

GORING-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Annual Meeting

Bellême Room, Village Hall, Goring on Monday 8th April 2019 at 7.00pm

All residents of the village are invited to attend

AGENDA

1. Chairman's welcome
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2018
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

Kevin Bulmer
Chairman
Date: 27 March 2019

MINUTES OF THE GORING ON THAMES PARISH ANNUAL MEETING
Bellême Room, Goring Village Hall 7.00 pm Monday 9 April 2018

Members of the Parish Council Present:

Chairman	Kevin Bulmer (KB)
Vice Chairman	John Wills (JW)
Members	Lawrie Reavill (LR)
	Catherine Hall (CH)
	David Brooker (DB)
	Mary Bulmer (MBu)
	Bryan Urbick (BU)
	Emrhys Barrell (EB)

Officers Present:

Clerk	Colin Ratcliff (CR)
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Approx. 19 members of the public and press

18/1 Chairman's welcome

KB welcomed those present

18/2 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2017

Resolved: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman

18/3 Matters arising from those minutes

None

18/4 Annual Report incorporating District and County Councillor's report and reports from Local Organisations

Copies of all reports appended to the minutes

KB ran through his report with other contributions in the order below:

Chairman's report

Planning report – given by DB

Railway Action Group report – given by Ron Bridle, he hoped that the consultation, which was four years overdue, would possibly take place later this year. There was a RAG meeting due to take place at the end of April.

EB asked about the comment on tinting metalwork – did this mean painting? RB said it was NWR's wording, RAG did not believe it would be effective as the colour depended on viewpoint; maintenance would also be an issue.

Neighbourhood Plan report

MIGGS report – given by John Boler

Goring Gap in Bloom report – given by Stephanie Bridle

Design Guide report – given by CH

Precept

The Rectory Garden

Signed:

Dated:

Trees

Gardiner Recreation Ground and Pavilion

Burial Ground

Going Forward Buses

Readibus

School Lights – Stephanie Bridle asked who would be adjusting them. EB said that GPC was managing the process.

Special Projects

Weir – Jim Emerson asked what the appeal had cost so far. KB stated he did not know off the top of his head but that some had been covered by private donations; the amount would be in the accounts.

County Council report – KB stated the council had been overwhelmed with potholes. The cost to repair all roads to standard would be £450m; OCC's budget is £3m and that the problem needed Government action to resolve properly. As an example, last January 1,700 reports were filed, this January 7,000.

Regarding Carillion he said the immediate effects were mitigated, e.g. school meals, but building works affected were still being assessed.

District Council report

There were no other organisation reports.

18/5

Public Forum

Ned Worsley congratulated GPC on the new website but asked when the back records would all be updated. CR said as soon as practicable but if any item was requested he could supply it. KB said GPC had recently advertised for an Assistant Clerk.

Ron Bridle asked about Strategic Projects: The school and traffic projects were moving but what about the Village Centre?

KB said there were a number of projects relating to the roads and that CIL funding was required to progress. The Village Centre was a longer term project, GPC do not own the centre sites and are taking projects one at a time initially.

Martin Smith asked if any progress had been made on Youth Club funds donated for teenagers' recreation facilities. KB said it was wrapped up with the school NPSP and playground options are still being considered, it had not been forgotten and the funds were ring fenced.

John Boler asked if there was any news on Unitary Councils. KB said there was only speculation and it would possibly come back onto the burner at some point but that depended on Government.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 2045 hrs.

Signed:

Dated:

Abbreviations (where used):

GPC	Goring on Thames Parish Council
MIGGS	Mobility Issues Group for Goring and Streatley
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPSG	Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
NPSP	Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Project
NWR	Network Rail
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
RAG	Railway Action Group
SODC	South Oxfordshire District Council

DRAFT

Signed:

Dated:

GORING-on-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report 2018-19

Minutes 2018

General

The annual meeting is not a meeting of the Parish Council although its hosted by the PC and a statutory requirement.

