Friends is a service that is unfunded, so we have to raise money through donations and so on to run it’.**

418.24 It was agreed that the council would give Age UK Oxfordshire a grant. This was proposed by Cllr. Johnston seconded by Cllr. Feather and agreed unanimously.

419.24 A proposal was made by Cllr. Johnston to grant the sum of £50 , which was seconded by Cllr. Powles and agreed by all with one abstention.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Inform Age UK Oxfordshire of the council’s decision and arrange payment.

B Oxfordshire Mind/Mind in Berkshire - more information as requested by the council in relation to a request for a donation: **‘ Thank you very much for taking our request to the council meeting. I have attached our financial records, I am still waiting on the Data team to get back to me about how many Kennington residents are being helped by Oxfordshire Mind. In the OX1 postcode there are 177 residents that have used our services’.**

420.24 It was agreed that the council would defer this grant request until Oxfordshire Mind come back to the council with the requested data. This was proposed by Cllr. Powles seconded by Cllr. Johnston and agreed unanimously.

C Clean Slate - Urgent Appeal for Support: Tackling Domestic Abuse in Oxfordshire. **‘We are reaching out to request your support in addressing the escalating abuse crisis affecting our community. We kindly ask for a donation of £100 to help us continue our vital work. According to Thames Valley Police, violence and sexual crimes account for over 50% of reported crimes in Oxfordshire. In January alone, 21 violent and sexual crimes were reported in the Heythrop and surrounding area. Unfortunately, many incidents of abuse go unreported, and the ongoing Cost-of-Living Crisis has exacerbated this issue’.**

421.24 It was agreed that the council would write to Clean Slate referring them to the website and to the council’s grant application form and that once this form has been completed the council will consider the request. This was proposed by Cllr. Russell seconded by Cllr. Powles and agreed unanimously.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Request Clean Slate complete the council’s grant application form and return

422.24 It was agreed that this will become the standard response to requests for grants that have not completed the council’s application form.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Prepare standard response for those requesting grants outside of Kennington

Correspondence for discussion/action

D CONSULTATION – ‘The Lawns’ Development (Radley) proposed 20mph Speed Limit - any objections or other representations on the proposals should be submitted by Friday 17th January 2025.

423.24 It was agreed that the council would support the 20mph speed limit within The Lawns.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Respond to the consultation supporting the 20mph speed limit

E Local Government Standards Consultation – request from OALC to complete

424.24 It was agreed that no action would be taken by the Clerk but that councillors respond individually if they would like to.

F SLCC – invitation to renew clerk’s membership for 2025/26 at a cost of £190

425.24 It was resolved that Kennington Parish Council would renew the Clerk’s membership to SLCC for 2025/26
This was proposed by Cllr. Powles seconded by Cllr. Cobb and agreed by all

ACTION FOR CLERK – Renew SLCC membership for 2025/26

G River Thames Society membership – invitation to renew council’s membership for 2025 at a cost of £15

426.24 It was resolved that Kennington Parish Council would renew River Thames Society membership for 2025/2026. This was proposed by Cllr. Johnston seconded by Cllr. Cobb and agreed by all

ACTION FOR CLERK – Renew River Thames Society membership for 2025/26

Correspondence forwarded to Councillors for information

H Third Quarterly report of road safety statistics (July to September 2024) - Thames Valley Police

I Vale Council Leader has written to Oxfordshire County Council following the Government's publication of the White Paper on English Devolution – posted on Facebook and the Website

J National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey 2024-25 - Public Representatives – request for parish councillors to complete the survey

K Thank you letter from Kennington Women’s Institute for the recent grant awarded to them.

