

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20 May 2025 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 12.15 pm

Present:

Councillor Mark Lygo – in the Chair

Councillors:

Ted Fenton (Vice-Chair)	James Fry	Kieron Mallon
Thomas Ashby	Andrew Gant	Emma Markham
Brad Baines	Emma Garnett	Gavin McLauchlan
James Barlow	Sean Gaul	Lesley McLean
Ron Batstone	Stefan Gawrysiak	Ian Middleton
Tim Bearder	Laura Gordon	Toyah Overton
Will Boucher-Giles	Andy Graham	Glynis Phillips
Chris Brant	Tom Greenaway	James Plumb
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Kate Gregory	Susanna Pressel
Mark Cherry	Jane Hanna OBE	Leigh Rawlins
Andrew Coles	Jenny Hannaby	Judy Roberts
Izzy Creed	David Henwood	James Robertshaw
Andrew Crichton	Georgina Heritage	Paul Austin Sargent
Hao Du	Ben Higgins	Geoff Saul
Imade Edosomwan	David Hingley	John Shiri
Judith Edwards	Johnny Hope-Smith	Roz Smith
Gareth Epps	Robin Jones	Ian Snowdon
Lee Evans	Liz Leffman	Peter Stevens
Neil Fawcett	Dan Levy	Bethia Thomas
Nick Field-Johnson	Dr Nathan Ley	Liam Walker
Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Diana Lugova	Tony Worgan
Rebekah Fletcher	Saj Malik	

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

27/25 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE 2025/26 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 1)

Before nominations were invited for the office of Chair of the Council, Mrs Alison Rooke, the retiring Chair, invited Members to reflect on the tragic fire at Bicester Motion which took the lives of firefighters Jennie Logan, Martyn Sadler and a member of the public, Dave Chester. Two further firefighters sustained serious injuries and remained in hospital in a stable condition.

The retiring Chair invited the Bishop of Dorchester to share thoughts and prayers. Following his address a minute's silence was observed.

The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members to sign books of condolences.

On the resumption, the retiring Chair thanked her husband and Consort, Brian Rooke, for his support during the year. She also thanked the Democratic Services and Facilities Management Teams, the Monitoring Officer and her Vice-Chair, Councillor Lygo. It was noted that over £9,200 had been raised for the Chair's chosen charities over the year, and the retiring Chair thanked all for their support.

The Monitoring Officer invited nominations for the office of Chair of the Council for the 2025/26 Council Year. Councillor Brighthouse moved, and Councillor Leffman seconded that Councillor Mark Lygo be elected as Chair of the Council for the 2025/26 Council Year. There being no other nominations and no dissent, Councillor Lygo was duly declared elected.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that Councillor Mark Lygo be elected as Chair for the 2025/26 Council Year.

(Councillor Mark Lygo in the Chair).

28/25 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE 2025/26 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 2)

The Chair called for nominations for the office of Vice-Chair.

Councillor Walker moved and Councillor Brighthouse seconded that Councillor Ted Fenton be elected as Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2025/26 Council Year. There being no other nominations, Councillor Ted Fenton was duly declared elected Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2025/26 Council Year.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that Councillor Ted Fenton be elected Vice-Chair for the 2025/26 Council Year.

29/25 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

30/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 4)

Apologies were received from Councillors Cotter, Kerr and Webb.

31/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 5)

There were no declarations of interest.

32/25 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 6)

Thirteen firefighters who have served Oxfordshire residents for a combined total of 260 years (20 years each) have been presented with His Majesty The King's long service and good conduct medals.

In addition, four firefighters with a combined total of 120 years' service received commemorative clasps and certificates. The awards were presented by Marjorie Glasgow BEM, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire,

At the Oxfordshire Care Awards, organised by the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers, Shared Lives carers, Roger and Kym Garnett were named winners of the 'Long Service' category. This follows their recognition in our own Shared Lives awards, having committed 27 years to the programme.

Our Community Partnership Team were finalists in the 'Team' category having been recognised for the flexible nature of the support they offer.

