

Annual Meeting of the Parish 2022

Annual Reports

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Parish Council

Update since the last annual Parish Meeting.

January 2020 saw the retirement of the previous Clerk & RFO Mr Colin Radcliff who had served the Council and the Parish for about 6 years. March 2020 brought with it a new Clerk & RFO Laura White and a Global Pandemic. The Council participated in the following months with setting up a volunteer response in the village, being the focal contact point for vulnerable individuals in the parish, coordinating referrals from OCC and SODC and liaising with local organisations to coordinate the most appropriate assistance.

In June 2020 the Gardiner Recreation Ground was visited by a group of travellers. With some external expert help the group was moved on swiftly and the generosity and expert delivery of some very large stones from GRUNDON secured the ground until gates could be installed. The gates also were kindly donated by GRUNDON. The Parish Council received a significant sum from the villagers toward the future safety and security of the parish, this has been earmarked, and was so far used for the gate installation. The remaining monies will be used for future work to secure parish properties.

The end of 2020 and early 2021 included review of the back catalogue of the parish archives, triggering both the Public Spaces Review project and thinning of the archives.

Public Spaces Review

The public spaces review is being completed in conjunction with the expert advice and recommendations of the appointed Landscape Architect, to review all 5 of the public space in Goring as a whole.

This approach is being taken to mitigate some of the issues on previous projects where an individual location for an individual project was looked at and a few residents would raise concerns and the project would then be passed over. This new approach of looking at the village as a whole is to help show concerned residents that no individual location is being singled out, and that there will be a long term plan for the whole village.

There will be a series of consultations prior to one final large consultation where the village will be asked to comment on the final recommendations and give a priority list for the projects.

Archiving Project

The archiving project has included amongst other things:

- sorting historical minutes to be sent to the County archives for long term storage
- shredding of vast quantities of old data which should have been disposed of over many years
- transferring of pertinent historical information to the Local History Society
- disposal of duplicate information and redundant equipment

The archiving project was partially triggered by a number of leaks at the Old Jubilee Fire Station, as there was a risk that precious historical information would be damaged. The Council commissioned a professional survey in mid 2021 which highlighted a number of failings in the building including, leaking roof, rotting doors & windows, upgrades required of a public building to make it accessible etc. With the announced imminent departure of the Bowls Club from Goring and a decision not to immediately repair the OJFS, a decision was made to move the Parish Council offices temporarily to the Gardiner Pavilion whilst a more formal assessment of where the Council Offices could permanently move. This temporary move was completed in October 2021.

GORING-ON-THAMES

August 2021 was the inaugural Goring Summer of Play. Three weeks of free family friendly events culminating in a Silent Disco, and including Open Air Cinema, and Goring Mayhem was widely regarded as a great success and a positive addition to the village calendar. Though initially it provided a consultation platform to find out what local people wanted as part of the Public Spaces Review as well as providing support to our community having endured the pandemic and lockdowns. After such positive feedback the Council has once again approved to hold a Summer of Play event in 2022, which, when considering current concerns of financial challenges, is likely to be of even greater support for our community.

There have been a number of well-publicised resignations of Parish Councillors in the recent months, driven by ill health. Prior to that, there was a vacancy resulting from the sad death of Cllr Matt Brown. There was a by-election to replace Matt, and another by-election is to be scheduled by South Oxfordshire District Council for the three open positions. Hopefully this will allow the Council to get back to full strength and spread the burden of the numerous tasks taken by the current Councillors (who, it is important to remind everyone, are all volunteers to serve our community).

Cllr Bryan Urbick, Chair

Financial Summary

The following table details the final end of your accounts by budget code for the most recently completed Financial Year: 2021-2022, and the previous financial year 2020-2021 for comparison.

The reserve account contains funds that have been earmarked for specific purposes. Whilst £250,000 is a significant amount to hold in reserve, the council is currently working toward an Operating Reserve at a level of the recommended 50% of precept, circa £80,000 plus saving for significant infrastructure projects, such as replacing the aging inventory of street lamps, play equipment replacement, adding EV charging points to the Community Centre car park etc.

NOTE: All figures to be considered draft, until accounts have been audited.

INCOME

		2020-2021	2021-2022
100	General Income		
1010	Bank Interest	949	588
1020	CIL Receipts	11798	51463
1030	Community Car Park	416	3026
1040	Events Income		1863
1050	Grants/S106/Donations	28255	11983
1060	Insurance		
1070	Miscellaneous Income / Other	1	135
1080	Precept	150768	158306
1090	Property Income	4542	4348
Total	General Income	196729	231712
200	Burial Ground Income	15695	
2010	Grazing & Miscellaneous		58
2020	Interments and Plots		15446
2030	Memorials; Including Bench Donations		3399
Total	Burial Ground Income	15695	18903
Total	All Income	212424	250614

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EXPENDITURE

		2020-2021	2021-2022
300	Administration		
3010	Allowances Expenses Training	603	1392
3020	Awards and honours	466	0
3030	COVID-19 Response (not Staff)	1131	2969
3040	Election fees	0	0
3050	Hire of Meeting Room	0	39
3060	Postage, copies and printing	365	1036
3070	Publications	42	582
3080	Subscriptions	792	938
3090	Legal Fees	35	3387
3100	Rates and Taxes	1497	1497
3110	Website	15	69
Total	Administration	4946	11839

400	General Finance & Grants		
4010	Audit and Accountancy	250	2950
4020	Bank Charges	60	64
4030	Churches S214(6) LG Act 1972	0	0
4040	Miscellaneous Expenditure	1873	0
4050	S137 and Other (Non-Grant) Payments	0	452
4060	Staff Costs	31813	39130
4070	Transport S26-29 LGR Act 1997	350	350
Total	General Finance & Grants	34346	42946

500	Burial Ground		
5010	General Maintenance	1629	1347
5020	Mowing & Hedges		2253
5030	Plot Preparation	3417	1660
5040	WHBG Waste		742
Total	Burial Ground	5046	6001

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600	Facilities	2020-2021	2021-2022
6010	Car Park	2400	2400
6020	Defibrillator	299	250
6030	General Maintenance & Repair	2901	6711
6040	Grass Weeding Strimming Fertil	12799	12713
6050	Hedges/Fences/Paddocks/Gates	2550	0
6060	Pedestrian Safety Projects	29865	25000
6070	Inspections Surveys & Reports	3717	4953
6080	Insurance	1756	1749
6090	Office Equipment	1575	1288
6100	Playground Equipment Maintenance	471	230
6110	Property Sundries	173	2640
6120	Public Spaces Review	0	1993
6130	Security, Fire & Safety	310	285
6140	Software and back-ups	1256	3859
6150	Street Furniture & Seats	0	812
6160	Street Lighting	20247	23014
6170	Street Light Replacements	1313	6437
6180	Summer of Play		12873
6190	Telephone & Internet	626	1161
6200	Traveller Eviction & Cleanup	4525	0
6210	Trees	5535	983
6220	Utilities - Gas, Water, Electr	6286	4086
6230	Vandalism	0	135
6240	Waste / Litter / Street Cleaning	7058	9463
6250	Winter & Flooding	0	0
6255	Jubilee 2022		2416
Total	Facilities	105662	125451
700	Neighbourhood Plan		
7040	Misc Expenses/ purchases NP	87	110
Total	Neighbourhood Plan	87	110
Total	All Expenditure	150087	186348