L ‘Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England’ Government Consultation – please respond if you wish

M Call on your MP now to kickstart rooftop solar - CPRE

N Energy Outlook January 2025 – Utility Aid

O Oxfordshire should move quickly on Local Government Reorganisation – posted on website and Facebook

P PCSO recruitment now open – Thames Valley Police (TVP) – posted on website and on Facebook

Q Booking.com users targeted with scam messages – TVP – posted on website and on Facebook

Newsletters

R The Rural Bulletins **S** Christmas Wishes & Newsletter - The Abingdon Bridge

T Season's Greetings and Welcome to your wild 2025! from BBOWT **U** CPRE Newsletters

V Police & Crime Bulletin Dec '24 **W** Health Watch news **X** RSN Rural Funding Digest

427.24 FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Bank Accounts as at 31 January 2025

Community Account	£500.00
Business Premium Account	£91,460.19
National Savings & Investment Account	85,681.57
Public Sector Fund (CCLA account)	£111,379.42
Total	289,021.18

Income received in December	
Barclays Bank	428.30
Interest earned from 2 September – 1 December	
CCLA Investment Management Ltd	437.92
Income reinvestment between 30 November – 31 December 2024	

Direct debits paid in December		Power to Act
SSE Southern Electric – 19.06.24 to 30.11.24	167.72	LG (Misc Prov) Act
Forest Side pavilion £31.62		1976
Playfield Road pavilion £83.63		War Memorial Act
War Memorial £52.47		1923

Castle Water – 01.12.24 to 31.12.24 Playfield Road pavilion	30.72	LG (Misc Prov) Act 1976
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Direct debits to be paid in January		Power to Act
Virtual Landline Invoice No. 875858 (28 Dec– 28 Jan 25) subscription for virtual landline	8.75	Section 111 LGA 1972
EDF Playfield Road pavilion gas supply 1 December – 31 December 2024	28.62	LG (Misc Prov) Act 1976

Reference No. 2024/	Accounts to be paid in January		Power to Act
207	Mrs A E Feather Salary for December less tax, NI & pension contribution	1,463.00	Section 112 LGA 1972
208	Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund Clerk's and Employer's contributions for December	525.83	Section 111 LGA 1972
209	Mr J Satchell Salary for December with tax refund	985.13	Section 111 LGA 1972
210	HM Revenue and Customs Tax and Employer NI contributions for December	126.66	Section 111 LGA 1972
211	Mr T Fleming War memorial grass cutting volunteer for December	£41.91	Section 111 LGA 1972
212	Mr A Cobb Chair's monthly allowance for December	73.69	Section 111 LGA 1972
213	Kennington Women's Institute Grant agreed at December's meeting (minute Nos 375.24 & 376.24)	250.00	Section 137 LGA 1972
214	St Swithun's Church Kennington Grant agreed at December's meeting (minute Nos 377.24 & 378.24)	500.00	Section 137 LGA 1972
215	Mr J Satchell Cleaning materials; materials to repair stone wall + materials for wooden fence at Forest side	85.19	LG (Misc Prov) Act 1976
216	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd Training on reports	84.00	Section 111 LGA 1972
217	S H Lewis Cleaning Ltd Cleaning of 14 x bus shelters	180.00	Section 111 LGA 1972
218	Adventis Digital Limited Web hosting & website managing for December	31.50	Section 137 LGA 1972
219	Kennington Village Hall Room hire for December	55.00	Section 111 LGA 1972
220	Grundon Waste Management Ltd Playfield Rd wheelie bins – December £79.08 Forest Side wheelie bins – December £69.41	149.08	LG (Misc Prov) Act 1976
221	The Friends of Kennington Library Amount collected for this year's Chair's charity at the Carols around the Tree on 1 December 2024	125.00	Section 137 LGA 1972

222	BGG Garden & Tree Care Ltd Cemetery maintenance on 7 November 120.00 Cutting The Links Play area on 7 November 30.00 Cutting Forest Side playing field on 7 November 80.00 Cutting Playfield Rd playing field on 7 November 100.00 Cutting cemetery hedges on 9 December 550.00 Plus VAT	1056.00	LG (Misc Prov) Act 1976 Section 214 (6) LGA 1972
223	Eurooffice Ltd Keyboard for Clerk's pc (outcome of annual DSE assessment)	42.00	Section 111 LGA 1972

Total transferred £ 5,773.99

Castle Water – water supply for The War Memorial - £418.01 in credit as at 4 December 2024 – Invoice dated 8 January 2025 of £6.67 brought credit balance down to £411.34.

428.24 Reconciliation reports together with the trial balance, cash books and summary income and expenditure (against budget) and copy of annual budget reports were circulated to all Councillors for December.

