**Crawley Parish Council**

**Minutes of meeting held at 7.00pm on 26th February 2025 at The Lamb**

Present: Cllrs Heather Northam (Chair), Mark McCappin, Michelle Hill; Sheena Derry (Secretary); Liam Walker (WODC and OCC), Paul Marsh (WODC); Lewis Ross (parishioner).

1. Apologies: Isabel Webb.

2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2024 were approved.

3. Declarations of interest: None.

4. Matters Arising

* Grass cutting. A quote was obtained from Steve Putt but was too expensive and he was unable to reduce it. A second quote of £1900 was received from a contact of IW and this was accepted subject to meeting him and confirming public liability insurance. HN to follow up.
* The soakaway at Whiteoak Green has been cleared.
* MM has been trying to contact Chris Grain at Highways Engagement to get updates on repairs to the handrail along the Fordway and the pothole and gulley outside The Lamb, but has had no response.

5. Parishioners’ Matters: HN reported that she had received a phone call from a parishioner about numerous complaints concerning work carried out on their land, most of which had not been upheld. HN will ask them to put it all in writing so that the parish council can see if there is any way it can help.

6. West Oxfordshire District Council Reports

Liam Walker:

* WODC have set their budget with nothing major to report.
* The draft of potential housing sites for inclusion in the next Local Plan has been drawn up but will not be released until after the May elections. Both sides of Dry Lane at the junction with Burford Road have been put forward.

Paul Marsh:

* Central Government’s changes to the Planning Bill (at White Paper stage) are taking up local government officers’ time. The bill will change planning law, potentially involving compulsory purchase, and will have a big impact.

7. Oxfordshire County Council Report – Liam Walker

* OCC have also set their budget, with rises of 5% in council tax.
* There will be more money for pothole repairs.
* LW will chase up the officer responsible for the handrail along the Fordway.
* Resurfacing of Foxburrow Lane is scheduled for 12-15th May
* Work on the Shores Green slip roads onto the A40 has finally started and is expected to be complete by summer 2026.

8. Treasurer’s Report – LW has resigned and there has been no response from the village to take this on. The end of year accounts and VAT return are due imminently, so as an interim measure HN will stand in.

9. Biodiversity

* Jack Wheeler of OCC will attend our next meeting on 26th March to give a talk about road verge nature reserves and groups in our area linked to Biodiversity. This will be held at Hailey Village Hall at 6pm, followed by the normal parish council meeting. MH has also asked if Wild Oxfordshire can attend to broaden the topic.
* SD has contacted Genny Early of the Wychwood Flora Group and asked for Crawley graveyard to be surveyed. We are on the list, but no date has been fixed yet – it looks like it will in late April or May. SD will follow up.
* One of the yews in the graveyard lost a large branch in the January storms, which was cleared by Rob, Philippa, Stewart and Mark. Rob took the brush to burn, and the logs have been piled up in a corner to create new habitat. Subsequently, Ian Gourlay, a tree anatomist at Oxford University, offered to look at the yew and take a core to date it: “The lower trunk is very wavy in profile, with many older, possibly cut long ago branches incorporated, giving somewhat excentric growth”. His best estimate is 110-150 years old, which fits with it being planted soon after St Pater’s Chapel was built.
* SD has continued to network with nearby nature groups. The Mid Windrush Land and Nature Group has recently been set up and now includes Crawley. There is a meeting on 18th March in Burford to set out their visions for the group. SD plans to attend.

10. Parish Online, Website, email addresses. CD was not at the meeting and there was no update. James Walker has sent a reminder that renewal of our current Google service (£480) is due on 1st April.

11. Update on WING. MM reported that, following meetings with key stakeholders, they had updated their report about essential infrastructure improvements if North Witney Housing is approved for development. Hugo Ashton (Executive Member for Planning) and Phil Shaw (Officer)from WODC then asked WING to organise a meeting for all parties to come together at the council offices (Environment Agency, OCC, WODC, Charlie Maynard (MP), Lidia Arciszewska will attend; Multiagency Flood Group declined; Lawrence King yet to reply). The meeting will be on 14th March, and if there is agreement between these parties to work together, they will then get the developer involved.

12. Future dates:

23rd March – Litter pick

26th March 2025 – Biodiversity talk (6.00pm, followed by PC Meeting) at Hailey Village Hall

28th May 2025 – PC Meeting

4th June 2025 – Pub Quiz and meal

23rd July 2025 – PC Meeting

10th August 2025 – Summer BBQ

24th September 2025 - PC Meeting

8th October 2025 – Pub Quiz and meal

5th November – Bonfire and Fireworks

26th November 2025 - PC Meeting

17th December 2025 – Carol singing

13. AOB

* The Social Group have scheduled a number of village events – see above.
* MH has done her Super User training and has been marking up defects around the village.
* MH has asked Luke Harris to provide a quote to replace the back of the village notice board.