Views expressed are individuals views including those given by individual PC and do not reflect any formally PC approval and can involves more than one view on particular areas

The Council has nine councillors, David Brooker, Matthew Brown, Mary Bulmer, Kevin Bulmer (Chairman), Catherine Hall, Lawrie Reavill, Bryan Urbick, Debbie Gee and John Wills (Vice-Chairman).

Emrhys Barrell resigned before the end of the term and the council expressed there thanks for his efforts and service.

Mike Ward has joined the team as assistant Clerk, cllr Urbick will give more details in his report.

This Council will come to the end of its final year of a 4-year term in May. A new Council will start after the 2nd May, all current Councillors are standing again.

Report by Cllr Mary Bulmer

Report by Cllr Urbrick

Planning

See report by Cllr Brooker.

RAG

See report Ron Bridle.

Neighbourhood Plan

MIGGs Report

See report by John Boler.

Goring in Bloom

See report by Stephanie Bridle.

District Cllr report

Precept

The Rectory Garden

Cllr Bulmer County Report

Trees

Some routine tree maintenance work was carried out during the year.

Burial Ground

The burial ground continues to be an important and respected part of the village, looked after by our Clerk Colin Ratcliff, Cllr Mary Bulmer and a small team of volunteers helping to keep it litter free and provide some colour in the way of flowers every year.

Going Forward Buses

This is a service organised by Mike Ward and staffed by paid & volunteer drivers. It gone from strength to strength and complements to all involved.

This is a successful community projects and continues to provide vital services to the local area.

<http://www.goingforwardbuses.com/>

Readibus

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

Kevin Bulmer
Chairman Goring On Thames Parish Council

Report on New Play Equipment Proposal Annual Meeting 2019

A scheme has been produced for a new play area on the Gardiner Recreation Ground and is now in the hands of a local architect.

When the plans come back to the PC, there will be a consultation period with local residents and interested parties.

After that the PC will consider any submissions, make any alterations that it considers necessary and then submit the final plans to SODC for planning approval.

It is hoped that this project will be completed sometime in the autumn.

Cllr Mary Bulmer

Get Involved Fair



The Parish Council run Get Involved Fair, held on Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th September 2018, was held and was widely considered to be worthwhile. All participating groups were consulted, with most feeling that the event is worthwhile and the consensus being that it could be run every 18 months or so..

A quick overview:

26 organisations had tables/stalls and presented information to those who attended
7-8 additional organisations displayed material at the Community Table
70+ volunteers represented their organisations
300+ attendees (225-250 on Saturday, 100-110 on Sunday)

There were mixed reviews as to whether it should be a one-day or two-day event, though the attendance would indicate that each day attracted some different demographics.



Though this first Get Involved Fair cost the Council approximately £500 for the hall hire, a further £325 was donated and was spent. If future Councils decide to do this again, a suggested budget of about £1,000 was recommended.

The Council gives a very big 'thanks' to each and every volunteer who represented their organisations, the Goring Village Hall for providing the teas, coffees and cakes, and to those who donated to support the event.

Strategic Project for the School

In the past year, 3 School Governors and 3 Parish Councillors have worked together to explore issues and opportunities for the school, and to find ways to address the needs that the current condition of the school have brought to the fore, and to build a plan to address those needs to strengthen the School for the long-term.. This project was established in response to a parent-led campaign to get a new school (because of the current condition of the buildings).

A feasibility study was commissioned, half funded by the Parish Council and half-funded by the Diocese, to consider the current condition of the school and the potential of the school to redevelop the School on its current site. From this study, there were some options put forward – ranging from repair to some alterations and reconfiguring, to a complete re-build. All options involved considerable cost, so the Governors are concerned about viability.

An outline plan to rebuild the school with a staged approach that would take 8+ years to finalise was put forward to the Governors, who were supportive but concerned as to the ability to fund it. These issues are being worked through, and the project is likely to continue into the next Parish Council.

Gardiner Pavilion

Though the Gardiner Pavilion refurbishment was completed last year, there were significant residual issues with the showers and low water pressure. A plan was approved by the Council to address this issues to invest in the long-term solution to resolve the issue and to ensure that the fluctuating water pressures would not diminish the ability for all the showers to work. This work was successfully carried out.