429.24 The financial report was proposed by Cllr. Powles seconded by Cllr. Johnston and voted unanimously.

450.24 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 17 December 2024 and draft minutes of meeting held on 14 January 2025 were noted.

451.24 MINUTES OF PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the Playing Fields Committee meeting held on 15 January 2025 were noted.

452.24 PROPOSED PAVILION'S ASSOCIATED PLANNING SUBMISSION COSTS

The cost of £1,156 has been indicated by the architect as the cost of VoWHDC's fee for the application, an actual invoice detailing the cost will be sent to the council after the plans have been submitted.

453.24 It was agreed that the council would pay the necessary fees invoiced by VoWHDC once the plans for the proposed pavilion have been submitted. This was proposed by Cllr. Johnston, seconded by Cllr. Brown and agreed.

ACTION FOR CLERK – To prepare for payment as soon as invoice from VoWHDC has been received

454.24 FOREST SIDE PLAY AREA UPDATE

Unfortunately there are only two grants that the council could apply to for funding; FCC Community Foundation and Lottery Funding; the deadline for both is the end of February. It will take 16 weeks for the council to know whether it has been successful in attaining any funding. Sadly this means there is no way there will be a new Play Area for the summer. Different funding opportunities should be explored such as asking St John's College; Crowd Funding; instigation of a lottery together with fund raising events. It was felt at the same time, repairs to this play area should be carried out so that the play area can be re-opened and enjoyed by children again.

455.24 After some discussion it was agreed that the council would request Mick Herring to inspect this play area and give costs (to be discussed at February's meeting) and at the same time grants are applied for together with initiating any additional funding avenues. This was proposed by Cllr. Johnston seconded by Cllr. Feather and agreed unanimously.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Request Mick Herring to inspect and cost Forest Side play Area with the intention of repairing/replacing items to enable the play area to be re-opened.

456.24 NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr. Andrews volunteered to become a member of the Personnel Committee, with Cllr. Douglas volunteering to become a member of the Playing Fields Committee.

457.24 It was agreed that Cllr. Andrews would become a member of the Personnel Committee and Cllr. would become a member of the Playing Field Committee.

Cllr. Andrews also volunteered to become the council representative for St Swithun's Church.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Amend the Terms of Reference of both Committees and post on the website

Cllr. Cobb reported that the Clerk had handed in her notice and will be leaving on 30 April 2025. A Personnel Committee meeting needs to be arranged as soon as possible to begin the advertising process. The Village Warden's six month probation period is also up at the end of February.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Arrange a Personnel Committee meeting

458.24 EMAILING ALL COUNCIL PAPERS

459.24 It was resolved that the all papers for all meetings will be electronic, emailing copies of all papers, with an option for councillors to opt into hard copies to be available on the evening of the meeting for their use. This was proposed by Cllr. Powles seconded by Cllr. Andrews and agreed unanimously.

ACTION FOR CLERK – See all papers for future meetings via email, printing off copies when requested by members. Will continue to hand deliver agendas and draft minutes to the usual organisations within the village, including a hard copy on the Parish Council noticeboard in the village hall.

460.24 ELECTRIC PROVIDER – NEW CONTRACT

Utility Aid presented a report with various suppliers at different costs.

461.24 It was agreed that the Council would go the YGP for a 3 year fixed period. This was proposed by Cllr. Powles seconded by Cllr. Johnston and agreed unanimously.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Liaise with Utility Aid and sent up new contract

462.24 APRIL'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (23 April 2025)

Last year's Annual Parish meeting was a success and the Events Committee plan to meet and organise a repeat of last year. All village organisations will be invited to send in an annual report which will be posted on boards within the main hall.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Arrange an Events Committee meeting

463.24 REPORTS OF MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES - None

464.24 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

Cllr. Russell – the issue of parking at school drop off and pick up times has been reported to Cllr. Russell. Cars are being parked at the top of Poplar Grove and on the blind bend, resulting in a dangerous situation for those travelling along this area, either in a vehicle or on a bike.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Inform PCSO Maddie Highmoor of this situation

ACTION FOR CLERK – Write to St Swithun's school explaining about the current issues requesting they include in their regular newsletter to parents/guardians

Cllr. Douglas – Had been asked when the path around the outside of The Lawns would re-open. It is understood that this cycle track will be opened again after all the heavy plant is no longer necessary on site. The Lawns falls within Radley village. Radley Parish Council will be 'on the case' in terms of making sure this path is opened as soon as it can be.

