

Yattendon Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd April 2025
in Yattendon Village Hall. Commencing at 7:08 pm.

Members Present: Councillor Adam McCormick, Chair
Councillor Philip Bickford Smith
Councillor James Hole
Councillor Georgie Rudge

Officers Present: Sarah Marshman, Clerk/RFO

In Attendance: Carlyne Culver, District Councillor
Members of the Public

Minutes

1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Tim Magee.

2 To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 17th April 2024

Those present agreed the minutes of the last meeting be accepted as a true record.
The Chairperson then signed the minutes.

3 Yattendon Estate

It has been a busy and productive year for the estate, marked by significant growth and ongoing environmental initiatives. Since the last meeting, the estate has expanded through the acquisition of Wyld Court and a small field adjacent to the Estate Office. Several businesses and three new commercial tenants have joined the estate. Major renovation work has been completed on the main house and surrounding buildings, with efforts also made to integrate and improve the wider estate landscape.

This year marks the estate's centenary. A small celebration is planned for 30th August to commemorate 100 years of stewardship.

Environmental Initiatives:

The estate now has 830kW of solar energy capacity installed across various sites, with on-site usage ranging from 55% to 92%. These installations have collectively saved an estimated 180,000 tonnes of carbon, the equivalent of planting 11,000

trees. Four additional solar sites are planned this year, including one residential property (as a trial), the Estate Office, and local village schools.

A wetland restoration project is in development along the River Pang, in partnership with an environmental trust. This aims to restore the river to its natural course, allow seasonal flooding, improve water quality, and reduce downstream flood risks.

The estate had entered the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme, though national policy changes have since curtailed the programme. Nevertheless, some projects are underway, alongside existing Higher Stewardship Scheme commitments. Approximately 20% of the estate's farmed land is involved in these schemes, which support biodiversity and soil health, though their future viability remains uncertain due to high costs and inconsistent grant availability. Efforts are ongoing to measure and reduce carbon emissions across the estate. While farming operations are considered carbon-neutral, a full audit of estate-wide emissions is underway.

Weather and Agricultural Challenges:

The past year saw rainfall levels 50% above average, with over 1,100 mm recorded for the third consecutive year. Weather extremes - heavy rainfall followed by dry spells - pose ongoing challenges to farming operations. Broader concerns around food security, tariffs, and trade deals add further complexity to estate planning.

Woodland Management:

The estate continues to actively manage its woodlands, having planted 40,000 trees over the last three years at a cost of £250,000. However, high deer and squirrel populations threaten young trees, necessitating effective wildlife control. Plans are in place to expand woodland planting, particularly on less productive agricultural land.

Commercial and Residential:

Commercially, the Pot Kiln refurbishment has been a notable success, and the Royal Oak continues to perform well despite a challenging market. One commercial unit remains vacant.

There remains strong demand for residential properties, and refurbishments continue with a focus on sustainability. When properties become available, they are stripped back to the brick and fully insulated. Six major residential refurbishments were completed in the past year.

4 Report from the District Councillor

The District Council is currently awaiting a decision from central government regarding a potential amalgamation with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Vale of White Horse District Council. This move would be part of a broader government initiative to create larger unitary authorities. There is concern that such changes could distance decision-making from local communities. As a result, discussions are ongoing about how to strengthen the role of town and parish councils, including whether they may wish to take on certain local services in future.

A related concern is the possibility that district council financial reserves may be used to cover wider budget deficits, particularly in adult social care and children's services.

Waste Services:

A shift to a three-weekly bin collection cycle is planned, although the exact timing of this change is not yet confirmed.

Council Finances:

The council has received £16 million in exceptional financial support from central government to help manage ongoing budgetary pressures.

Community Facilities:

The Downland Sports Centre, which had been under threat of closure, has now been saved following local consultation.

Additionally, the pop-up library initiative in Compton Village Hall will continue with funding from Compton Parish Council.

5 Parish Council Reports

Report from the Chair

Good evening, everyone, thank you for joining our Annual General Meeting, the 3rd of which I've now done as Chairman.

When I started thinking of what to say for this, I thought to myself that it's been a fairly uneventful year. We've not had to make any changes to the council members- we've had no departures or additions. We'd also had no major unforeseen expenditure, helping our bank account become a little more robust.

And then I heard about the bench in the village square from James, so had to have a

re-think. I don't know the full story, however I understand some young men perhaps enjoyed their time in the Royal Oak a little too much and took their merriment outside and the bench was damaged. So as a result, we will be starting off this year on the council with a discussion about how to manage this, but I understand we are looking at a full replacement.