Consultation on Recurring George Michael Event

The Parish Council was asked by a George Michael fan group to have a 'George Michael birthday weekend' event somewhere in Goring in June 2019. As there have been supporters of this idea, there have also been some concerns raised about this becoming an annual event. The Parish Council determined it was best to consult on the matter prior to making a decision.

Views were sought with an on-line questionnaire, as well as a duplicate of the on-line questionnaire being provided to all homes in Goring-on-Thames parish as well as on-line and at the GPC offices. As well as the questionnaire being delivered to all Goring homes, it was also advertised in the Goring Gap News, the GPC website and Genie. The consultation period was from 14th November 2018 until 5th January 2019.

The residents were split about having such an event – with about 40% supportive and 40% objecting, and 20% neutral. If the event was to support charity/ies, the support exceeded 50%. To disallow an event supporting charity/ies would have been to go against the majority of local residents' views. The frequency, location and structure of the event, though, was considered carefully.

Based on the consultation results the Council agreed:

- GPC allow the fans to conduct an event
 - Within a strict time limit (ie no more than 8-10 hours in a day; no later than 7 or 8pm - TBD)
 - Strict monitoring and limits to noise
 - Coordination of parking, police, etc (organised by the sponsoring fans)
 - Provision of portable toilet facilities (to be provided by the sponsoring fans at their cost)
 - All insurance, licensing, etc to be organised and funded by sponsoring fans
 - All necessary clean-up, repair/'making good' to the field to be guaranteed and funded by the sponsoring fans
 - Not more than biennially (every two years)
- Though initially the thought was to offer the Gardiner Recreation Ground, the Council determined that the Sheepcot field would be more appropriate.

A draft contract was sent to the fan group based on the above, though it was declined.

Conservation Area Appraisal

The Parish Council – via both the now-disbanded Weir Committee and the Planning Committee – have several times requested that South Oxfordshire District Council fulfil their obligation to conduct a formal Conservation Area Appraisal. Initially SODC suggested that the PC self-fund the Appraisal, and quotes were obtained between £12-15,000 – and as a result, an earmarked reserve was set-up to attempt to pay this over a few years.

In the past few months, the appropriate officer at SODC has offered to begin the process, and the PC has put forward some individuals who will work with SODC to get this important appraisal completed. This appraisal will have weight when any planning applications are considered.

Assistant Clerk

Though Goring is classed as a large village, in many ways we are equivalent to a small town. Our administrative responsibilities are also more commensurate with a small town than a large village. We have a Clerk, working approximately 80%, and some hourly work to support keeping the village clean and maintained. The workload on the Clerk was greater than the hours allowed – and even greater than if our Clerk worked 100%. As a result, a part-time Assistant Clerk was appointed, not only to take on some of the workload burden and to support the Planning Committee, but also to be thoroughly trained in all of the Clerk duties so as to have appropriate holiday and sick-leave cover and for succession planning.

Cllr Bryan Urbick
2nd April 2019

Report for Annual Parish Council meeting - 2019

Planning Committee

As reported last year in general terms we have had the usual applications associated with residential property and as previous years the majority of the wrong type. Once again, a high percentage of applications were either for extensions or new build to achieve 4 & 5 bedroom properties. In addition, any new build proposed as two beds have sufficient space to achieve a third bed so the need for one and two bedroom residential units is still not being catered for.

Once again hopefully when the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is adopted it will provide sufficient weight to require the provision of accommodation limited to one and two bedroom to cater for the need of young people to buy or residents wishing to downsize.

Referring to the NP and the provision of Affordable Homes, we are seeking to arrange a meeting with SODC to encourage the building of Affordable to Rent Homes instead of taking money in lieu.

Although we lost the appeals against the planning approval for the Hydro scheme, although not officially confirmed it is believed that the scheme will not go ahead as it is not considered financially viable.

We have included a new agenda item for planning meetings which is to cover the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is money required to be paid for certain developments, large new build, which goes to SODC but which pre-NP we get 15% but when NP adopted I believe 25%. We are owed money from SODC but have not received any to date but are chasing.

David Brooker
Chair of Planning Committee

Rail Electrification in the Goring Gap

Update for Goring Annual Parish Report 2019

2018 has seen the continuation of the evaluation undertaken by Network Rail to review the impact of the electrification works on the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. For this project they have used Balfour Beatty to conduct analysis on the infrastructure and Bill Blackledge of 2B Landscape Consultancy to look at visual impact. Phase 2 was completed in August 2018 and Phase 3, to consider cost implications, was initiated shortly after; this was due to be completed by March 2019, but has not been forthcoming yet.

At a meeting in Sept 2018 of the Design Advisory Group (Chilterns Conservation Board, North Wessex Downs Conservation Board, Natural England and other statutory bodies) with Network Rail, to which the Railway Action Group was invited, the conclusions to Phase 2 were shown and discussed. This included consideration of new gantries including T shaped versions and slimmer 'goal post' types, together with proposals to clean up the existing gantries by shortening the uprights and re-locating some of the wires lower down. Painting was also a possibility and there remains the likelihood of screening and planting at strategic locations to reduce the visual impact on some of the iconic Chilterns views. However, there was a warning that the way money is allocated to Network Rail was changing from April 2019 and that all future projects and initiatives (as opposed to routine operations and maintenance) would only be allocated by the Dept for Transport on a discretionary basis. This, together with the disbanding of the electrification team during 2019 as the electrification programme in this area reaches an end, means that funds and resources to implement any agreed modifications to the infrastructure will be placed at risk.

In terms of the overall progress of the electrification of the Great Western Railway through this area, the section between Didcot and Swindon was completed and opened in November 2018, the section to Bristol in early 2019, with the full route to Cardiff due to be finished by end 2019. In July last year the government announced the planned upgrade of the line between Cardiff and Swansea had been scrapped altogether, and there has been no update on the proposed electrification of lines to Oxford, Bath and Bristol, which were "deferred" in 2016 following rising costs.

Progress on the Goring Neighbourhood Plan since the last AGM

The Final version of the Neighbourhood Plan was completed in April last year. At the time of the previous AGM it was expected that the final formal public consultation and the subsequent independent examination would be completed in the middle of the summer with a referendum in Autumn. However there have been a number of delays, outside the control of the Parish Council and Steering Group, that have hindered progress.

However, on Friday 29/03/2019, the council received a confidential, draft, 'fact checking' version of the examiners report. SODC have requested that we check the facts in the report and return it to them by the 12th April. They will combine any comments we have with their comments and forward them to the examiner, who will review them and formally issue his report.

This report explains the activities undertaken and the delays encountered during the year.

Strategic Projects and Actions

The Plan contains a number of strategic projects and actions. While the Plan has not yet been formally adopted, we are pleased to note that it has already catalysed activity and progress in a number of areas:

1. The NP Strategic Project for Goring CE Primary School is making progress on the potential refurbishment / renewal of the school.
2. The NP Strategic Project for traffic management, parking and pedestrian safety in the village centre has started to make an impact on safety in the village centre.
3. SODC have committed to undertaking an appraisal for the Goring Conservation Area and have started the process.

Submission of the Plan to SODC

The final version of the Goring Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to SODC in early April 2018. It should be noted that once the Regulation 16 version of the Plan had been submitted to SODC its contents could not be changed by the Parish Council or the Steering Group.

Final public consultation

SODC published the Plan on the 26th April and the second formal public consultation, known as the Regulation 16 Consultation, was initiated and managed by SODC. The consultation period was six weeks, ending in June 2018.

Plan examination

During the consultation, SODC appointed an independent government examiner, Mr Timothy Jones, Barrister, FCI Arb.

Mr Jones formally commenced his examination on completion of the Regulation 16 consultation in late June 2018. Before starting the examination, Mr Jones had confirmed to SODC that he expected to complete the examination by the end of July 2018, which could have supported a village referendum in September or October 2018. There have been a number of delays but is now in its final document production stage.

