

# KIDLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Meeting of Kidlington Parish Council

held at Exeter Hall and on Zoom at 7.30pm on Thursday 7 September 2023

**Present:** Cllr David Betts, Cllr William Easdown Babb, Cllr Alan Graham, Cllr Lesley Mclean, Cllr Ian Middleton, Cllr Melanie Moorhouse, Cllr David Robey (Chair), Cllr David Thurling, Cllr Alison Street, Cllr Linda Ward, Cllr Doug Williamson, Cllr Danny Wright, Cllr Phil Wyse.

**In Attendance:** Clerk – Rachel Faulkner, CDC Cllr Dorothy Walker and 5 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Cllr Fiona Mawson.

**On Line:** 19 members of the public.

**23/063** Declaration of interests – none received.

**23/064** The Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 13 April 2023 and the minutes of the Council Meeting on 29 June were a true and correct record and they were signed by the Chairman.

**23/065** **Public Participation** - In the course of the meeting a point of order was raised concerning the entitlement to speak at council meetings of members of the public who are not residents of Kidlington. It was agreed that the Standing Orders on this matter should be reviewed.

**23/066** The minutes of committees were moved by Chairs:

a) **Planning Committee:** 13 July and 10 August 2023 – moved by Cllr Graham.

b) **Policy and Finance Committee:** 3 August 23 – moved by Cllr McLean.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Scheme of Delegation.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the proposal from Ridge & Partners for development consultancy to move forward with the plans to redevelop Exeter Close at a cost of £22K. It is hoped that this money will be recouped from the One Public Estate funds held by the County Council.

The Council requested that the matter of new double lines in a number of locations around the village be determined by the Traffic Advisory Committee and any expenditure approved by P&F committee. It was agreed that a full survey of the village would not be appropriate at this time.

The Council agreed that a framework for considering Sports and Recreational needs for the village is needed and will be considered at the next Community Committee meeting.

It was confirmed that the Stratfield Brake Liaison Group would be meeting on site on 20 October.

**23/067** The Council received the Facilities Manager's report. This report was distributed to members of Community Committee in lieu of the cancelled meeting in August.

**23/068** The Council received the Clerk's Report.

**23/069** The Council discussed the meeting held with OCC Head of Estates, Assets and Investment

Michael Smedley regarding the future of Glebe House. The Council had expressed concerns about its future when it closed and had proposed a community use. It was agreed that KPC write to CDC and OCC to put pressure on the County and District Councils to consider the provision of social housing or at least a good proportion of affordable housing on the site.

**23/070** The Council considered a report from Cllr Street regarding KPC's action on Climate Change. It was agreed that environmental considerations should be at the forefront of all the council's decision-making. Councillors raised a number of items around the topic including:

- Does the council have a Flood Defence plan?
- Does the Council know its current carbon footprint?
- What other partners should be involved in our future plans?
- How have we documented what actions have already been taken?

It was agreed that the report would be considered and discussed by Community Committee and Policy and Finance Committee at their next meetings.

**23/071** The Council discussed the consultation on CDC's Local Plan which is due to commence in mid-September. It was agreed that the Local Plan Working Group would meet to discuss the Council's response shortly after that date.

**23/072** The Council received a report from the Cherwell Collective Working Group. Whilst the group recognised the excellent work of the Collective it expressed some concerns about the governance and management and asked for further information and assurances. The Council offers a significant grant to the Collective with in-kind support and use of facilities. Councillors asked about the pallets stored around the barn and kitchen area and expressed concerns about the unicorn installation at Park Hill. Clerk to follow up on risk assessments and investigate possible untidy storage.

**23/073** The Council discussed their response to the Oxford United Stadium Proposal and agreed a response objecting to the proposal because the previously stated concerns, regarding traffic management, congestion and parking, frequency of events, pledges of community benefits, guarantees of commitments and environmental impact, have not been sufficiently met. Concerns were also expressed about the County Council's consultation process. The Chair proposed that the response should comprise the substance of his draft letter and the additions in his subsequent note, together with the substance of a paragraph proposed by Councillor Betts as follows:

It would appear that many of the concerns that KPC have could be contained in the proposed Collateral Agreement (Contract). However, at this stage it is unclear what detail will be included and KPC will continue to have these concerns until this detail is available. We would ask that OCC shares this detail with KPC in order that the questions we have posed can be answered. These are not questions that can be answered by OUFC

This was agreed with a number of modifications of detail, as incorporated in the letter that was sent (appended below).

A named vote was requested for approval of the response.

In favour of the motion were Cllrs Betts, Easdown Babb, Graham, Mawson, Middleton, Moorhouse, Robey, Thurling, Street, Ward and Williamson.

Against the motion were Cllrs Wright and Wyse. Cllr McLean abstained.

The motion was carried.

**23/074** The Council received written reports from County and District Councillors (available on KPC website with meeting papers).