In addition to these, I wanted to touch on both the SID device and the Playground.

For the playground we put out a survey mid last year looking for feedback from local residents. The feedback was very supportive of the project, with many comments about it being the thing 'the village is missing'. While there were some concerns around noise and teenage anti-social behaviour (do we have that in Yattendon?) this was very minimal. We have met with several playground providers to get an initial overview of the cost. While we can't get a full quote until an exact site is selected, we are in the region of £80-£100k. Oddly, and maybe frustratingly, a significant proportion of that is for the car parking element of the project. The other major consideration is the flooring type used in the playground.

We need to work with the estate and the family to settle on a preferred location and get consent to proceed, following this we can get detailed quotes and look at fundraising options and potential for community support to see if the costs can be reduced. It's a project that we'd really like to see carried through, that we think will benefit the local area and potentially have the side benefit of easing congestion at school pick up.

Which brings me nicely onto the SID. Following it's time away for repair, we've started using this again and it does highlight that the main factor which seems to increase speed in the sites we measure is a straight road. We see increased speeds by the school and the road approaching the motorway bridge in Frilsham. The other two sites, the road to Hampstead Norreys and the bend out to Everington Lane, are significantly lower. On the bend, for example, while there are examples of speeding, the average is around 20mph.

Other than this, I just wanted to say thank you to Sarah, our Clerk, and Karen, who continues to do a great job keeping the village tidy. Thank you all for coming tonight.

Financial Report from the Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer

The Clerk presented her Finance Report for 2024/25, which is in Appendix 1.

6 Invite local organisations to provide an update on their recent activities

Yattendon Classic Car Event

The Yattendon Classic Vehicle Day was first established in 2015 by the owner of Yattendon Garage and has since grown into a popular community event. Lyn has taken over the organising and continues to lead the event with the help of a

dedicated team. It is run by volunteers who take great enjoyment in putting it together, while also raising funds in support of the Air Ambulance.

The event features two display fields surrounding the cricket ground, showcasing a wide variety of vehicles of all types, along with stalls and catering, made possible with the generous support of local sponsors.

Military police assist with traffic management on the day, and a £5 charge per visitor car helps support the event's costs and fundraising efforts. The organising committee includes members from both Yattendon and Frilsham, and new volunteers are always welcome.

This year's event will take place on Sunday, 29th June 2025.

Yattendon Social Club

Yattendon & Frilsham Social Club welcomes all to enjoy the Club's facilities. We have free pool & darts on non-event nights and a great range of drinks & snacks at Social Club prices for our members. Membership is renewable from 1st May, at £15 per year for those under 65 years & £10 for those over 65. We encourage those purchasing their fish & chips from the van on Wednesday evenings to come in, where you can eat your meal accompanied by a drink.

We advertise our opening hours & events in the Broadsheet, also posted on the noticeboard outside the Village Hall. There are "Open Mic" nights on the last Friday of each month, starting from Friday 25th April.

The Club will be open for the Fete with both an inside & outside bar, raising funds for the Fete. We were grateful for the Sports & Social Trust's grant last year towards a drink dispensing system for use for outside bars which we put to good use at the Classic Vehicle Show last year to support the Thames Valley Air Ambulance & will do so again this year.

The Club relies upon volunteers to help run it alongside paid bar staff. Whilst many hospitality venues are struggling to stay open, we are also under the same pressures, but through the hard work from all involved in the Club, we have remained open as a community asset, providing a venue for those wishing to hold funeral teas & on a happier note, celebration parties. We recently held our Annual General Meeting where the annual financial report was presented, it details some of the overheads we face & as an example, we paid £908 for the Phonographic Performance & Performance Rights licence to enable us to play music in the Club, we need to sell a lot of drinks just to cover this.

We also offer "corporate membership" to Tennis Club Members, where they benefit from Members' prices when playing tennis. We welcome those who are playing or watching Yattendon & Frilsham's Football Club after a game, as we do with the Cricket Club.

We will be open for those attending the Parish Council meeting to come & have a drink afterwards, come & see what we have to offer.

Yattendon and Frilsham Sports and Social Trust

The Yattendon Sports and Social Trust is responsible for managing a number of key community assets, including two village halls, the social club, and facilities for cricket, football, and tennis. The Trust owns all of these facilities except the grounds of the tennis club. Its ongoing aim is to build and maintain a dedicated fund for the upkeep of these assets.

The Trust's sole source of income is the annual village fete, which plays a vital role in maintaining facilities and supporting the wider community. In 2024, the fete generated £22,700, enabling the Trust to cover both its fixed commitments and a range of grant requests from the school and other local organisations.

The Trust offers capital grants of up to 50% for local projects. The deadline for applications this year was 18th May.

Yattendon Village Hall Committee

The Village Hall operated at a small profit over the past year, despite the loss of one of its regular weekly bookings. Additional funding support was received through Brewhouse Events, which helped to offset the shortfall and maintain financial stability.

7 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

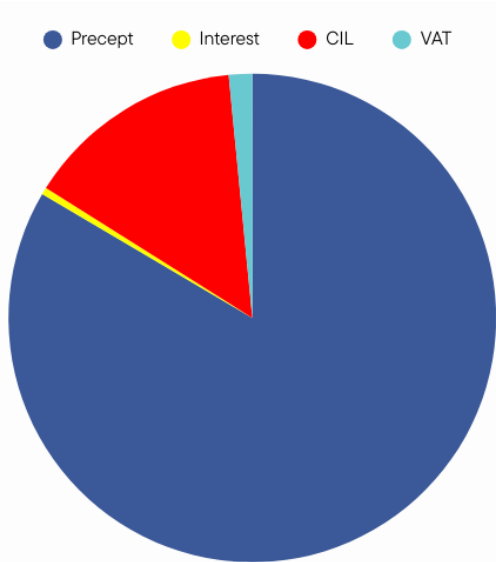
There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8:03 pm.

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 1: Annual Finance Report

Yattendon Parish Council Finance Report 2024/25

The Parish Council is pleased to present its financial summary for the year 2024/25.



Income Overview

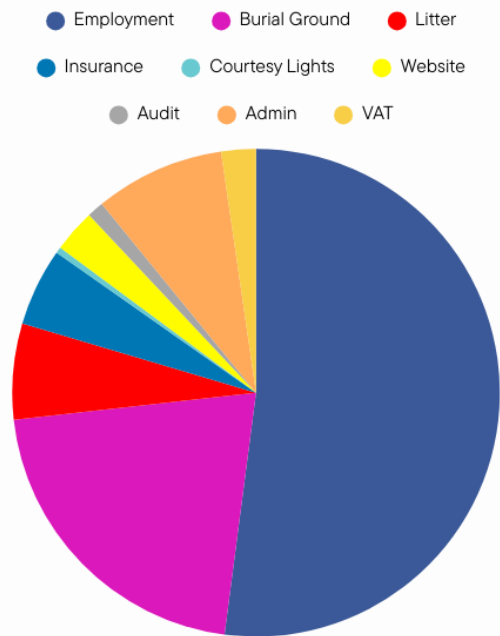
This year, the Parish Council received a total income of £14,649, which was made up of the following:

- Precept: £12,228 (Funding from local taxpayers allocated to the Parish Council.)
- Interest: £67
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): £2,127 (These funds, derived from local developments, are earmarked exclusively for infrastructure projects.)
- VAT Refund: £227 (Reimbursement from the previous financial year.)

Expenditure Breakdown

The Council spent a total of £11,808 this year, which was directed toward the following essential services and projects:

- Employment Costs: £6,148
- Burial Ground Maintenance Grant: £2,500
- Waste Management: £750 (Litter and dog waste bins.)
- Insurance: £609
- Courtesy Lights: £48
- Website and Email Maintenance: £335
- Audit Fees: £130
- General Administration: £1,017
- VAT (Reclaimable Next Year): £271



Through prudent financial management, we have ensured the effective use of funds to maintain and improve our community.

Reserves

At the end of the financial year, the Council's reserves total £6,961. These reserves are allocated as follows:

- General Reserves: £4,134
- Earmarked Reserves:
 - Replacement Laptop: £200
 - Bench/Bus Shelter Repairs: £500
 - CIL Projects: £2,127

These reserves provide stability and allow us to respond to unforeseen expenses while planning for future projects.

Looking Ahead to 2025/26

The upcoming financial year will see a 3% increase in the Precept, resulting in a total of £12,589. For Band D households, this equates to £71.82 annually, or just £1.38 per week.

The Parish Council will continue supporting the burial ground with a grant of £2,500, and core expenditures, such as waste management, insurance, and website maintenance, are expected to remain consistent with slight adjustments for inflation.

In addition, the Council is exploring the installation of a new playground and associated car parking area to enhance community facilities. To make this possible, we will be seeking grant funding and support from the village to help cover the costs of the project.

A Commitment to Yattendon

The Parish Council remains dedicated to maintaining transparency, delivering value for money, and supporting the growth and well-being of our community. We look forward to another productive year in service of Yattendon.