It is important to note that the independent examination was commissioned by SODC and that the Parish Council and Steering Group did not have any relationship or direct communication with the examiner. All GPC / SG communications with the examiner were via SODC and published by them on their web site. Neither the Parish Council nor the steering group, nor for that matter SODC, have attempted to influence the outcome of the examination, except through the formal consultations initiated by the examiner, the contents of which have been published on the SODC web site.

Purpose of the examination

The principal purpose of the examination is to consider whether the Goring Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) meets the government-defined basic conditions for an acceptable neighbourhood plan. These are that:

- (1) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the NDP;
- (2) the making of the NDP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- (3) the making of the NDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of SODC (or any part of that area);
- (4) the making of the NDP does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and
- (5) The making of the NDP is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

The examiner is also required to consider whether the NDP is compatible with Convention rights as defined in the Human Rights Act 1998; whether the NDP complies with the provisions made by or under sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; and (in certain circumstances) whether the area for any referendum should extend beyond the neighbourhood area to which the NDP relates.

Output from the examination

At the end of the examination Mr Jones is required to produce a report covering the above, identifying any changes he requires to the Plan. He must send the report to GPC and SODC. SODC must then publish the report.

Public Hearing

Having reviewed the Plan and the Regulation 16 Consultation responses, Mr Jones issued a set of guidance and directions, in which he stated that he had determined that a public hearing was not required for most of the NDP, but was required for the following issues only:

- (1) Whether the number of dwellings (94) in policy 01 [NDP page 35] is appropriate;
- (2) Whether the allocation of the sites specified in policy 01 is appropriate;
- (3) How many dwellings are likely to be delivered on the sites specified in policy 01 on or before 31st March 2033; and
- (4) Whether any other site considered in the NDP process should be allocated for housing.

The hearing was held on Wednesday 11th July 2018 in Goring Village Hall. A number of residents, landowners and consultants asked in advance to speak at the hearing, all were accepted by Mr Jones and offered the opportunity to speak on the above considerations. Two members of the GPC steering group also attended and spoke, as did two attendees from SODC. The consultation lasted for most of the day, concluding with a number of accompanied site visits by Mr Jones.

Issues and delays

A number of issues and delays arose during, and after, the hearing, which resulted in a significant delay to the conclusion of the examination.

EU Habitats Directive Assessment. At the close of the hearing Mr Jones announced that progress on the examination would be delayed due to a need for SODC to repeat the EU Habitats Directive Assessment. SODC had previously commissioned and undertaken this assessment for Goring but a recent European Court ruling, which impacted a number of the neighbourhood plans nationally, meant that the assessment had to be repeated using a slightly different assessment process.

Revision of the NPPF. Mr Jones also announced that during this delay he would undertake a further consultation giving the opportunity to comment on the effect of any substantial change in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was due to be published by 24th July 2018. This was formally announced in the examiner's supplementary directions 2 and allowed submissions until Thursday 23rd August 2018.

Information Commissioner Decision. In September, following a decision by the Information Commissioner, the examiner made a provisional conclusion that he ought to consider and consult on a further set of documents and initiated a set of consultations, issuing supplementary directions 3, 4 and 5. These consultations closed on Wednesday 21st November 2018.

SODC Local Plan Publication Version (2034). On 13th December 2018, a draft South Oxfordshire Local Plan Publication Version (2034) was published. It should be noted this is an emerging plan, and the development plan to which basic condition (e) applies is the adopted development plan, not the emerging one. However, the examiner concluded that the reasoning and evidence informing the emerging local plan process may be relevant, and that an opportunity should be given to comment on any changes the emerging Local Plan introduced. He initiated supplementary directions 6, announcing a further consultation until Monday 7th January 2019.

Receipt of final report and scheduling of Referendum.

The council received a confidential, draft, 'fact checking' version of the examiner's report on 29/03/2109. The contents of the report are embargoed until the final report is received from the examiner.

SODC have requested that we check the facts in the report and return it to them by the 12th April. They will combine any comments we have with their comments and forward them to the examiner, who will review them and formally issue his report.