**The meeting closed at: 9.30pm**

Susannah Wintersgill  
Director: Communications, Strategy and Insight  
Oxfordshire County Council

8 September 2023

Dear Susannah,

### **OUFC's plans for stadium development.**

Until the Club's detailed plans were published in June, the Parish Council remained neutral on this subject. When the plans finally appeared, we raised a number of major questions and concerns with the Club and the County Council. The Club has recently informed us that the information we requested is not available at this stage. We did not hear back from OCC.

The Parish Council therefore objects to the stadium proposal as it stands. Our main concerns are as follows.

1. **Traffic congestion.** Specifically, what plans have been made for the provision of public transport to matches? Who will provide it? Where will passengers be dropped off? Where will coaches park? How much will this add, together with additional car traffic, to congestion in the area? Detailed modelling is urgently needed. More specifically:
  - a) The footbridge across the Oxford Road is described as "potential". In our view it would be indispensable, in order to avoid unmanageable congestion on crossings and the foot-/cycle-path.
  - b) The *Stand United* document (but not the *Overview and Summary*) refers to the need to close the Oxford Road for part of match days. This is a totally unacceptable solution as far as Kidlington is concerned. Getting into Oxford is difficult enough already.

*Congestion is already a major problem in the Village. It will become far worse in the next few years. 4,400 new houses in Kidlington and the three adjacent parishes will increase their joint population from 20,000 to 30,000, not including major new developments in North Oxford. The current draft Cherwell 2040 Local Plan includes another 750 dwellings in the immediate area. Yet only minimal improvements are planned to the road network. The stadium development would add very significantly to the construction traffic generated by these new houses, and to the general traffic congestion thereafter. The resulting prospect is alarming.*

2. **Parking.** In the long term the Club may meet its aim of 90% match attendance by sustainable means, but that will not happen immediately. We need to know what additional measures will be implemented in the short-to-medium term. Specifically, what will be done to prevent match-day crowds from parking in Kidlington? Detailed modelling is needed to demonstrate capacity at the park-and-rides.

*Commuter and other parking is already a serious problem in the Village. Use of the park-and-rides will only increase with the new housing developments*

3. **Frequency of matches** and other major events. We need to know precise numbers of these, and how they can be scheduled to avoid excessive disruption to traffic.

4. **Pledged benefits to residents.** These are currently expressed for the most part in general and quite vague terms. What exactly will be available to residents, what will be free and what will be charged for, and for how long?
5. **Guarantees** of OUFC commitments. We understand that in the absence of a lease these will take the form of covenants. We need to know exactly in what form, if we are to be confident of these commitments in the longer term.
6. **The Green Belt Gap.** Building the stadium on the Triangle site, together with the extensive new housing developments along the Oxford Road, would effectively remove the Green Belt gap between Oxford and Kidlington. This would be a major loss to a Village that values its identity and does not want to coalesce with Oxford. The loss is not compensated for by the mitigations and benefits proposed in the plans as they stand.

We are also concerned at the scale of development currently proposed on the site, and believe that it should be further reduced in order to minimize the environmental impact and the loss of biodiversity. We believe it is essential for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be included in the plans.

**Consultations.** In the first OCC online consultation, out of 822 Kidlington and Gosford & Water Eaton respondents 38% were in favour of taking the stadium proposal forward and 58% were against. In the Parish Poll held in May of this year 928 Kidlington electors supported the proposal and 2073 voted no, a turnout of 29.99%. The analysis of the County Council's recent engagement exercise substantially supports these results: residents living within a 2-mile radius do not believe that OUFC's plans wholly or mostly meet 6 out of 7 of OCC's stated priorities.

**The OCC Officer report** on the issue gives insufficient weight to the fact that local opinion is so clearly opposed to the proposal; it relies far too much on the survey data for Oxfordshire as a whole. But the Oxfordshire data is skewed by the disproportionate response from Club supporters outside the 2-mile radius. Within the 2-mile radius, supporters responding are a minority of 1 to 2; in the County outside the radius they are a majority of 3 to 1. All that the Oxfordshire results really show is that club supporters in the County favour the proposal.

For the all reasons stated above we do not believe that the priorities have been sufficiently met for OCC to agree to the disposal or lease of the land at this stage. (We note that Sport England takes much the same view.) But meeting these concerns will require commitments by OCC as well as by the Club. As custodian of this key Green Belt site, OCC has a responsibility for its future use. It will be abdicating its responsibility if it leaves the resolution of concerns to the statutory planning process, which after all may well be concluded not in Cherwell but in Westminster.

We recognize, finally, that Cabinet may decide that the serious concerns we have expressed can be dealt with through the Collateral Agreement that the report proposes. However, at this stage it is unclear what details would be included in the agreement and whether it really would meet our concerns. We ask OCC to consult major stakeholders on these details, and also to recognize that the details should entail commitments by OCC, notably on transport, as well as by the Club.

Yours sincerely



DAVID ROBEY  
Chair  
Kidlington Parish Council