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		2020-2021	2021-2022
TOTAL	INCOME	212424	250614
TOTAL	EXPENDITURE	150087	186348
SURPLUS	↳ EMR	62337	64266
TOTAL	INCOME (IGNORE CIL)	212424	199152
TOTAL	EXPENDITURE (IGNORE CIL)	150087	186348
SURPLUS	↳ EMR	62337	12804

EARMARKED RESERVES

Account	2020-2021	2021-2022
320 EMR Operating Reserve	61463	71464
325 EMR Tree Felling & Replacement	10000	12000
330 EMR Playground Equipment	13500	20500
335 EMR MIGGS Pavement Widening	5000	5000
340 EMR Car Park Reserves	2000	12000
345 EMR CIL	0	31415
350 EMR High Street Strategic Project	25000	0
355 EMR Street Lighting Replacement	29645	42489
360 EMR Covid-19 Response	7533	4555
365 EMR Security	3249	3249
370 EMR Public Spaces Strategy	24000	11007
375 EMR GGBN Reserved Monies	1031	1031
380 EMR External Audit Costs	6000	3700
385 EMR WHBG Reserved Plots	5500	5500
390 EMR Summer of Play		12303
395 EMR Winter of Play		0
400 EMR Jubilee 2022		4803
410 EMR WHBG - 99y Maintenance		5000
420 EMR Election Costs		8000
425 EMR Freedom of Goring		1000
430 EMR Previous Financial Year Commitments		4374

TOTAL RESERVES

193920

259390

Laura White, RFO

South Oxfordshire District Council

Corporate Plan Performance Reporting

The Council adopted its new Corporate Plan towards the end of 2020, so 2021-22 was the first full year of its implementation. As part of our commitment to Openness and Transparency, we now publish quarterly performance reports at <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/corporateplan> and these are a very useful point of reference on the highest priority areas such as Nature Restoration, Taking Action on the Climate Emergency, Improving Economic and Community Wellbeing and Rebuilding our Financial Viability. This annual report to the Parish Council will provide an overview, but for more detail we would encourage you to refer to these quarterly performance reports.

Covid-19 Support for the South Oxfordshire Community

Throughout the past year SODC teams have continued to provide support, finance and guidance to residents and local businesses as we have moved from one phase of the pandemic to the next (and back again!). Working in close collaboration with other public authorities across Oxfordshire, the council has supported vaccine roll-outs, handled multiple different grant schemes, delivered food parcels and reached out to vulnerable residents via the Community Hub. We also provided materials to support our towns and businesses during the gradual re-opening of our high streets.

Cost of Living Crisis

We are very conscious that many people in our districts will face difficulties due to rising costs of living. Our community Hub has been evolving to support anyone who is struggling no matter the issue. Emailing or calling the Hub will mean people get to speak to a real person and will be able to be signposted to appropriate help. Depending on their situation people may be able to access grants, housing advice, or any other SODC or OCC services. To make it easy to access help we have also put together a webpage with lots of information: [Cost of living crisis – information and support - South Oxfordshire District Council](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/cost-of-living-crisis) ([southoxon.gov.uk](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk))

- **South helpline:** +44 1235 422600 / 01235 422600 (press option one). Opening hours: 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am-4.30pm Fridays, Closed weekends and bank holidays.
- **Email:** communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Climate Action Plan

A highlight of this past year has been the creation and adoption of a Climate Action Plan, which will help the Council to achieve its objective of being Net Zero in its own operations by 2025 and to show leadership to the whole District in getting there by 2030. Examples of actions that have been taken include the creation of a new Tree Planting Policy, which has enabled community groups to plant trees on SODC-owned land, installing EV charging points in all of our market towns and implementing flood alleviation schemes (e.g. in Chalgrove) to combat risks arising from climate change.

Of course, SODC is only responsible for a small percentage of the carbon emissions in the District, and so we are very dependent on local communities, businesses and individuals playing their part too. We support such actions through regular communications campaigns (such as Food Waste Action Week in March) and we are working with our colleagues across the County to develop a new website which will provide practical

examples of actions that can be taken by individuals to change their behaviour and reduce their own climate impact.

Improving our Finances and Investing to Save

In February 2022 we delivered a budget representing a step-change in how the council invests in our communities and collective priorities. If our first budget responded to the council's poor financial position, and the second to the existential challenges of the pandemic, this third budget is the first fully realised expression of the projects in our corporate plan.

Our administration's approach to bringing services back in-house is a clear reversal of our Conservative predecessors' policy and has put us in a much stronger position both financially and practically. As a result, Heads of Service can manage costs more effectively, improving the long-term position and freeing up £500,000 for immediate additional investment. We have split these funds between three of our key priorities in the Corporate Plan. This will enable us, for example, to accelerate activity to support the retrofit of homes and development of green construction skills, run green business fairs in towns, and support car-sharing clubs.

There's also funding to invest in access to green spaces and our rivers. We have campaigned to raise awareness and take action on sewage pollution in our river, which runs 47 miles along the length of the district. We have also allocated funds to renovate our much-needed public toilets and support community litter picks and children's activities.

As well as bringing services in-house, we're saving money by working on a joint local plan with our neighbouring Vale of the White Horse district. We are planning to move out of expensive rented offices in Milton Park this summer by making a substantial investment in the centre of Didcot Garden Town for a new civic building. We're buying houses to use as temporary accommodation for homeless families rather than paying for hotels.

Delivering Genuinely Affordable Housing and Improving Community Facilities

Although South Oxfordshire has one of the lowest levels of council tax of any shire district, it's vital that we deploy all the funding we can access, especially to support facilities used by our residents, whatever their income level. By introducing new action and policies on developer funding contributions, we have improved the council's ability to spend them more quickly, and as a result, we are able to make substantial investments. In this budget, we have released nearly £2 million to support community leisure and wellbeing facilities, as well as in some cases supporting a specific need, such as improved access to the Thames for wheelchair users.

We are now planning a £5 million investment over two years, using affordable housing funds from developers to enable the council to purchase and invest in its own council housing, another vital step toward reinstating the council as a provider of housing for those most in need. This follows major commitments last year to Henley and District Housing Trust and for our own Didcot Broadway development of new low-carbon council housing.

In addition, in the first 3 quarters of the 2021/22 financial year, we delivered 214 affordable homes through s106 agreements with housing developers.