Once the final examiner's report has been received SODC will publish it on their website. It will also be published on the Plan website. Physical copies will be available in the Parish Council offices and the library.

Once SODC have received the final report they have five weeks review its conclusions and decide whether to accept the revisions to the Plan and put it to referendum in the village. Assuming there are no further delays to the conclusion of the examination, and SODC do accept the changes, the Plan document will be revised to incorporate the changes required by the examiner, the Plan will be published and the date of the referendum announced, likely to be mid to late June this year.

Should SODC not make a decision within the 5-week period, or not accept all the examiner's recommendations, or modifies the plan in a way that was not recommended by the examiner, the Parish Council have the right to request the Secretary of State to intervene.

The Referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures similar to those used at local government elections. The referendum will be announced, managed and tallied by SODC in the same way as any public election or referendum. Any person registered to vote in local elections in the Parish will be entitled to vote.

The question that will be asked will probably be:

“Do you want South Oxfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Goring to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

If more people vote ‘yes’ than ‘no’ in the Referendum, then South Oxfordshire District Council will be obliged to use the Goring Neighbourhood Development Plan to help it to decide planning applications within Goring i.e. development in the village will be protected by the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, will then become part of the Development Plan used by the Local Planning Authority (South Oxfordshire District Council).

If more people vote ‘no’ than ‘yes’ in this Referendum or there is a tied vote, then planning applications will continue to be decided without reference to the Neighbourhood Development Plan, relying entirely on SODC’s Local Plan i.e. the Neighbourhood Plan will be redundant and will offer the village no protection against unwanted development.

A year of progress – with strong support from the parish council**1 Wallingford Road pavement widening**

In February Network Rail removed the rusty rail crash barrier and replaced and realigned its boundary fence in Wallingford Road. The effect is to widen the pavement to a minimum of 1100mm and up to 1500mm in places. A wheelchair or pushchair can now pass safely between High Street and the station without riding on the carriageway. MIGGS had lobbied for this since July 2013, with strong support from the parish council and local community. The pavement surface has also been made up with concrete and tarmac where soil was exposed by the works, but not yet to full highway standard (see also 3, below).

2 Railway bridge crash barrier alteration

In January OCC highways and Network Rail corrected a design error in the integral crash barrier of the railway bridge. The effect is the removal of a face level hazard to wheelchair users and children in buggies and a 300mm (1ft) widening of the pavement at Goring's busiest road junction. MIGGS had lobbied for this, also with parish council support.

3 Wallingford Road and Gatehampton Road pavement resurfacing

With support from the parish council we are seeking permission from OCC to invite tenders for reinforcement and resurfacing of the uneven and rutted pavement alongside the railway between High Street and the station. An exploratory meeting with OCC was expected to be held on 4 April. It is envisaged that the work will be paid for with £5,000 earmarked by the parish council and £7,000 in voluntary donations from Goring Gap News, the Gatehampton Trust and The Swan at Streatley.

4 Vegetation removal in Wallingford Road

Ancillary to the fence realignment (see 1, above), in February OCC highways contractors cut back the severe overgrowth of vegetation on the east side of Wallingford Road, outside Station House. As a result, the vision splay is much improved for drivers and pedestrians. OCC has a long term plan to rebuild and realign the road at this point and increase the pavement width alongside the railway to the minimum highway standard of 1.8m

5 Additional bollards in High Street, Goring

MIGGS has encouraged and supported the parish council's decision to increase the number of bollards near the High Street shops, with a view to keeping the pavements free of trucks and other parked vehicles and thereby enhancing wheelchair access and pedestrian safety.

6 Tesco bollards, ramp and safety barrier

At the request of MIGGS, OCC highways has twice required Tesco to make alterations to the bollards, ramp and safety barrier on the shop forecourt to make it easier and safer for mobility scooters and wheelchairs to negotiate the crossing of Gatehampton Road.

7 Application for power assisted doors at station booking office

MIGGS has applied for a grant from Great Western Railway (GWR) to finance the fitting of power assisted doors at the street and platform entrances to the station booking office. The outcome of the application is expected to be known in early April.