Cllr. Jempson – Had been asked by residents for the name and address of the owner of Sandford Copse – these details can be found via the Land Registry. Cllr. Jempson had also been asked about any progress regarding the balancing pond. Cllr. Johnston reported that there had been no progress as nobody is taking responsibility. Cllr. Johnston will enquire more at the next Radley Parish meeting .

Cllr. Gamble – Confirmed that he will be at the Radley Large wood meeting on 24 January 2025.

Cllr. Locklin – Asked if the council planned to comment on the Botley West Solar Project.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Add as an agenda item on February's council meeting

Cllr. Feather – Asked who was regularly clearing the trash screen on the other side of the road from Sandford Lane, just before Pebble Hill. Cllr. Johnston reported that a local resident carries this out.

Cllr. Andrews – Resident reported that the graffiti is still present on the columns under the fly over bridge at the north of the village.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Report to OOC again, requesting removal of this graffiti

Cllr. Andrews asked for help with carrying out the annual asset inspection – Cllr. Gamble volunteered.

Cllr. Powles – Reported that Father Christmas being able to visit the village, after cancellation due to the weather, was fantastic and Cllr. Powles passed on his gratitude to Abingdon Lions and in particular Brian, who was superb. Thanks also went to Cllr. Locklin who towed Father Christmas's sleigh and to Cllr. Brown for her help and support. Father Christmas will be invited again next Christmas.

Cllr. Powles suggested that the council discuss the proposals as to the change in local government.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Add as an agenda item on February's council meeting

Cllr. Powles volunteered to assist Clerk with the annual review of the Emergency Plan.

ACTION FOR CLERK – Arrange a meeting to review the Emergency Plan

465.24 REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS – Diana Lugova and James Cox

We will add a bit to Bob's points regarding Local Government Reorganization (LGR). There are some options being considered currently and Vale keeps talking to other Councils. Oxfordshire has expressed interest in "Fast Track" LGR and Vale DC fully supports that, the reorganisation should be done quickly. Now we are waiting for regarding Government response and next steps. Radley Large Wood is now the biggest issue for both Kennington and Radley. The meeting was arranged with St Hilda team and their Woodland Manager Nicholson in Kennington Village Hall for 24th Jan 2025 and after that we all will go to the site and would appreciate if people can join. Vale reported to FC and Forestry Commission Enforcement started their own investigation and FC officer visited the site last week. He is now working on the case of possible Felling License breaches and promised to keep us updated.

466.24 REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR – Cllr Johnston

The County will be presenting a balanced budget to the meeting on the 11th of February. The previous gap in funding has been closed and there will be proposals for extra funding for Social Services, Special Education (SEND) and highway repairs. The County Cabinet has responded (against a very tight government timetable) to the government white paper on devolution. It will engage positively with the government but takes the view that the question of a unitary authority(s) should be decided before coming to a conclusion on the matter of a Combined Authority with a Mayor. No conclusion has been reached on a unitary(s) but a proposal to base one on the Vale, SODC and West Berkshire is thought unlikely as it does not reach the population threshold of 500,000. This is made even more unlikely because much of West Berkshire is likely to be taken into an enlarged Reading Unitary (Tilehurst etc). In respect of a possible combined authority a possibility in one based on Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Most agree that it is most likely to be Thames Valley based. On a personal level I have become involved with the issue of what is happening to Radley Great Wood on our doorstep. At the very least I believe that St Hilda's and their subcontractor have some grave questions to answer in respect of how they have operated their felling licence from the Forestry Commission.

467.24 MATTERS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Botley West Solar Project
Forest Side play area
April's Annual Village meeting
proposals as to the change in local government

468.24 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Meeting closed at 9:06pm

Signed Date