Improving our Efficiency and Modernising our Infrastructure

Over the past year Council officers have been working hard on an IT Refresh and a Customer Transformation Strategy which will modernise and integrate the various systems used to interact with residents across the district. With so many officers working from home, and residents, parish councils and local businesses interacting with the council using increasingly digital channels, this work will help to integrate the information we hold about them and use to deliver our services in a more efficient and customer-oriented way. This is a challenging project, since we have inherited such a patchwork of outsourced contracts and distributed customer records, but it will hopefully improve satisfaction with Council services and enable us to be more responsive in how we engage with our many and varied groups of stakeholders. It will also give us better resilience and will deliver operational and financial savings over time.

Diversity and Inclusion

In addition to the statutory duties for equalities as a public sector organisation, the Council has made a strategic commitment in our Corporate Plan to focus on strengthening and improving diversity and inclusion across our communities and council services. Several motions have been passed by Council in the past twelve months relating to diversity and inclusion and we have also published a Diversity calendar which we use to highlight social campaigns on these matters. We strive to create an environment where everybody feels that they belong and have a voice that will be heard. We embrace our differences, our unique talents, our beliefs, backgrounds and abilities and commit to improving community well-being as we collectively emerge from the pandemic and tackle the challenges presented by climate change and social injustices.

Progress on the Joint Local Plan

Local Plans are used to help determine planning applications and set out how and where new housing developments should take place, along with identifying the infrastructure needed to support them. They also set out policies on what kind of housing is appropriate and acceptable; what the local requirements for affordable housing are; and can even set requirements on the energy-efficiency levels of new developments.

Last year the two district councils in South Oxfordshire (SODC) and the Vale of White Horse agreed to produce a Joint Local Plan to reduce costs and help the councils meet their ambitious targets for making the two districts carbon neutral.

As you will hopefully have seen by now, we've launched our consultation for a new Joint Local Plan, which focuses on the issues facing both districts and how we might tackle them. The plan also gives us an opportunity to set out ways we can address the climate emergency and enhance our natural environment, which both councils have committed to.

We're really keen to increase how many people get the opportunity to take part in the Local Plan, especially those who have never previously engaged with the process, and so we're trialling [an innovative new, digital approach to this consultation](#). This allows users to explore some engaging interactive online content related to the Local Plan and answer quick and easy questions about what they think the key issues are that we should tackle.

You can find out more on our [South Oxfordshire Joint Local Plan page](#) / [Vale of White Horse Joint Local Page plan](#)

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Homes for Ukraine

As you can imagine over the last couple of months the Oxfordshire system of councils have been extremely busy responding to the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This new scheme has required local authorities to create new approaches, functions, and processes to ensure new arrivals can settle in our communities and it has not been without complications.

However, we have been able to apply learnings from the Covid response to undertake accommodation and safeguarding checks at speed, make the £200 payments to new arrivals in good time and create the process for making the £350 thank you payments to hosts. School places and GP registrations are progressing well notwithstanding the additional pressures.

We've just appointed two new Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) who will work with Asylum Welcome and help community groups to support Ukrainian guests who are settling in households across our districts. Our CLOs will provide information, advice and guidance and liaise with local authority support teams across Oxfordshire, to build a support framework for refugees that need it.

I want to take a moment to thank members of the community (both hosts and those supporting them) for the incredible community support networks created to welcome new arrivals. I feel immense pride to represent such generous and welcoming community.

Please remember you can call our **community hub** with any issues you may experience, or contact me if I need to escalate matters.

- **South helpline:** +44 1235 422600 / 01235 422600 (press option one). Opening hours: 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am-4.30pm Fridays, Closed weekends and bank holidays.

Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

District Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Goring Church of England Primary School

Introduction

The past year has presented the school with many challenges and opportunities. In addition to the pressing issues created by the Covid pandemic – some of which are ongoing – we have had to address the impact of further real-terms cuts in funding, rising costs, and a significant reduction in pupil numbers. However, despite these challenges, the school has benefited from many enhancements and improvements, and continues to thrive and offer the children in our community an enriching and engaging education.

This report briefly sets out the challenges the school has faced over the past year, the many positives we have experienced, and some of our plans for the coming year.

Covid recovery

When all children were welcomed back to school after the second lockdown in the spring of 2021, the staff embraced the challenge of reinstating the usual school routines and resuming teaching and learning among a cohort who were profoundly affected by the pandemic. During lockdown, live lessons using Teams and the use of online resources enabled staff to make daily contact with those children learning remotely, but inevitably experiences differed widely and extra support measures were required for some of our vulnerable families. With school reopening for all pupils, detailed assessments and the implementation of tailored interventions helped individual children adjust to the return to the classroom. Happily, progress across the school has been excellent, and staff and governors have been so impressed by the resilience of the children and how they have embraced being back among their friends and ready to learn. The past year has also seen the introduction of a revised curriculum that emphasises the importance of developing the depth of children's learning and offers a huge breadth of topics.

The return to 'normality', however, has been gradual. All classes have been affected by cases of Covid, inevitably disrupting learning and resulting in changes to planned activities such as the Christmas performances. School trips have been limited throughout the current school year, although we were delighted that the year 6 residential visit to Osmington Bay went ahead in March, and there are more trips organised for the summer term. Likewise, many sporting activities have resumed throughout the year, with success in inter-school competitions, and new opportunities such as boccia and real tennis.

Many of our extra-curricular clubs have also resumed, such as running club, newspaper club, choir and orchestra, gardening club and the multi-sports clubs. Energy Kidz – the provider of our breakfast and after-school club – ran their first holiday club at Goring Primary School during the Easter holidays, and we are hopeful that the success of this will mean that more holiday clubs will be offered in the future.

Funding and pupil numbers

As with many schools in the UK, funding has been a challenge for Goring Primary School for a number of years. With a prolonged period of low per-pupil funding, we are now facing further constraints in the form of rising costs and a dip in pupil numbers, making balancing the budget a very significant challenge. While we have benefited in recent years from investment by the Diocese of Oxford in the school buildings, the funding stream relating to the operation of the school (staffing costs, utilities, teaching resources, etc) has been squeezed to such an extent that we rely on the generosity of the PTFA (Parents, Friends and Teachers Association) and other charitable organisations to meet many of the day-to-day expenses, such as buying reading books and Forest School provision. From a governance point of view, one impact of these budgetary

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constraints is that they hamper the ability to develop ambitious, long-term strategies. For example, in exploring the possibility of opening a nursery class given concerns about the lack of pre-school provision in Goring, the governors decided in autumn 2021 that this would not be a viable strategy at the current time. It was concluded that the very low per-child Early Years funding and competition from local nurseries would result in too great a financial risk.