It was noted that the Chair's events since the last meeting of Council were listed in the Schedule of Business.

33/25 RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT

(Agenda Item 7)

The report was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Vice-Chair.

RESOLVED (unanimously): to note the return of persons elected as Councillors for Oxfordshire County Council on 1 May 2025.

34/25 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 8)

The Chair called for nominations for the office of Leader of the Council.

Councillor Fawcett moved and Councillor Graham seconded that Councillor Liz Leffman be elected as Leader of the Council. There being no other nominations, Councillor Liz Leffman was duly declared elected Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that Councillor Liz Leffman be elected Leader of the Council.

Council noted the Leader's Cabinet appointments. The detailed portfolios were circulated to Members and published online alongside the Agenda.

Resources and Deputy Leader: Cllr Neil Fawcett

Future Economy and Innovation: Cllr Ben Higgins
Children and Young People: Cllr Sean Gaul
Place, Environment and Climate Action: Cllr Judy Roberts
Finance, Property and Transformation: Cllr Dan Levy
Transport Management: Cllr Andrew Gant
Adults: Cllr Tim Bearder
Public Health and Inequalities: Cllr Kate Gregory
Community Wellbeing and Safety: Cllr Jenny Hannaby

A report was before Council on clarification of 'Opposition Group' arrangements which was published in the Addenda.

The report was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Vice-Chair.

Council noted the report on Opposition Arrangements and the Leaders of the Opposition:

Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Labour & Cooperative Group
Councillor Liam Walker: Oxfordshire Alliance

35/25 COMMITTEES AND REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

(Agenda Item 9)

Council considered a report required by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance on its committees after an election.

The report, with amendments from political group leaders to the appointments, was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Vice-Chair.

The recommendations were agreed.

Council RESOLVED:

- a) To note the review of political balance of committees to reflect the formation of the groups following the Council election on 1 May 2025.
- b) To appoint members to the committees of the Council as listed at Annex 1 with the following amendments.

Councillor Gareth Epps appointed to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel.

**On the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Lee Evans will replace Councillor Kieron Mallon**

**On the Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Kieron Mallon will replace Councillor Lee Evans**

Councillor Emma Garnett appointed to the Oxfordshire County Council & Employers Joint Consultative Committee

Councillor Emma Markham appointed to the Oxfordshire County Council & Uniformed Members of the Fire Service Joint Consultative Committee.

36/25 SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

(Agenda Item 10)

At its Annual Meeting, Council is required to agree the officer scheme of delegation within the Council's Constitution.

The recommendations were moved by the Chair and seconded by the Vice-Chair. The recommendations were approved with 62 votes in favour, 2 abstentions and no votes against.

RESOLVED: to amend the Constitution as follows:

- a) **approve amendments to Part 7.1: Officers as shown in Annex 1;**
- b) **approve amendments to Part 7.2: Scheme of Delegation to Officers as shown in Annex 3.**

37/25 GENERAL DISPENSATIONS

(Agenda Item 11)

Council was asked to approve a number of general dispensations under the Localism Act 2011.

The report was moved by the Chair and seconded by the Vice-Chair. The recommendations were approved.

RESOLVED to

- a) **approve, under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, the general dispensations, listed at paragraph 5 of this report, for all elected and co-opted voting Members of Oxfordshire County Council;**
- b) **agree that those general dispensations should remain in force for a period of four years;**
- c) **agree that the granting of individual dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Code of Conduct remains delegated to the Monitoring Officer.**

38/25 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

(Agenda Item 12)

Council received the Annual Report of the Audit & Governance Committee setting out the role and summarising the work that has been undertaken both

as a Committee and through the support of the Audit Working Group in 2024/25.

The report was proposed by Councillor Ted Fenton and seconded by Councillor Roz Smith, Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee for the 2024/25 Council Year.

Council noted the report.

39/25 COMMITTEE MEETING DATES FOR INFORMATION
(Agenda Item 13)

Council noted the meeting dates.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing