

# **GORING-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL**

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## **Parish Annual Meeting**

**Bellême Room, Village Hall, Goring on Monday 10 April 2017 at 7.00pm**

**All residents of the village are invited to attend**

### **AGENDA**

1. Chairman's welcome
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2016
3. Matters arising from those minutes
4. Annual Report  
incorporating
5. District and County Councillor's report and
6. Reports from Local Organisations
7. Public Forum

pp Kevin Bulmer  
Chairman  
Date: 29 March 2017

**MINUTES OF THE GORING ON THAMES PARISH ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Bellême Room, Goring Village Hall 7.30pm Wednesday 13 April 2016**

**Members of the Parish Council Present:**

Chairman	Kevin Bulmer
Vice-Chairman	John Wills
Members	Catherine Hall
	Bryan Urbick

**Officers Present:**

Clerk	Colin Ratcliff
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15 members of the public and press

**16/1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:  
Emrhys Barrell, David Brooker, Mary Bulmer, Matthew Brown, Brandon Hancox, Lawrie Reavill

**16/2 Chairman's welcome**

Cllr. Kevin Bulmer, as Chairman on the Parish Council welcomed those present. He said this was his first as Chairman and explained briefly the differences between a Council Meeting and the Parish Meeting.

**16/3 To approve minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2015**

It was noted that paragraph 1 should have the word 'Council' deleted as it was a Parish and not Council meeting.

**Resolved:** That the minutes be amended as above, approved and signed by the Chairman

**16/4 Matters arising from those minutes not elsewhere on the agenda**

None

**16/5 Annual Report**

The Chairman stated he would intersperse his report with others from local organisations at appropriate times.

The Chairman's Report is appended to the minutes. (Appendix A).

Additional comments made included under Planning: A response from SODC was expected during the week and a meeting would be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April regarding the Weir. He has recused himself from the Weir Committee due to his roles as both Chairman of the Parish Council and an SODC Councillor.

Burial Ground: The Council are seeking to get the pavilion redecorated.

Goring Gap in Bloom: Stephanie Bridle gave an update that ground at the BT Exchange has been cleared for a pilot wild flower planting project which would need additional fundraising, the broken fence is being repaired and building woodwork repainted. John Boler commented on the danger of a low hanging basket.

Readibus: The Chairman noted the service's increased importance given OCC subsidies are being withdrawn but Go-Ride will continue with a slightly reduced 134 service.

**16/6 Neighbourhood Plan**

Report given by Tom Rothwell at (Appendix B)

Ian Haslem asked who is looking at infrastructure. Mr Rothwell stated the Group are looking at that connected to immediate development but other is outside the scope.

Villagers are being asked where they think Community Infrastructure Levy funds might be spent. The Chairman commented on recent successful appeals by developers but noted the presumption to build doesn't apply in an AONB.

Signed:

Dated:

**16/7 MIGGS**

Report given by John Boler at (Appendix C)

Ron Bridle asked if the lifts would be available when no GWR staff were present. Mr Boler said he has a meeting with GWR on 26 April to discuss but was hopeful they would be.

**16/8 Railway Action Group**

Report given by Ian Haslem at (Appendix D). He stated there are still risks to budget promises by Network Rail and that there is a need to maintain enthusiasm. He asked that full use be made by the public of the consultation to come. There is still a need for funding and specialist skills.

**16/9 County Councillor's Report**

Report given by Cllr. Bulmer at (Appendix E)

**16/10 District Councillor's Report**

Report given by Cllr. Bulmer at (Appendix F)

**16/11 Public Forum**

Stephanie Bridle asked if the Parish Council would be communicating with West Berkshire over the weir. A letter is to be sent to Streatley Parish Council.

She also asked if consideration could be given to the dates of Goring and Streatley Council meetings as they clash.

John Boler commented that currently Readibus funding is 50/50 from MIGGS and the Parish Council. MIGGS may run out of sufficient money to continue the grant after March 2017 and will need to start fund raising again.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 2040 hrs.

# **GORING-on-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Annual Report 2016-17**

### **General**

The Council has ten councillors Emrhys Barrell, David Brooker, Matthew Brown, Mary Bulmer, Kevin Bulmer (Chairman), Catherine Hall, Brandon Hancox, Lawrie Reavill, Bryan Urbick and John Wills (Vice-Chairman).

This Council will come to the end of its second year of a 4-year term in May.

### **Planning**

See separate report.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

The NP has been progressing well but not without its fair share of challenges. It has involved a lot of hard work from all concerned, probably more than the people concerned envisaged when they volunteered. However they'll get no sympathy from me as anybody who has volunteered for any community work probably ends up thinking the same, I know my colleagues on the council do at times.

So rather than listen to me I'm going to call upon the NP Steering Group to give a report.

### **Flooding Gatehampton Rd**

Happy to report that there's been no return of this long running problem, so it looks we really have solved it.

### **Precept**

Despite undertaking major refurbishment and update works to the Gardner Pavilion we have been able to finance this from reserves and therefore keep the increase in precept down.

2016-17    £93,202

2017-18    £95,066

= 1.99% increase.

Or approx £1.10 per household

### **The Rectory Garden**

While it's been used more since it's make over the PC feels & hopes it will be even more heavily used over the coming months.

### **Trees**

Felled:

2 x Sycamore at Yew Tree Court, not replaced - coppice area.

2 x Beech at Sheepcot - not replaced.

1 x Red Horse Chestnut at Gardiner Recreation Ground - replaced by a Beech  
1 x Lime at The Rectory Garden - replaced by another Lime  
Removed Elder tree at Sheepcot  
Removed ivy from all the trees in Thames Road  
The Council had a Tree condition survey done in July and will run a rolling maintenance programme on tree management in line with the recommendations.

### **Gardner Rec**

As people will have seen the drive to refurbish & extend the Gardner pavilion continues apace. We all I'm sure are looking forward to having this improved facility available for the village's use. One important improvement that is not obvious to people yet is the improved disabled access facilities that bring this resource right up to date.

### **Burial Ground**

The burial ground continues to be an important and respected part of the village.

### **Going Forward Buses**

This is a new service that replaces the Go-Ride service that has ceased to operate.  
This is a new service that's been put together by Mike Ward and we not only compliment him on his efforts to get this off the ground but wish him every success with it.  
For further information:-  
[littlebluebus@yahoo.com](mailto:littlebluebus@yahoo.com) or M: 07484 605888

### **Readibus**

This service supported by the parish council and private donations continues to be valued and well used.

### **Oxfordshire County Council Comet Bus Service**

This is a innovative bus service put together to use OCC school buses when there not in use transporting children to & from school.  
It's available to hire M-F (school holidays included) 10.15am to 2.30pm.  
For further information, T: 01865 323201 or  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cams/content/Oxfordshire-comet](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cams/content/Oxfordshire-comet)

### **High Street**

The Parish Council under lead Councillor David Brooker have come up with some ideas for improvements to the High Street. This was put out for consultation which closes on the 31st May, details on the Parish Council website or the GGN March edition page 21.

### **Weir**

See separate report.

Kevin Bulmer  
Chairman

# **Goring Division County Councillor Kevin Bulmer 2016-2017 Report**

## **County Council elections on the horizon – polling date in early May**

Elections to Oxfordshire County Council are now just under five weeks away and there are a series of key dates in the lead up to the Thursday, May 4 poll.

The final full council meeting of the county councillors elected in May 2013 took place on Tuesday, March 21.

All 63 county council seats will be up for election and residents all over Oxfordshire will begin to receive polling cards during the last week of March.

On Wednesday, April 5 the list of candidates for each county council seat will be published. A number of existing county councillors have already indicated they are standing down but the definitive list will not be clear until April 5.

### **Registering to vote**

The last day for people to register to vote is Thursday April 13. Although this is a county council election, Oxfordshire's district councils are the authorities responsible for administering the electoral register and people should contact them if they are not already registered to vote.

The last date to apply for a postal and postal proxy vote is Tuesday 18 April and the last date to apply for a new proxy vote is Tuesday 25 April 2017.

### **Polling day**

Polling Day on Thursday, May 4 runs from 7.00am to 10 pm. The election count takes place on Friday, May 5 in Abingdon.

## **Better Oxfordshire unitary bid officially submitted to government**

Joint statement by Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, Cllr Matthew Barber, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council and Cllr John Cotton, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council:

"We have submitted proposals for a single council for Oxfordshire to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government today.

Visit the Better Oxfordshire website to read the full proposal

"Our three councils have listened to the views of residents, businesses and other organisations across Oxfordshire and worked hard to address any concerns in the final bid - and with seventy percent of those surveyed showing support for a single unitary, we know we are on the right track.

“This is a significant moment for us and for the communities of Oxfordshire, who under a new single council will receive better, simpler joined up services, saving taxpayers millions of pounds each year and ensuring good quality services for generations to come.

“We believe local government reorganisation is vital to protect council services as central government funding is reduced, and to secure the investment in infrastructure needed to support sustainable economic growth in Oxfordshire.

“It is expected that the government will make a final decision on our proposal later this year, but work is already underway to ensure all six councils work together effectively on delivering a new council for Oxfordshire in 2019.”

## **Education**

I've sat on the education committee for the last 4 yrs and we've dealt with many things from home to school transport, Attainment to the virtual school for looked after children.

A important item from our last meeting was the funding formula which lots of people have raise concerns about, the committee agreed and decided to lobby government, MPs & others as well as responding to the consultation that the current ideas unfairly disadvantage Rural small schools and to ask government to rethink.

## **Health**

I've also sat on Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which is responsible for scrutinising all aspects of the NHS in oxfordshire apart from primary care (GPS).

This committee has had a very busy schedule and dealt with many matters and although we do not scrutinise Primary Care, we have written to the NHS (CCG) & Health Sectary to register our concern that proposed changes to NHS delivery would lead to additional pressure on a underfunded and stretched primary care system.

We've also expressed our concerns to the NHS (CCG) about faults in the present two stage consultation process on the future of the NHS already underway. The general thrust of there ideas, which is basically treating patents (where appropriate) closer to there homes has merit but people should be given all the information and in clear easy to understand language.

## **Coming soon to a road near you in Oxfordshire**

Oxfordshire's roads will soon resound to the sound of a dragon's roar when the team responsible for fixing the county's highways take delivery of a new pothole fixing machine.

After the successful introduction of the first machine in 2015, the county council's highways contractor, Skanska, will soon put a new dragon to work on the county's rural routes blazing a trail in the fight against holes in the roads.

The original machine was shared with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, but the new machine will be dedicated to Oxfordshire.

Breathing fire, stone and asphalt

It is nicknamed the 'Dragon' because it breathes fire to de-ice and dry out the road surface enabling to work all year round. The area is then cleaned with compressed air and sealed with a stone mix and hot bitumen emulsion. With the pothole gone in just two minutes, the patcher can move onto the next repair.

County Councillor David Nimmo Smith, Cabinet member for Environment, said: "The dragon patcher is five times faster than traditional methods and can do more work for the money.

"It is also safer as it is operated from the vehicle's cabin and we found that it was well suited to Oxfordshire's rural roads. Since 2015, it has made 5,000 repairs to potholes and larger patches across Oxfordshire."

Richard Lovewell, Operations Manager at Skanska, explained: "At Skanska we are always looking for innovative ways of working. An example of this was drawing on our global expertise to bring Sweden's patching machine to the UK and help tackle the pothole problem for our customers."

Thousands of miles, thousands of fixes

Last year, the pothole patching machine won the Highways Industry Project of the Year category, at the Highways Magazine Excellence Awards.

The original dragon patcher has been working hard over 2016 with great results:

23,000 miles covered across Peterborough, Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire  
29,779 potholes fixed across Peterborough, Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire

## **Government minister hails superfast broadband boost for Oxfordshire economy**

Better Broadband for Oxfordshire partnership has already reached more than 6,500 businesses including leading companies at Milton Park

Matt Hancock, the Minister of State for Digital and Culture, has hailed the pace of the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire roll-out as a 'tremendous boost for the local economy' ahead of his visit to the county.

The £35 million BBfO roll-out is being led by Oxfordshire County Council and BT, with additional funding from Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). It is part of the Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) programme and builds on private sector investment.

Across Oxfordshire more than 70,000 businesses and households now have access to superfast fibre broadband as a result of BBfO. The figure rises to around 273,000 when combined with commercial roll-outs.\*

The Rt. Hon Matt Hancock MP said: "Nine out of 10 homes and businesses can now get superfast broadband, and we're reaching thousands more every week. I'm delighted we've now reached more than 70,000 additional properties in Oxfordshire, providing a tremendous boost to the local economy, and helping make sure that the people of Oxfordshire have the connectivity they need in today's digital society."

More than 6,500 Oxfordshire businesses can now access the technology as a result of the BBfO roll-out, including around 250 firms on Milton Park, home to some of the county's most dynamic industries, innovative small and medium businesses and world-leading life science companies.

Councillor Ian Hudspeth, leader of Oxfordshire County Council, said: "We're delighted that all businesses at Milton Park are now able to choose a connectivity service which offers choice and affordability to innovative companies who are helping to boost a critical segment of the economy, not just here in Oxfordshire, but around the UK."

Councillor Hudspeth added: "We expect at least 95 per cent of Oxfordshire premises to have access to superfast broadband by December, and I'm delighted to announce an ambition to improve on this. In partnership with BT, we are finalising plans to make the technology available to



a further 2,000 premises as a result of contract savings achieved in this successful programme to date.

“We’re also about to launch a co-funding scheme whereby Oxfordshire County Council will support those very rural or very small communities which are too expensive to upgrade using public funds alone.”

Further details are available on the BBfO website: [www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk)

The Openreach network is ‘open’, which means businesses and households choosing to upgrade have a wide choice of fibre broadband providers. The FTTC network provides access to download speeds of up to 80 megabits per second (Mbps) and uploads of up to 20Mbps\*\*.

\*Source: [www.thinkbroadband.co.uk](http://www.thinkbroadband.co.uk)

\*\*Speeds referred to are the top wholesale speeds available from Openreach to all service providers; speeds offered by service providers may vary.

## **Ten years of flood prevention work in Oxfordshire**

More than £6.8million has been invested in flood prevention work in Oxfordshire thanks to Oxfordshire County Council over the last ten years, with more to come according to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council.

The county council is the Lead Flood Authority for the area and each year contributes in the region of £600,000 towards work that protects properties from flooding.

### **Protecting residents**

County Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, said: “I am proud of the work that the county council has funded which has helped tackle and prevent the devastation that flooding can cause to our communities.

“Oxfordshire has suffered a number of floods in recent years, with the really big one in 2007 that everyone remembers.

“What people may not realise is that Oxfordshire County Council has been contributing hundreds of thousands of pounds every year to protecting homes that could otherwise face disaster should there be extreme weather in the future.

“The physical work that we have helped to pay for goes a long way to protecting our residents while the county council’s fire and rescue service has a proud history of stepping in to provide hands on help and things like pumping in emergency situations.

“On top of this the county council’s drainage teams work all year round to keep drains and ditches – that can make a big difference – clear. As an example, in West Oxfordshire, we have spent £2.8m on drainage work alone in the last decade.”

### **Commitment to flood prevention**

Cllr Rodney Rose, co-chair of the Oxfordshire Flood Alleviation Scheme Sponsoring Group and member of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, said: “The county council’s commitment to reducing flood risk is unquestionable.

“The county council has helped make the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme a reality by agreeing to contribute a further £5m when the scheme goes ahead. This takes our total contribution to £6.5m.

“This is a crucial piece of work for Oxfordshire as we saw only a couple of years ago how flooding in Oxford has wide-reaching impacts for the whole county.

“We have also led on the development of the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit which provides all the information residents and businesses need to become more resilient.

“All this illustrates the great efforts and strides that we have made towards tackling flooding, and I am keen to see this work continue.”

## **Next steps**

In next year’s program further drainage improvement schemes are planned as well as money set aside for re-active work for drainage problems which arise during the year.

## **Where the money has gone**

Over the last 10 years the money has been spent by the county council on:

Flood bunds

Replacement culverts

Additional culverts

Upsizing highway drains

New highway drainage systems

Flood storage areas

Ditch maintenance

Maintenance of the highway drainage system

Jetting and investigating existing drainage systems

The county council has spent the money in the following district council boundary areas:

£1,264,000.00 in the West Oxfordshire area

£1,433,000.00 in the South Oxfordshire area

£1,066,000.00 in the Vale area

£205,414.00 in the Cherwell area

£2,901,650.00 in the Oxford city area

## **PLANS TO TRANSFORM ADOPTION SERVICES ACROSS THAMES VALLEY**

OCC is joining forces with neighbouring councils to create a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) for the Thames Valley. The agency will improve outcomes for both children and adopters – including the ability to match children with families more quickly and improve support services for adopters. The Government has advised that a grant of £300k will be made available to help set up the new service. OCC will be the host authority within a

partnership known as 'Adopt Thames Valley', alongside six other councils (Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham, Swindon and Reading) and two Voluntary Adoption Agencies (PACT and Barnardo's). All partners have begun work to develop the new shared service across the geographical area covered by the councils.

## **EXTRA FUNDING SECURED IN ADDITION TO 2017/18 BUDGET PROPOSALS**

The County Council set its budget for 2017/18 on Tuesday 14th February. Ahead of the meeting, it was announced the Council had £1,957,000 extra, over and above the position reported to the Cabinet in January, as a result of better than expected business rate collections, council tax collection fund surpluses and a higher than expected grant. The County is proposing to hold £926,000 of this until the 2018/19 financial year, to deal with future pressures. Cabinet proposes to spend the rest of the money (£1.03m) in this financial year in the following ways:

- £170,000 to be spent on additional grass-cutting work on highway verges. This is an area of spend that has been reduced in recent years.
- £250,000 one-off funding initially for a pilot Communities Fund for parishes and towns to bid for matched funding schemes following changes/reductions for funding for services.
- £600,000 additional funding for children's social care – a part of the council that has been exempted from cuts since 2010 but has continued to experience significant rising demand on services in common with children's social care departments across England.
- £11,000 increase on the Council's Flood Defence Levy.

Council on solid financial footing after many difficult decisions since 2010

Long-term planning over many years to cope with increased demographic pressures in social care means Oxfordshire County Council will set a budget for 2017-21 on a solid and resilient financial footing after seven years of difficult funding decisions.

Oxfordshire County Councillors from across the whole county will meet for their annual budget setting meeting on Tuesday, February 14 at 10am.

Councillor Ian Hudspeth, the leader of the council, said: "We've taken difficult decisions over the last seven years because we forecast rising demand for services and reducing Government funding.

"Our auditors have confirmed that our four-year budget plan is 'realistic' and that we have 'put in place proper resources to secure value for money' at a time when other county councils are talking about unfunded gaps in their budget.

"Good financial planning means we are now able to find new ways to ensure people and communities get the support they need rather than making short-term service cuts. We do this year have at least some additional money while still being in a challenging financial position along with the rest of local government."

Fit for the future

Cllr Hudspeth said: "We are a completely different organisation to seven years ago with 35

per cent fewer staff and many more services delivered with partners. Over coming years we'll continue to change to become fit for the future.

"We are continually looking for new ways to improve services and reduce costs including investment in digital technology to make dealing with the council simpler. As people will know, big changes in structure to local government in Oxfordshire are being discussed.

"We've kept community libraries open by encouraging volunteering with work under way to develop their role as community hubs. We've enabled parishes to take on maintenance work in their areas and we are helping community groups provide local support for children and their families.

## Adult Social Care

There are two new funding streams across England for adult social care:

the adult social care ring-fenced element of the Council Tax rise which first came into effect in 2016/17

a new one-off adult social care grant of £2.3m for 2017/18 (which is Oxfordshire's share of a national grant funding stream)

The total benefit of these two funding streams for Oxfordshire for the period 2017-20 is £20.2m with £7m of this being received earlier than that had already been planned for and known from previous budget processes.

This money is being spent as follows:

The council had in previous years set aside money in its financial plan to pay for increases in demographic demands forecast on social care for future years. A total of £6.586m of the new adult social care funding will be spent on meeting demographic pressures in this area. This means money previously set aside to cope with demographic demands can be directed to meeting the demographic pressures in children's social care (as described below).

The council will be able to directly meet £3.353m of new funding pressures that have been identified in adult social care from these funding streams.

A balance of £10.3m from 2017-2020 will be available to fund expenditure related to pressures including increases in the National Living Wage with the county council obliged to assist private and voluntary care sector organisations with their costs in this area. This was one area the Government had strongly in mind when setting a ring-fence on adult social care for part of the council tax rise.

## Children's social care and other new areas of spending

A total of £5.3m can now be spent on dealing with demand increases in children's social care. Money previously held in the financial plan for demography can now be allocated to children's social care as a consequence of the council receiving specific funding to address these pressures in adult social care as described above.

Included in the £5.3m is £0.600m that was added to the children's social care budget as a

result of the county council having £1.957m more money than anticipated as a result of better than expected business rate collections conducted by Oxfordshire's five district councils, council tax collection fund surpluses and a higher than expected grant. This information only became available earlier in February.

A total of £0.776m of the £1.957m of new funding will be added to balances in 2017/18 so that the Cabinet can consider how this money will then be spent in the 2018/19 financial year. The council is still in the throes of saving £377m from 2010 to 2020.

The remainder of this £1.957m is proposed to be spent as follows:

A total of £0.170m to be spent on additional grass-cutting work on highway verges. This is an area of spend that has been reduced in recent years.

A total of £0.250m one-off funding initially for a pilot Communities Fund following changes/reductions for funding for services. This will be divided between individual localities in Oxfordshire with local councillors deciding how the money will be spent.

An £0.011m increase on the Council's Flood Defence Levy.

A total of £150,000 is to be spent on continuing to provide locally based Area Stewards, overseeing local highway work. In previous budgets these posts had been set to be removed.

#### Budget proposals and Council Tax

In December the Government announced changes to how much it will permit councils who deliver adult social care to raise in Council Tax.

The result of this is that there is no extra permanent money overall but there is temporary finance (as a result of receiving the money earlier than planned) released which can be spent on one off measures.

Details relating to council tax rises are outlined in the table below

2017/18

2018/19

2019/20

Total 2017-20

Pre-December Government guidance

In the current Financial Plan

Up to 4 per cent with 2 per cent of this to be spent on adult social care

Up to 4 per cent with 2 per cent of this to be spent on adult social care

Up to 4 per cent with 2 per cent of this to be spent on adult social care

Up to 12 per cent (6 per cent to be spent on adult social care)

Post-December Government guidance

In the proposed budget and financial plan

Up to 5 per cent with

3 per cent of this to be spent on adult social care

Up to 5 per cent with

3 per cent of this to be spent on adult social care

Up to 2 per cent with no ringfence on how this should be spent

Up to 12 per cent (6 per cent to be spent on adult social care)

In spending the temporary finance raised the council is proposing to:

Spend £0.875m more than originally intended in making the changes to daytime support services approved by cabinet in January. Of this money £0.650m is temporary spend on transitional/grant funding for the voluntary sector while £0.225m is permanent funding.

Allocate £1.01m toward growing , developing and building resilience in the external care workforce helping the private and voluntary sector with issues such as recruiting, retaining, training, and supporting this workforce. The high cost of living means that care organisations face issues in these areas. This funding would increase the numbers and the skill base of local care workers and help providers to recruit and retain for the longer term.

Spend £1.485m on transforming delivery in adult social care. The council plans to increase staff capacity (social workers, occupational therapists, and care managers) to ensure the right size for home care packages. The council would train and develop staff across the council to improve their commercial negotiation skills. It proposes to invest in improvements to systems to enable it to better track and monitor the care demands in order to understand and use available capacity. The council would also like to increase its ability to design and evaluate adult social care services with significant input from people in Oxfordshire including service users.

Children's social care a top priority

Councillor Hudspeth added: "There's always the temptation to immediately allocate all of any new money, especially in an election year. We are proposing that more than half of it should be spent in 2017/18 but we also need to plan for challenges in future years.

"Children's social care is an area that we have said year-on-year is one of our top priorities as a council. We have always protected this area from the wider financial savings affecting local government and new money will help with the continued rising demand on the

service that is being experienced both here in Oxfordshire and elsewhere in England .

“This time next year though, Oxfordshire County Council will be setting its budget for 2018/19. As is the way of things there will be new financial pressures for local government to contend with by then along with various other changes in the landscape.

“By setting money aside now to deal with those inevitable future changes we are planning carefully and sensibly in precisely the way that led to our auditors last year describing our methods of financial planning as ‘realistic’.

“Setting budgets via a four-year medium term financial plan and looking beyond the year immediately ahead is the responsible and prudent way for a council to manage its finances.”

When last year’s budget was set the council stated that it was saving £361m from 2010 to 2020. As a result of this year’s changes this figure is now £377m

The council has more than 35 per cent fewer staff and 40 per cent fewer managers with further reductions in senior management to come.

The council uses more than 90 fewer buildings than it did a decade a

**I produce a monthly report which is sent to the Parish Councils on things going on at County**

#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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# **Goring & South Stoke Annual District Report Councillor Kevin Bulmer 2016-2017**

## **Better Oxfordshire unitary bid officially submitted to government**

Joint statement by Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, Cllr Matthew Barber, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council and Cllr John Cotton, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council:

“We have submitted proposals for a single council for Oxfordshire to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government today.

Visit the Better Oxfordshire website to read the full proposal

“Our three councils have listened to the views of residents, businesses and other organisations across Oxfordshire and worked hard to address any concerns in the final bid - and with seventy percent of those surveyed showing support for a single unitary, we know we are on the right track.

“This is a significant moment for us and for the communities of Oxfordshire, who under a new single council will receive better, simpler joined up services, saving taxpayers millions of pounds each year and ensuring good quality services for generations to come.

“We believe local government reorganisation is vital to protect council services as central government funding is reduced, and to secure the investment in infrastructure needed to support sustainable economic growth in Oxfordshire.

“It is expected that the government will make a final decision on our proposal later this year, but work is already underway to ensure all six councils work together effectively on delivering a new council for Oxfordshire in 2019.”

## **South Local Plan 2033**

- The Second Preferred Options consultation is scheduled to commence at the end of March 2017. The slight delay from the last update is to ensure we have the most robust evidence available to support the consultation – particularly for infrastructure. It will take the form of a full Draft Local Plan to include development management.

➤ Some of the evidence studies and their progress:

- o Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA): Final draft received. Will form an appendix to overarching SHEELA document
- o Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP): Draft ‘baseline’ report received mid-Feb. officers are currently reviewing
- o Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI): Draft interim report received Mid-Feb. Officers are reviewing.
- o Green Infrastructure Strategy: Received first detailed ‘pilot’ (for Abingdon) and expecting similar settlement level assessments for all towns and larger villages through the first half of 2017. Settlement level assessments received and comments returned.
- o Sustainable transport study: Consultants (Steer Davies Gleave) appointed. Technical note received and comments returned. Stakeholder workshops to be held Spring.
- o Leisure Strategy: Consultants appointed Nortoft. Inception meeting to be scheduled.



- o Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment: Consultants ORS appointed. Cherwell to join study.
- o Sustainability Appraisal. AMEC Foster Wheeler appointed. Inception meeting scheduled March.

## **Council tax frozen and more than a million to support community projects**

Council tax frozen for the second year running

More than £1,000,000 in grants available to support community projects

New local lottery scheme to provide further funds for local causes

On 16 February South Oxfordshire District Council agreed to freeze its council tax rate for the second year running. With these freezes, and having also reduced its council tax in previous years, South Oxfordshire remains one of the most cost effective and efficient local authorities in the country.

In setting its budget the council included significant additional investment in car parking, support for the regeneration of Berinsfield and funding to help provide accommodation for rough sleepers.

More than £1,000,000 in grants is being made available to support community projects, such as improvements to village halls and providing new sports areas.

The district council will also invest a further £500,000 over the next two years to help deliver Superfast Broadband to more communities across the district.

To help raise further funds for local voluntary and community groups the council will introduce a new local lottery scheme during 2017 giving residents the opportunity to win while raising money for a chosen cause or general good cause fund. Almost £99,000 will also go towards increasing volunteering and volunteering opportunities across the district.

Cllr Jane Murphy, Cabinet Member for Finance at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "I am very pleased that despite tough budget conditions we are able to continue to offer over a million pounds to help community projects in our towns and villages. We're also launching the new local lottery and working to increase volunteering in order to provide extra support."

## **Design Guide shortlisted for award**

South and Vale urban design officers together with collaboration from other specialist officers have had the South Oxfordshire Design Guide shortlisted for the Public Sector entry in the Francis Tibbalds Urban Design Awards 2017.

Being shortlisted for the award is a good step towards raising the profile of the Council and the need to secure high quality design in South Oxfordshire. Awarded by the Urban Design Group, the awards give more recognition to urban design work, particularly at project stage. Voting is now underway and the results will be announced in March 2017.

## **Neighbourhood Planning Up-date.**

This month at Planning Committee we had the first opportunity to put Minister For Housing Gavin Barwell MP's announced new rules concerning Neighbourhood Plans to the test. An application for homes at Sonning Common was refused for a number of reasons, but one of the most significant was that the application differed significantly from the policies of the Adopted Neighbourhood Plan. This was not the only reason and I have no doubt that the developer will appeal, but it will be one of the earliest tests of the Minister's directive.

## **5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) update**

Our public position remains that we have 3.8 years housing land supply (target 5YHLS).

\* We have updated the district-wide completions data, which is being verified before we recalculate our 5YHLS

\* In addition to all the major applications in and around our larger villages we are starting to receive housing proposals in our smaller villages such as Brightwell cum Sotwell (3) and Warborough (2).

## **46 Young Achievers awarded in South Oxfordshire**

Dozens of young people from South Oxfordshire have been recognised for their achievements in sport, art or citizenship at a celebration event.

South Oxfordshire District Council's Young Achiever Award Ceremony took place on Wednesday 22 February at Didcot Civic Hall with district council Chairman Paul Harrison and Vice Chairman Jeanette Matelot presenting certificates to 46 young people. Each young achiever also received £250.

Those recognised for their achievements include synchronised swimmers Lottie Moghul, aged 12, and Teri-Faye Coupar, 15; ice dancers Hannah Stewart and Anais Sophie, 13 and 15 years old; 16 year old endurance athlete Nancie Bowley; and Emily Williams, 15, who volunteers to help at her local Beaver group.

## **Grants available to help get residents active**

New funding from Sport England will be available to councils, community groups and sports clubs from January 2017. The funding is aimed at projects which reduce inactivity, increase volunteering and improve facilities. Please tell residents about the following funds:

- Community Asset Fund for capital projects to provide new or enhanced facilities, or new facilities in fields or unused buildings. Types of projects that could be eligible include renovating a sports pavillion, installing floodlighting or creating a new sports pitch. £5,000 - £150,000 is available.
- Inactivity Fund for revenue projects that increase activity levels in people aged 55 and over such as Walking Football or care home activities. Funding is anticipated to be between £250,000-£500,000.
- Volunteer Funding which targets under-represented groups and young people aged 10-20 years. Projects could include charities and organisations working with groups to promote volunteering opportunities for example matching volunteers to sports club volunteering roles.

For more information please contact Cath Dale, Participation Officer on 07801 203 551 or 01235 422222 or by email [cath.dale@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:cath.dale@southandvale.gov.uk).

## **Councils' meet Food Standards Agency targets**

The Food Standards Agency has recently published its report on local authority food law enforcement for the period 2015-16.

Out of the 323 English authorities that provided data, only 18 met the target to complete 100% of inspections scheduled for the year. Both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are included within these 18, and are the only Oxfordshire authorities to have met this target. Both councils also achieved the national average of 93% for food premises that are 'broadly compliant' with food law.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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## Goring Gap in Bloom 2016

As in previous years, the volunteers purchased, planted and maintained over 40 baskets in the public areas of the village. In addition we provided an increasing number of pots and troughs of flowers and continued maintaining and improving the new garden at the corner of the cricket pitch, the area near the public toilets, the BT land and the bed outside McColl's shop. We did not enter the Britain in Bloom Competition but continued working towards its aims of encouraging community involvement in the village horticultural environment. We are concerned about the urban appearance of the station following its development and we started the process of applying for grants to provide planting.

In 2017, we expect to be very busy and are seeking more volunteers. We will be entering the RHS Competition and we expect the judges to visit the village in July. We will be working on the station and carrying on with all the work of last year including the continuing establishment of a wildflower garden at the BT site.

As councillors will be aware, the RHS judges pay particular attention to the tidiness and cleanliness of the village. At the moment we have a problem, presumably due to the change in the provision of street cleaning. Last year's leaves have filled the gutters and blocked the drains as they were not cleared during the winter months. In the wet weather this turns into a messy sludge. Unlike many of its neighbouring villages, Goring has large trees which line our village streets. These can be a blessing and a curse as they add to the maintenance bill. However, to ensure that the village looks cared for during the summer months we would ask the council to arrange for the most badly affected gutters to be cleared, if necessarily manually.

Finally, we would like to thank the Parish Council for its financial support of the hanging baskets and Councillor Urbick for his supportive interest in our work.

## **GPC AGM Report April 2017 – Goring Neighbourhood Plan**

### **Introduction**

The volunteers have all worked incredibly hard right through the year showing huge commitment to the future of the village. Much of 2016 was spent collecting and analysing information through extensive consultation with Goring residents, services and businesses, SODC and OCC, other key Agencies such as EA, Thames Water, CCB and with professional bodies such as Bramhill and TVERC.

### **Consultations**

(Consisting of presentations, consultation events, surveys, engagement and consultation with regulatory authorities including SODC and OCC, public meetings, updates at GPC public meetings, correspondence, meetings with developers/landowners)

In March 2016, a Sustainability Scoping Report was issued to SODC, OCC (education, transport), Thames Water (sewerage, drainage, water supply), Chiltern Conservation Board (AONB management policies), North Wessex Downs AONB Management Board, National Rail, Police (safety, security), Environmental Agency (flooding, environmental), British Gas, National Grid and British Telecom.

Two separate questionnaires were distributed to Goring residents in early 2016:

- Housing Needs and Living in the Village – 1450 distributed to every household in Goring, returned by 37%
- Site Selection Criteria – 2739 distributed to all Electoral Register people, returned by 31%

The feedback was analysed, documented and the results published on the GNP web site and made available in the village Library and at the Council offices. This document is key and thoroughly quantifies the views of the community.

Four major open days were held at Goring Village Hall in 2016:

- January 2016 – to explain the NP process, present initial ideas from each Workgroup, obtain and record opinions, concerns and preferences. 301 people attended this initial Consultation
- March 2016 – to present the results of the initial consultation and initial Sustainability Objectives and to seek further ideas and opinions. 330 people attended.
- May 2016 – to present the analysis of feedback from questionnaires, update residents on the available development sites, seek further input and opinions. 340 people attended.
- December 2016 – an Exhibition to present the SSMG assessments, provisional site selection results and issues, the timetable and process prior to Referendum and to present supporting technical material on Sustainability considerations. 350 people attended this Exhibition.

During 2016, several meetings were held with the School Governors, the Medical Practice and local businesses and Estate Agents to understand the issues regarding growth in housing in Goring and to ensure that the Plan could take account of their feedback and issues.

## **Site Selection**

The Site Selection Management Group (SSMG, TOR approved by GPC) was formed, consisting of the SG and Workgroup Leaders. Declarations of Interests were produced. A Site Selection Methodology was developed and published on the GNP Website. GPC formed an independent Site Selection Overview Group (SSOG) to confirm that the Methodology was followed with integrity.

A set of Site Selection Objectives, Criteria and Measures were developed from all available information and published on the GNP Website in October 2016. The SSMG met weekly in the evening between October and December 2016, rigorously reviewing available evidence and systematically assessing and recording all 15 sites against 14 Objectives, 25 Criteria and 100 Measures. All suitable sites were provisionally identified based on this analysis.

As part of the Site Selection process, meetings were held in November with all available Landowners and Developers to discuss outstanding questions, to explain the initial Site Assessments and to discuss next steps. Sites were then reassessed by the SSMG prior to the Exhibition in December.

## **Evidence Base Overview**

The analysis, objectives, policies and proposals which underpin the Neighbourhood Plan have drawn on a variety of sources:

- population, demographics, employment, health, housing, deprivation, education, car ownership was obtained from the Office of National Statistics and other HMG sources
- the housing need for Goring, developed from local information and the latest national trends and statistics. The SODC SHMA, Local Plan 2027 and Local Plan 2032 (Consultation version) were taken into account
- all local views were obtained from the numerous consultations, questionnaires and meetings outlined above
- because of the importance of the AONB and river setting to the values, culture and sustainability of Goring, a specialist and independent Landscape and Visual Impact report was commissioned from Bramhill Consultancy to supplement SODC's own report from Terra Firma as part of the 2012 Local Plan preparation
- flooding and analysis of flood risk from the EA and OCC
- school facilities and planning for growth in capacity from OCC and SODC
- management policies in the Chilterns AONB from the Chilterns Conservation Board

## **Next Steps**

Provisional Plan Objectives and Policies have been drafted and reviewed with SODC. The Plan is now being drafted. Supporting documentation such as the Sustainability Appraisal and Basic Conditions Statement will be initiated shortly.

SODC have released their Local Plan 2033 for consultation along with supporting documentation. This seeks an additional 251 houses in Goring but recognises that the AONB will constrain the allocations, subject to robust evidence.

Subject to any further unforeseen local distractions, the SG hopes to have the Plan pack ready for GPC approval/consultation in May.

**Report from:**



**Mobility Issues Group for Goring & Streatley**

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*The aim and purpose of MIGGS is to exchange information and represent the interests of residents of Goring, Streatley and surrounding communities who have limited mobility; and to raise and disburse money for that purpose.*

## **1 Wallingford Road pavement**

In cooperation with the parish council and with the support of other official and voluntary bodies MIGGS has made representations to Network Rail, Great Western Railway and Oxfordshire County Council, as the highway authority, to increase the width of the pavement on the west side of Wallingford Road, between High Street and Reading Road. This is to enable wheelchair users to pass safely to and from the station booking office. Widening of the pavement would, of course, also help other pedestrians, especially parents with prams and pushchairs.

At the date of writing (29 March) MIGGS was waiting for Network Rail and OCC to absorb and respond to two separate technical reports prepared by highway professionals. The first is the results and conclusions of a traffic survey conducted by Transport Planning Associates. The second report, by an OCC highway engineer, envisages widening the pavement to 1.5-1.8 metres as part of a comprehensive, long term reconstruction and realignment of the road. Both reports point to the conclusion that it will be possible without endangering railway safety for the rusty rail barrier alongside the railway boundary fence to be removed and the fence realigned to provide an extra 300mm or so of pavement width. This is regarded as an adequate but imperfect short term way of widening the pavement at minimum cost.

The technical reports were commissioned jointly by MIGGS and the parish council using a grant of £7,000 awarded by Great Western Railway from its customer and community improvement fund. The parish council has committed itself to match the £5,000 in local voluntary donations raised by MIGGS towards the cost of physical improvements to the pavement in Wallingford Road.

## **2 Station accessibility**

Goring parish council strongly supported representations by MIGGS over several years to have passenger lifts installed when the station footbridge was rebuilt as part of the electrification programme. The footbridge and lifts were formally opened on 26 September 2016 by John Howell MP, in the presence of Sir Peter Hendy, chairman of Network Rail and several Goring councillors. Great Western Railway, SODC,

OCC, West Berkshire and Streatley parish councils were also represented. Although there were teething troubles, and some out of hours problems remain to be resolved, the lifts are now available under passenger control from 6am to 10.30pm. Other disabled access improvements have been made at the station and, in the interests of sustainable transport, a second cycle rack is expected to be installed by GWR in the coming financial year. There are plans, supported by GWR, to promote Goring and Streatley as a destination “Accessible by train” to mobility impaired visitors.

### **3 Access between Station Road and High Street**

MIGGS is grateful to the parish council for two measures that promise to improve access between Station Road and High Street for users of wheelchairs, mobility scooters and other mobility aids. The first, completed in March, is rearrangement of the pedestrian safety barriers between the Arcade and Community Centre car parks. This will permit all but the largest mobility scooters to use that route to and from the shops while continuing to protect against the reckless use of cycles and motor cycles. The barriers have also been painted bright yellow as an aid to visually impaired pedestrians. The second measure is to raise the kerb height and widen the pavement at the High Street end of the Wheel Orchard path. This is included in a larger plan for High Street traffic safety improvements now subject to an informal consultation by the parish council. The wider pavement will enable all pedestrians emerging from Wheel Orchard to get a better view of High Street traffic in both directions before venturing to cross the road. The higher kerb will protect pedestrians by discouraging westbound cars and trucks from mounting the pavement as they enter the narrow stretch of road between MaryS and Virgo Beauty.