A key factor affecting our revenue stream is the reduction in pupil numbers. Our reception cohorts in 2012 and 2013 were 50 and 40 children respectively, with the Local Authority asking us to take a number of out-of-catchment children due to the pressure on places across the county. In 2021 the reception class numbered 15. One reason for this dramatic shift is a drop in the birth rate – many local schools are experiencing a similar trend, and indeed this was a key factor in the closure of Goring & Cleeve Pre-school; however, Goring is particularly vulnerable to this shift due to the lack of affordable housing for young families, as well as competition from the independent sector. The impact on funding in 2021 was such that the Senior Leadership Team and governors concluded that a degree of restructuring was required, reducing the number of classes from seven to six, with mixed-year classes from reception to year 3 from September 2021. Applications for the September 2022 reception class suggest a partial recovery, but forecasts indicate that, on the whole, numbers are declining in the short term. This may have further implications for the structure of the school if per-pupil funding remains at its current level. It should be noted, however, that the new structure has brought certain benefits. In the spring term this year we had two external visits – one from the Diocesan Adviser and the other from the Local Authority School Improvement Partner, both of whom reported on the high quality of the mixed-year-group teaching and learning. In addition, we now have new class names which give each class their own identity:

Greenfinch

Owl

Robin

Ibis

Nightingale

Goldcrest

A further impact on funding has been the cancellation of many key fundraising events during the pandemic. Despite this, the PTFA and event sub-committees showed remarkable innovation in their determination to find alternative ways to raise money, such as the 'Movember Challenge' in November 2020 and the '10k Your Way' in March 2021. However, we have been delighted to see the return of the big community fundraisers over the past year, such as the Craft Fair in the autumn of 2021, followed by the Goring 10k in March, and Hairy Legs just a couple of weeks ago – all of which were fantastic events. We are looking forward to a successful summer fête at school on Saturday 18th June, and hope that this is an enjoyable (and sunny) afternoon for the whole local community.

Enhancing the school building and learning resources

Spring 2021 saw the completion of the latest round of structural refurbishments to the main school building, with floor, window and door replacements and the installation of new steel supports in the school hall. This was a major project over several months, being 90%-funded by the Schools Capital Allowance (a capital funding programme devolved to the Diocese and Local Authority) – we have been fortunate to have received around £500k over the past five years for such structural work. The next phase of window replacement (also a major undertaking due to the construction of the building) is due to begin shortly.

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Another significant addition to the school is the new library. We recognise the transformative impact that being a confident reader can have on a child's learning, with research showing how reading for pleasure is vital for academic success, mental health and even later economic success. With its official opening in June 2021, the library is stocked with a fantastic selection of books, providing a bright and engaging space for the children to relax, learn and, most importantly, develop a lifelong love of reading. This wonderful resource was made possible by the incredible fundraising efforts of our PTFA.



Space Makers contemplation practices and mental health

Before the pandemic the Diocese of Oxford asked Goring Primary School to pilot a newly developed set of contemplative practices – Space Makers – to help children navigate the world around them in a safe and meditative environment. The children and staff embraced this challenge and Space Makers has become an integral part of the school week for all year groups, providing the children with an opportunity to take time to focus on their wellbeing and their place in the world. This has become particularly relevant in the wake of the pandemic, the effect of which on children's mental health has been well documented. In October 2021, Goldcrest class (year 6) and their teacher, Mrs Toolin, appeared on BBC South Today to talk about the benefits of Space Makers and how it helps them in their day-to-day lives and to prepare for their lives ahead. Goldcrest class are also thrilled to have been invited to present a contemplative workshop at the Goring Gap Festival on Thursday 9th June at St Thomas' Church. [Click here](#) for more information on Space Makers at Goring Primary School.

Space Makers is just one of the many tools that staff at Goring Primary School have at their disposal to promote positive mental health. Already a priority before Covid-19, our curriculum content, pupil Mental Health Ambassadors and regular staff training in this area all help to keep mental health a focus. In addition, a now well-established routine in place across the school is our 'Zones of Regulation' system in which children state during registration whether they are green, blue, yellow or red, depending on how they feel. Yellow or red flags to the teacher that there may be an underlying issue that requires further investigation. In this way children are encouraged to air their feelings and address issues and concerns.

Community volunteers

This report has already made clear how much the PTFA contributes to the school, and we are incredibly grateful to all the parents and other members of the community who raise money and – importantly – offer their time. This year, community volunteers have provided help with reading in the classroom, run extracurricular clubs, ensured a well-stocked kitchen garden, and even created a [new website](#). We very much value our links with the community and would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the school.

The governors of Goring Primary School are of course also volunteers and devote time and skills in fulfilling a range of strategic functions. There will be a number of governor vacancies in the coming months and we are keen to recruit enthusiastic and talented individuals from the local community. For further details please see the '[Governance](#)' page on the school website, or contact Kerry Hughes, Chair of Governors, at governor.kerryhughes@goring.oxon.sch.uk.

Kerry Hughes, Chair of Governors

Genie

Genie, the Gap Electronic News & Information Exchange free community e-newsletter service has provided 111 Village Matters e-newsletters and 48 Public Information e-newsletters since its launch in June 2017 after a small start-up grant from the Goring-on-Thames Parish Council and subsequently supported by periodic grants from local charities.

Run by a few volunteers, the regular newsletter service was able to provide a unique service, putting out vital information to the local community during the pandemic and keeping them up-to-date with the latest government advice and edicts. In addition, there is a Genie Calendar of local events as well as a website with a lot of local information. All of this is completely free and does not have any advertising.

The Genie services are run by a small group (6 individuals) of volunteers and we could really use some **more volunteer help** with technical support, the website and production of the newsletters. If you could give a few hours a month to help support Genie's efforts, please contact us at volunteer@genienews.org.

Genie has some ideas for future features on the website and newsletters, but would need more volunteers to help us – e.g. perhaps produce a local Situations Vacant on the website and increase efforts on the Genie Calendar of Events.

The Genie team would like to thank all those who submit stories, and most importantly to the subscribers who read and share the newsletters. If you haven't yet subscribed, its easy and free to do so - just go to <https://www.genienews.org/subscribe-1/>.

Genie News

Goring Gap News

Due to the hard work and commitment of its magnificent volunteer deliverers, GGN continued to be published and delivered throughout Goring and Streatley during the pandemic. We hope that our readers found this useful, interesting and reassuring at a worrying time. There was some reduction in our surplus funds, but GGN is still in a position to consider making donations towards projects being carried out by local good causes.

In March 2021 we said farewell and thank you to our editor Jennifer Bending and our chairman Paul Bradstock OBE, on their retirement after many years spent working for GGN. The new editor Gill Haigh and chairman Jeremy Spring, are grateful for all the encouragement and support they have received from the Gap community in the last year. GGN is evidently regarded with affection and appreciation by many locals. We hope that the number of people contributing articles and photos will continue to grow, so that GGN can continue to reflect our community and the changes that time is bringing to the Gap.

Gill Haigh, Editor, GGN

Goring Gap Local History Society

Goring Gap Local History Society was founded in 1966 to encourage interest in the history of Goring and Streatley and the surrounding area and to record it. The villages lie either side of the Thames at the place where long ago the river forged a passage through the hills, known as the Goring Gap. Goring is in Oxfordshire and Streatley is in West Berkshire.

The Society holds monthly talks in Goring Village Hall on a wide variety of historical topics, and organises outings and social events. Members receive an annual journal. The Society has a significant collection of historical material and photographs which is available for consultation by appointment with the Archivist. Help in obtaining information about the two villages and their inhabitants is always welcome and members are encouraged to undertake research projects. The Society publishes occasional books and leaflets and arranges exhibitions.

In 2021/22 Society activities were limited by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the annual coach outing planned for June postponed. In March 2021, like most other local history organisations, our regular live talks had to cease and we went online. Monthly talks were held on the Zoom platform and chatting to one another in person in the village hall was replaced by a regular email newsletter which included news and a couple of local history tales each time, illustrated by old photos from the Society's archives. Although trips had to be cancelled, Mike Hurst, who organizes the popular Transport History Group, which usually holds an outing each month, made up for the deficit by compiling occasional bulletins that looked back at past events. As we go to a variety of venues that are loosely connected to transport, be it by plane, train, car or boat, he had a few years' worth of trips to describe, accompanied by background material on places visited. Luckily plenty of photographs were available, which Mike was able to use in his newsletters to give the former travellers a trip down memory lane.

We recommenced face to face meetings in Goring Village Hall in September and a good turnout of members enjoyed three live talks. Alas the Covid Omicron variant scuppered our Christmas event when there were plans to serve mince pies and hot punch after the talk on Charles Dickens and this took place on Zoom.

During the respite in Covid lockdowns we had an outing in the autumn, with about 25 members venturing on the (virtually empty) train at Goring to visit Didcot Railway Centre. Led by Transport History Group Co-ordinator Mike Hurst, who has been a volunteer at the centre for many years, they toured the outdoor site and were treated to a visit around the workshops. Everyone agreed how good it had been to participate in such an event again.

A spike in Covid cases locally meant that our January talk reverted to Zoom. but since then the monthly sessions have been in person, with good attendances. In late April Transport History Group members went by coach to Southampton where they took to the seas on a boat trip around the Solent which was much enjoyed.

The Society will be celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with an exhibition in Goring Community Centre from 3-4 June on Life in the Fifties. This will also be part of the Goring Gap Festival which is taking place that same week.

Then it will be time for the AGM in July and hopefully the start of a more normal year of activities.

Janet Hurst, Secretary

www.goringgaphistory.org.uk

Goring on Thames in Bloom

Goring-on-Thames in Bloom was formed by volunteers in 2007 to provide and maintain hanging baskets on the river bridges between Goring and Streatley.

It entered the RHS Britain in Bloom competition in the Thames & Chiltern Region for the first time in 2012. That year Goring held a two-day series of events to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and provided themed floral displays throughout the village. Hanging baskets lined the route of the longest street party in the country. Goring-on-Thames Bloom was awarded the Regional prize for the Best Celebration of the Queen's Jubilee and a silver medal for overall achievement.

Since 2012 Goring-on-Thames in Bloom has extended its activities and volunteer base, working with other local bodies such as the primary school, Withymead Nature Reserve and businesses. It has fund-raised to buy large containers filled with colourful planting year-round throughout the village. It started a campaign to brighten up neglected areas, some of which were owned by utilities or public bodies, and has transformed weed-infested plots into beds with sustainable planting that are wildlife friendly.

Goring-on-Thames in Bloom is entirely self-funded and run by volunteers. It raises money through grants, plant sales and donations. It has won one silver, one silver gilt and five gold awards in the Thames & Chilterns Region in Bloom Competition. Other accolades include: Best in Small Town Category twice; Mark Mattock cup for the Best School entry; Regional awards for Pride of Place; Most Clean and Tidy; Best Community Involvement; and Conservation and Wildlife. In 2019 the group was nominated for the National Britain in Bloom Competition where it was awarded Gold and the ultimate accolade of Best Small Town in the UK.

Goring-on-Thames in Bloom is run as an unincorporated association. The committee consists of Stephanie Bridle (Chairman), Anne Hardwick (Treasurer), Janet Hurst (Secretary) and Ron Bridle (Project Manager). In 2019, to comply with RHS rules, the name was changed from Goring Gap in Bloom to the present one. The group has a pool of around 40 volunteers who work hard to keep the village looking good through floral decorations and environmentally beneficial projects.

Like many other organisations, the Covid-19 pandemic restricted GoTiB's activities but community gardening was never prohibited and so the various projects were kept going as much as possible within the limitations of the rules. In 2020 there were no hanging baskets, but these were reinstated in 2021 with the plants funded by a large donation. Goring Parish Council hired baskets for the High Street. Due attention was paid to Covid-19 precautions. With the support of GWR work continued to complete the planting of the various beds on the railway station and to install an automated watering system on Platform 4 and a large rain water butt on Platform 3. Another butt is due to be installed shortly on Platform 1 to aid watering of the beds in that area.

The RHS Britain in Bloom Competition was suspended in 2019 and in 2020 Thames & Chilterns ran a virtual competition, with submissions online. GoTiB was awarded excellent in the two categories in which it took part. The national competition has been reinstated in 2022 but the judging criteria have been considerably modified, with greater emphasis on environmental responsibility including the state of the public realm, something over which GoTib has no control, this being the responsibility of local councils. We have always opted for sustainable planting which is now preferred by the RHS to old-fashioned bedding out. We have entered the competition, but the

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playing field is very different from when we last took part in 2019. This being the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Year as well as the Gap Festival, the group will do its best to make an attractive environment for both visitors and residents alike. We wish to thank all our supporters and volunteers, without whom our work could not continue.

Janet Hurst, Secretary

Goring & Streatley Versus Arthritis Fundraising Committee

Activities since 2019

Covid-19 brought the cancellation of our popular annual bridge tea (twice). It was heartening that so many of our supporters were kind enough to donate their ticket money.

We kept in touch during the pandemic, although there seemed to be no opportunity for fundraising activities. Then this year Versus Arthritis ran a sponsored knitting challenge. One of our members, Philippa Seymour, took up the challenge despite never having learnt to knit. You Tube showed her how. The result was a magnificent scarf and an even more magnificent £1,165 raised for Versus Arthritis. Well done and thank you Philippa!

We are planning to start up activities again and have a planning meeting scheduled, so look out for our next event, coming soon.

Goring and Streatley Versus Arthritis Committee

Goring & District Community Centre Trust

The Community Centre, in common with many other organisations, suffered from being unable to hire out accommodation during the pandemic. However, we were well supported by both Oxfordshire County Council and the Government, and as a result we have remained solvent. We pay to carry out maintenance/repairs/cleaning and also for organisation of the Lunch Club. All other services are carried out by volunteers.

The formal purpose of our Charity is to assist people, and elderly people in particular. Our main activity is to run the **Lunch Club** for the elderly. This currently takes place on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Clients are collected from and returned to their homes. We buy and collect the lunches from Flint House.

The Community Centre also runs the **Transport Office**, which arranges volunteer drivers to take patients to both the Medical Centre and hospital appointments.

Goring Mobility Equipment is housed in the Community Centre and provides mobility aids to local people, for example wheelchairs, walking frames, commodes etc.

The old school building and old school house in Station Road are leased from Oxfordshire County Council and various rooms are rented in order to provide an income for the Community Centre. These include the Goring Gap News office, the History Society office and the osteopath's consulting room.

In addition, there are three rooms which are available for hire, together with good kitchen facilities. We have several regular bookings, but greater use of the facilities would be desirable.

The Trust is currently seeking more trustees. This is mainly because two of our longest serving trustees have recently retired and we need to replace them. Meetings of the trustees are held four times a year in the Community Centre.

Our volunteers have been severely depleted as a result of the fact we were closed for almost two years because of the pandemic. **We are looking for more drivers** – both for the Transport Office and for the Lunch Club.

The Transport Office, which is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, also **needs** more volunteers. It would be very sad if these services could no longer be provided, but unless more people offer to help, this is a very real possibility.

May Carr, Chairman

Mobility Issues Group for Goring & Streatley – M.I.G.G.S

1 Station Road pedestrian safety

The main activity of MIGGS in the past year in relation to Goring concerns pedestrian safety in Station Road.

We are pleased that the council has listened to our concerns and agreed to improve the safety of pedestrians, including wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs, by introducing a trial pedestrian priority lane (PPL) in Station Road. We look forward to working closely with the council in implementing this. MIGGS has offered up to £3,000 in voluntary contributions towards the cost of any highway consultancy and design work needed.

Public support

The council's decision follows a public consultation in February this year in which 744 Goring residents took part. This established that two out of three people (64 per cent) supported the suspension of parking spaces in preparation for pedestrian safety improvements.

In December 2020 MIGGS had conducted its own, informal survey of residents of Station Road and its adjoining roads. Responses were received from 61 per cent of households. Of these, the number who agreed that "pedestrian safety improvements of some kind are needed in Station Road" exceeded the number who disagree by nearly seven to one.

Evaluation of success

In due course the council must decide the criteria for evaluating the success of the PPL and MIGGS has urged the council to ensure these include asking pedestrians whether they feel safer as a result of the change.

20mph speed limit

MIGGS is also relieved that the council has agreed to implement a 20mph speed limit in Station Road following a survey that showed 17 out of every 20 vehicles using the road already travel below this speed.

2 Croft Road / Station Road junction

MIGGS was disappointed at the council's decision to reverse its earlier agreement to instal a convex mirror at the junction of Station Road and Croft Road, in spite of an offer from MIGGS and a generous supporter to pay the entire cost. This would have improved visibility for users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters who are obliged to approach the junction from Croft Road by riding on the carriageway. However, our disappointment has been relieved to some extent by the apparent decision of OCC highways to interpret its policy flexibly and install a dropped kerb, enabling riders to approach this junction on the pavement.

3 Readibus support

MIGGS continues to provide cash support, jointly with the council, to keep the Goring Readibus service on the road. Readibus is a door-to-door service that takes elderly and mobility impaired residents to Reading to buy goods not available locally, such as personal items of clothing, and keep appointments with banks and personal service businesses based in Reading town centre. MIGGS has supported Readibus annually, including during the Covid-19 pandemic, since cash support was withdrawn in 2013 by Oxfordshire County Council.

4 Assisted travel by train

Since the most recent parish annual meeting, MIGGS has worked with Great Western Railway and others to improve the quality of assisted travel for disabled rail passengers. In recognition of this role, GWR chose to launch its mobile customer assistance scheme, providing origin-to-destination assistance, before an invited audience of public and press at Goring & Streatley station in December 2019.

5 Norman Radley honoured

In August 2019 we arranged, jointly with the council, Goring Gap News, Great Western Railway and Network Rail, to unveil a plaque at the station commemorating fifty years of service to the community by the late Norman Radley. It was at his suggestion, as a member of the committee, that MIGGS lobbied successfully for the installation of the passenger lifts that were opened in 2016.

6 “Accessible by Train” edition 2

In July 2021 MIGGS published a second edition of its “Accessible by Train” leaflet with funding from GWR and the support of the parish council. This leaflet, which has been distributed throughout GWR stations in the Thames valley, encourages disabled and mobility impaired people to take advantage of accessibility features at the station by using it as a gateway to the beautiful countryside that rail passengers otherwise only glimpse on the way through. The leaflet is used on the GWR ticket booking website to promote Goring and Streatley as a leisure destination. One consequence is that new station name boards have been installed with the message, “Alight here for the Ridgeway, Thames Path, Chilterns and North Wessex Downs” [AONBs].

7 Improved leisure opportunities for mobility impaired people

The Accessible by Train leaflet has opened several doors and helped identify improved leisure opportunities for disabled visitors and local disabled people. MIGGS has offered cash support towards the opening of a new, fully accessible right of way leading to the Thames Path behind The Swan at Streatley and is working with the North Wessex Downs AONB to create a route that enables disabled people to take part in its annual walking festival. We are working with Streatley parish council and others to create a safe and accessible pedestrian by-pass at The Bull crossroads.

8 Holmlea Road pavement resurfacing

We are pleased to note that our representations to Oxfordshire highways have borne fruit and that they have agreed to carry out long overdue resurfacing of the pavement in Holmlea Road. They will also install dropped kerbs at both junctions with Croft Road.

9 Planning issues

We continue to monitor progress and make representations on accessibility issues arising from planning decisions, the Goring neighbourhood plan and the SODC local plan, including level thresholds, hard surfaces and gentle gradients with resting places for wheelchair users. Three of the seven members of the MIGGS committee are regular users of wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

10 Wallingford Road pavement upgrade completed

We are pleased to be able to draw a line under the saga of Wallingford Road pavement. Our representations, made with the help of parish and county councillors, ensured that Network Rail removed a hazardous and ineffective safety barrier, widened the pavement by an average of 400mm and reconstructed the railway boundary fence in March 2019. OCC highways was then persuaded to complete the upgrade in August 2020 by re-surfacing the pavement from the railway bridge to station entrance.

11 High Street traffic calming

MIGGS gave wholehearted support to the traffic calming measures in High Street championed by Cllr David Brooker and completed in January 2021. MIGGS proposed the pavement widening at the High Street end of the Wheel Orchard path and lobbied members of the public to show support in the formal consultation on the scheme. We are pleased to note that it is working as intended, in the sense that pedestrians feel much safer crossing this busy road.

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12 Pavement hazards

We continue to take action where and when we can against pavement obstructions, such as waste bins, parked vehicles and carelessly located advertising “A” boards; and to petition for repairs to potholes that represent hazards to pedestrians, loose kerb setts and uneven surfaces that could topple a wheelchair and its passenger.

13 Goring surgery

We have persuaded the surgery to install handrails in public areas and are hopeful of success in persuading them to improve wheelchair access.

We have not given up our attempts to have automatic internal doors installed inside the surgery (and at the main station waiting room entrance and exit).

14 MIGGS committee

Members of the MIGGS committee are: John Boler (chairman) and Maureen Witcher (treasurer) plus Briony Cooke, Bob Gregory, Dr Rhys Hamilton, Angie Tomlinson and Frank Tomlinson.



The initial meeting with Network Rail and First Great Western representatives to discuss lifts and other accessibility improvements at the station, on 8 July 2013.

Going Forward Buses CIC

Apart from a three month suspension at the start of the lockdown, Going Forward Buses CIC has continued operating throughout the pandemic with services gradually increasing as restrictions eased. We are currently running five days a week, Mondays to Fridays, with a second bus on Tuesdays to Fridays. This enables us to run six return journeys every day on our 'core route', the 134 Goring to Wallingford service. Going Forward Buses took over running this service over five years ago in January 2017, but before that the service ran for nearly another five years under the auspices of GoRide CIC, so June 2022 marks 10 years of the service in its current form.

Our second bus also starts in Goring but runs to different destinations depending on the day of the week! On Tuesdays we run to Reading via Streatley, Basildon and Beale Wildlife Parks, Whitchurch Hill and Caversham. On Wednesdays we run to Didcot via Dorchester village and Long Wittenham. On Thursdays we run to Henley via Stoke Row and Sonning Common. On Fridays we run to Watlington via Ewelme, and Berinsfield via Dorchester. The use of the second bus means on these days we can also run a limited service on route 133 – Goring to Wallingford via Streatley and Moulsoford. We did run a Saturday service for two months on our Goring to Wallingford and Didcot routes but driver availability became an issue, and numbers using it were not great, so we had to discontinue it in April 2022.

Passenger numbers have risen but are still nowhere near pre-covid levels on most of our routes. This means the future is uncertain and continuation of the service will depend on the level of support we get from Oxfordshire County Council. The scheme for reimbursing Concessionary Pass journeys changed from April 1st, beginning with reimbursement at near pre-covid levels, reducing every two months until it matches the actual number of journeys recorded. Whilst this is relatively good news for the first few months, it seems very likely to cause us severe problems by the time we get to late summer/autumn. Furthermore, our fuel costs are now up by well over 50% in the past year, yet there is no additional income to cover that. It looks like it will be a very precarious situation.

In the meantime while we're still going(!) perhaps you'd like to know more about what we need to do 'behind the scenes' to keep the buses running? We'd love to hear from you, whether it's helping us keep the timetables up to date at our bus stops, or keeping track of the mileage our buses do, or helping work out our monthly claims to the councils for Concessionary Pass journeys, for example. Or maybe investigating potential additional sources of funding to help us keep going. There's plenty to do! Maybe you'd be interested in a part time job? Please email me with your interests for more information. And of course we always welcome anyone who'd like to join our team of volunteer drivers who help out when our paid drivers aren't available. It's definitely time we had some lady drivers! You just need 'D1' on your licence to drive our 14 seater minibuses.

Mike Ward

Managing Director Goring Forward Buses CIC

Website: goingforwardbuses.com

Email: littlebluebus@yahoo.com Telephone for bus service enquiries: 07484 605888

Goring Cricket Club

2021 Season Review

2021 was a season of mixed success and availabilities, however despite some challenging moments for our Saturday XI we comfortably retained our place in the Premier Division of the Berkshire Cricket League. We were also close to glory in the midweek T20 league, finishing joint 2nd and rueing a missed opportunity against the league winners Moreton in a crucial clash at their ground.

Perhaps most pleasing was the success of our newly formed Development Squad. This was put in place to give our Academy graduates the opportunity to transition from the academy to senior cricket in a supported fashion. A large number of this squad, aged 14 to 16, obtained valuable experience in senior matches in 2021 and many became a mainstay of our successful Sunday side.

Rhys Tong-Jones picked up the award for Clubman of the Year after expertly taking on the role of both Saturday and Sunday captain. Johann Toerien was chosen as the 1st XI player of the year thanks to his excellent contributions with both bat and ball.

Sunday player of the year was Will Slade who was amongst the most improved players in 2021, playing some key innings and taking numerous dismissals as keeper. Danny Tottman won the Young Player of the Year Award in what was a very tough category to choose a winner due to the strength of various candidates, however his 25 wickets at an average of 18 was an impressive haul in his first season.

Alfie Gammer-Flitcroft had his breakthrough season with the ball and after securing a place in the 1st XI he went on to have a number of fantastic performances and was the clear winner of Bowler of the Year. Taking 37 wickets at an average of just 17.7, including a 5 wicket haul in a league match was very impressive.

Taking home a plethora of awards – T20 player of the year, Batsman of the year and Cricketer of the year – was George Taylor. The maverick had an incredible season and on many occasions played a huge influence to secure victories for GCC. George outscored every other player by over 500, scoring a total of 1,114 runs, including two centuries. Those of you who had the pleasure of watching him bat at the Gardiner will have seen a very clean, huge and quick hitter of the cricket ball – there is never a dull moment when he is at the crease!

At Goring Cricket Club we are excited about the future and want to get as many of the local and surrounding community involved in cricket at Goring as possible, whether that is a player, supporter, or official. We offer opportunities for all ages and skills, so please contact gcc@goringcricketclub.com if you are interested in joining or would like more information.



Jonny Russell
Chairman

Goring Cricket Academy

2021 Season Review – Academy going from strength to strength



The provision of leisure, and in particular sporting opportunities, for children is more important than ever right now. The phenomenal and fantastic growth seen in recent years at, for example, the Goring Robins Football Club and the Tennis Club is matched within the Goring Cricket Academy too. Children playing and enjoying sport locally - and outside - can't be a bad thing for their health and wellbeing.

The Academy provides cricket coaching and matches from age 4 to 15. Starting with the ECB AllStars program up to school year 2, players progress into the U9s, U11s and then U13s. U15 players are then currently invited to play senior level cricket. Players of any gender play in Academy teams – we also have a girls-only squad, if preferred.

Last season, we had around 250 players in The Academy. We use professional cricket coaches from the brilliant Performance Cricket, with extra support from parents. Safety, inclusivity and fun are our primary goals (very closely followed by learning and honing technique and applying *The Spirit Of Cricket* ethos) and as such, training group sizes have had to be limited since we only have two net lanes. Unfortunately, we have a long waiting list to join The Goring Cricket Academy.

Whilst we are certainly more about the “taking part” as opposed to winning, we have had our fair share of successes too. As GGN back-page readers may have seen, our U11s played 18 games and won all 18 last year. This 100% win rate has never happened before - and included multiple games against Henley CC, who were crowned Berkshire county champions last season in this age group.

The Goring Cricket Academy is affiliated to the Oxfordshire Cricket Board (OCB). At the end of each season we propose players to join the OCB Pathway system which ultimately selects players to represent the county the following season. In 2021, we had 13 Goring players selected to play for Oxfordshire – seven boys and six girls. Five of these Goring/Oxfordshire players picked up a total of seven awards at the OCB end of season ceremony, including Oxfordshire U10 boys Batsman of the Year, U11 girls Bowler of the Year and U10 boys Player of the Year.

During 2022, we expect to field at least 10 Academy teams. We started the year with indoor nets and begin our outside training after the Easter holidays; the Gardiner Recreation Ground is known to be one of the most-picturesque cricket locations and have the one of the best-kept wickets in the area. The Academy is providing a bright future for the wider Goring Cricket Club as we approach our 150th anniversary in just four years' time!

Andy Ankerson
Head of Academy

Goring United Football Club

Introduction to GUF

Goring United FC was established in 1901, following the merger of two local sides and since then the club has always fielded at least one adult football team. The club currently has five teams: two men's Saturday teams, two women's teams and a men's Sunday team. In recent years the club has really developed and flourished, moving up from two teams to five, as we introduced women's adult football to the village and restarted the men's Sunday side.



In 2020 the club had the prestigious honour of being voted the Oxfordshire FA's club of the year, which is undoubtedly one of the club's biggest achievements. The club was given the award following a stand-out year both on and off the pitch. We were noted for raising over £5,000 for charity with our memorial match for PC Andrew Harper, who so tragically died whilst on duty. We were also commended for our volunteer work within the community during the pandemic. We created several care packages for those in need and distributed leaflets on behalf of GPC, to all households in Goring and Streatley.

The club is made up of purely volunteers, who selflessly give up their free time to run the club. The majority of the players come from the local Goring area and many have played for the club for several years now. We have strong connections with the Goring Robins and ensure there is a pathway from youth football to adult football between the two clubs. In addition, there are also three Goring Vets sides who many ex-Goring United players now play for. With such strong links between the three clubs, between us we provide football for locals from the age of 5 right through to over 60s.

Here is a selection of team pictures from our archives. We are very proud to have been fielding Goring teams for over 120 years now:



For the full history of the club, you can visit a designated page on our club website:

<https://www.goringunitedfc.co.uk/clubinfo/Club-history>

2021-22 season review

After a stop start two seasons, where we worked very hard and adapted to playing through the pandemic, Goring United finally enjoyed a full and uninterrupted season from September through to the end of April. This season saw us introduce a new team, as we successfully established a women's reserve team, taking us up to five teams in total. We were able to play more matches as a club than ever before and have enjoyed a successful season.

Last season the men's first team were promoted from division 2 of the Thames Valley Premier League and enjoyed a solid first season in division 1 this season. Tim Monk again led the team, with assistance from Mark Canning. The team secured a mid-table finish, which was a good achievement given that it is the team's first time in this division for over ten years. Dan Wallace was the team's top scorer with 18 goals. Dan made the step up from the Goring Robins a few years back and he is a great example of a player moving from the Robins to the adult teams.

The men's reserve team were again in division 3 of the TVPL, with managers Mark Sachse and John Ramsay continuing. The team also ended up with a solid position in the middle of the table, with Alex Halsey and Chris Allan finishing the season as the team's joint top scorers.

The men's Sunday team were promoted from division 3 of the Reading & District Sunday League last summer and enjoyed a very successful season in division 2. The team worked tirelessly throughout the season and ended up winning the league on the final game of the season. They only lost one league match all season, often fighting back from behind to secure wins. Dan Wallace led the scoring charts, with an unbelievable 31 goals in total. The team also made it all the way to the final of the Oxfordshire County Cup and put in a great display in the final, but sadly lost out 5-3 to an impressive Tackley United side.

Following their title win in the previous season, the women's first team were promoted to division 3 south of the Thames Valley Counties Women's League. It was another very strong season for the team, with Iestyn Llewellyn and Colin Williams again at the helm. They impressed throughout the season and welcomed some new signings to the team, who slotted in very quickly, helping the team finish the season as runners-up in the league. The team also enjoyed a strong cup run in the Oxfordshire County Cup, making it all the way to the semi-finals beating several sides from higher divisions along the way. Team captain Harriet Paynter again finished the season as top scorer with 25 goals.

The newly formed women's reserve team entered the development division of the TVCWFL and welcomed many new faces to the fold, including several young Goring Robins players who made the step up to adult football. Managers Nick Galer and Matt Wibberley have done a great job bringing the team together and they have developed throughout the season putting in some great performances, particularly towards the end of the season.

We are lucky to have created many long-standing partnerships with local businesses, who sponsor and support us year on year: Warmingham Estate Agents, Goring Social Club, DE Garden Services, GreenHigh Landscapes, HJ Denison Plumbing & Heating, The Village Cafe, The Miller of Mansfield, HR Central Limited, Tailor Made Builders and DJ Scott Electrical. Our yearly running costs are such that we'd simply cease to exist as a club without their support, so we are very thankful for all that they do. Pictured below are our five squads from the 2021-22 season:

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Looking ahead

The basic aim for Goring United as a club is to continue to provide adult football for men and women aged 16 and above. We pride ourselves on being a local club and at the heart of the community and plan to remain so for many years ahead. The recent pandemic taught us that sport remains an invaluable outlet for so many local people, allowing them to feel the enjoyment, team spirit and ultimate escapism that sport provides. Next season we will again be looking to field five teams and they will all be looking to build on the success of recent seasons.

Next season the teams will again be playing on our two local football sites, the Gardiner recreation ground, where a Goring team has played since the club's start in 1901 and the Sheepcot recreation ground, which we share with the Goring Robins teams. The Gardiner pavilion was refurbished in 2017 and has provided much improved facilities for the football club, as well as the cricket and bowls clubs with whom we share it. The Sheepcot pavilion remains a working facility, but ultimately it does need refurbishment, or a replacement facility created, as it doesn't meet the needs of the local sports clubs that use it. A new upgraded facility at Sheepcot could be done in such a way so as to cater for the needs of not just the Goring football clubs, but the tennis club too, as well as other sports clubs who have a desire to use Sheepcot rec in the future.

Thanks to local superstar James Forder, the pitches at Sheepcot rec have been vastly improved. With the support of the GPC, James has managed to create some of the best local football pitches in the area. They will only improve further in time now that we have the necessary machinery and a development plan in place. The aim going forward is to also look to improve the playing surface at Gardiner rec bringing it up to the same high standard as the Sheepcot pitches. The quality of the pitches ensures we continue to attract local footballers to play for the village teams, rather than look elsewhere. It also enables us to have a better

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level of football played and raises the enjoyment factor further still. The mid to long term plan is to continue to work closely with the GPC and other local sports clubs to improve the facilities available at Sheepcot rec and to improve the playing surface at Gardiner rec.

We pride ourselves on the connection and pathway that we provide from youth football in the Goring Robins to adult football in Goring United. This connection will undoubtedly only grow stronger in the coming years, ensuring that local boys and girls, men and women, of all ages, can continue to play the sport that they love within their local community. Pictured below are our championship winning teams from recent years, along with our recent awards:



Alex Fletcher
Chairman, Goring United FC