### **4 Readibus Goring service**

Since 2013 the Readibus shopping bus service for elderly and disabled people of Goring has been funded jointly by MIGGS and Goring parish council. Following a successful appeal in Goring Gap News in November 2016 MIGGS has raised enough in local voluntary donations to be able make a commitment to continue supporting the service until the end of March 2019 at least. We hope and trust that the parish council will continue with its support for this service, which is heavily used, greatly appreciated and regarded by some passengers as a “lifeline”. Money contributed by the council and raised by MIGGS goes exclusively to the Goring service, the core costs of the Readibus charity being paid mainly by Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire councils, with fares of national bus pass holders in Goring being subsidised by OCC.

## **Report for Annual Parish meeting - 2017**

### Planning Committee

The PC Chairman will have made comment regarding the most contentious issues that we have experienced in the last year i.e. The Hydro scheme in the Weir, the Railway electrification gantries and the land outside of the village envelope off Icknield Rd, for which we recommended refusal for numerous reasons but were subsequently approved by SODC.

In general terms we have had the usual applications associated with residential property, unfortunately a majority of the wrong type. A high percentage of applications were either for extensions or new build to achieve 4 & 5 bedroom properties. Any new build proposed as two bed have sufficient space to achieve a third bed so the need for one and two bedroom residential units is not being catered for.

Hopefully when the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted it will require the provision of one and two bedroom units to cater for the need of young people to buy or residents wishing to downsize.

It was necessary to notify planning enforcement of a development in a sensitive location, which was not constructed in accordance with the planning approval. Fortunately, the land owner subsequently complied with the enforcement notice.

David Brooker  
Chair of Planning Committee



# Railway Action Group – Update March 2017

The electrification of the Great Western Mainline continued last year with further installation of portal structures along the line. The section from Reading to Didcot ie the test track, was completed and made live in July 2016, when testing of the new Hitachi Class 800 Intercity Express Trains began. Indefinite delays to some parts of the GWML were announced in Nov 2016 due to budget over-runs, including the section from Didcot to Oxford.

RAG held several meetings with Network Rail (NR) throughout the year with a view to ensuring that NR maintained their stated intention to retrofit the section of the track through the AONBs with new designs (subject to itemised funds being approved). Other actions included;

- the sending of several legal letters to NR challenging their Permitted Development Rights and their adherence to the laws protecting AONBs
- a review of NR's Balfour Beatty contracted new designs report and the LVIA work that was conducted in parallel – this resulted in the original 80 or so designs first considered being reduced to 10 in August and then 4 in January
- the engagement of several other Parish Councils along the AONB section and their attendance at key meetings
- having two questions asked in the Houses of Parliament by local MPs regarding the visual impact of the electrification work on the landscape
- the continued engagement with the Design Advisory Group (DAG - which includes the Chilterns Conservation Board, the North Wessex Downs Conservation Board, Natural England and SODC)
- maintaining and updating the AG web-site and Facebook page
- supporting NR in a plan to hold Public Event meetings in several parishes to show their new designs as part of the belated Consultation Plan

The consultation events were due to be held in late January and February, however at a RAG/NR meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017, DAG - together with RAG - told NR that the designs that they had chosen to present at the Public Events and the process to choose those designs were flawed and could not be supported by the group. DAG also stated that they had not been properly informed or consulted during the latter stages of the process. It was suggested that NR should revisit the report and the design options in order that further designs and more imaginative options were included (including wire-headspans), there was a clearer indication of where the designs might be deployed (as part of a mixed design approach) and there was better integration with the visual impact work. NR subsequently postponed the Public Events at short notice stating that it would conduct the work suggested and would report back in a few months.

Although negotiations with NR appear to be progressing towards a better solution for the AONB section, there is still a significant risk that Network Rail is simply conducting this new design work and consultation exercise in order to fulfil their statutory duties with regards to AONB legislation, and that subsequently they will renege on implementing a retrofit project arguing that the overall project is too far over budget and that funding for retrofitting the AONB section is simply not available. RAG is fully aware of this and is capturing evidence, including NR statements to the media, minuted promises, statements of intent etc, in order that there is the basis for legal action to be taken resulting in a judicial review should NR back-track on their promises.

## UPDATE ON THE WEIR & PROPOSED HYDRO SCHEME

As was communicated in the last GGN, the Parish Council had applied to the Court of Appeals to reconsider the decision by the judge not to quash the planning decision for the proposed hydro scheme, even after determining that South Oxfordshire District Council failed in their lawful duty on two grounds. We were notified on 15<sup>th</sup> February that our application to the Court has been refused. The Council is currently taking legal advice as to how to proceed.

Though the Parish Council was supportive of a feasibility study into the idea of generating power from the weir, neither of the designs put forward by the Sustainability Group were considered to be appropriate for a development in both a Conservation Area, and in the Chiltern's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Parish Council maintains the concerns about flooding, noise, and the damage to a highly protected area surrounded by a good number of listed buildings – without much, if any, direct benefit to the local community. Though not strictly planning matters, there are concerns about the financial structure and viability of the scheme, as well as significant concerns about the apparent lack of contingency to return the weir to its current state should the scheme fail. These latter issues were raised directly with the Sustainability Group some months ago, and as of yet, have not been addressed.

Since the initial planning application, there have been hundreds of letters and e-mails from local residents – to SODC and to the Parish Council – against the scheme, with very few in support. In fact, nearly £10,000 was raised by a local action group to fight the scheme. And though the Sustainability Group has indicated they have a great deal of local support, we have seen no evidence. From the Parish Council's perspective, those against outnumber those supportive by about 10:1. We are aware that a survey was conducted by the Sustainability Group some months ago, and we would ask the results are verified and published.

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council