8 Readibus support

MIGGS and the parish council continue to co-support the Readibus shopping bus service for elderly and mobility impaired passengers. MIGGS has guaranteed its funding to 31 March 2020. Demand fluctuates but most recent journeys have been fully booked.

9 Accessible by Train leaflet

The Accessible by Train leaflet was published by MIGGS in August 2018, with financial support from GWR and the parish council. Content advice was given by National Trails and

the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. It has been widely publicised on the internet and paper copies have been distributed to more than 40 local libraries and 26 Thames valley railway stations. The leaflet exploits the accessibility of the station to attract disabled (and other) visitors to the Goring Gap. Ancillary to this, GWR has agreed to include on station name boards a legend promoting Goring & Streatley station as the place to alight for the Thames path, Ridgeway and the AONBs. National Trails and the AONBs continue to support the initiative via their programmes to improve footpath accessibility.

10 Norman Radley footbridge and lifts dedication

Among Norman Radley's contributions to Goring and Streatley were his membership for several years of the MIGGS committee and chairmanship of both Goring parish council and Goring Gap News. As a joint initiative of MIGGS, GGN, the parish council, GWR and Network Rail a plaque is to be unveiled on the station dedicated as follows: "Celebrating 50 years of service to the Goring community by Norman Radley. His ambition to have passenger lifts at this station was realised in 2016". Norman and his family are reported to be delighted with the initiative. MIGGS continues to lobby GWR and Network Rail to place lifts under local control at all times when trains call at the station.

11 Surgery accessibility

As a result of MIGGS lobbying the surgeries are fitting hand rails in the surgery corridors (currently half way done); also, automatic internal entry doors to the waiting rooms are planned.

12 Pharmacy access

MIGGS has approached the pharmacy, both formally and informally, with a request to keep the side entrance / exit clear of parked vehicles to ensure that wheelchair users have access when needed. Wheelchair access signs have also been suggested. The request has been "passed to head office".

13 Goring village road improvements

MIGGS has provided input to the parish council's plan to improve pedestrian safety in High Street, especially between Cleeve Road and Manor Road. With help from the council MIGGS has also urged OCC to level and resurface Station Road and mark one side as a dedicated pedestrian route, thereby providing some protection from speeding traffic, especially for mobility impaired pedestrians. At the MIGGS AGM last October we recorded an aspiration to have Lock Approach resurfaced for the benefit of wheelchair users and the many visitors who make a bee-line for the river, including those attracted by the Accessible by Train leaflet. Between 17 October 2018 and 21 January 2019 our wish was mysteriously granted - and without our intervention! Thanks to OCC highways (and possibly George Michael fans).

14 Assisted Travel by train

Arising from experience with producing the Accessible by Train leaflet MIGGS has pursued a number of issues with the "Assisted Travel" scheme provided by station and train operators. These include responding to a government consultation on Assisted Travel and engaging with GWR on staff training and various technical and operational constraints, such as train and station staffing levels and platform and threshold gap clearances. The outcome of the official consultation is expected later this year.

15 Get involved fair 29-30 September 2018

MIGGS considered its participation in the Get Involved Fair a success and informed organisers that it would take part in any future such event.

Goring on Thames in Bloom 2019 Annual report to Goring on Thames Parish Council

The committee would like to thank the council for its ongoing financial support which funds the plants for the hanging baskets and the containers throughout the public areas of the village. We were very pleased to win our 4th Gold award in the RHS Thames and Chiltern's Britain in Bloom competition in September with our highest marks ever which gave us the Best in Category award. In addition, we won the 'Pride of Place' award, reflecting the enthusiasm local people show for the appearance of the village.

With this in mind, on 14 February, we were pleased to be involved in the Parish Council's 'Village Audit.' Three of our committee walked around the village with Councillors Urbick, Brooker and Hall and documented where areas are in need of regular maintenance, or one – off repairs, to achieve significant improvements in appearance and safety. It is quite a long list! We look forward to the seeing the results of this work in advance of the arrival of the tourist season and the hanging of the baskets at the end of May.

Goring will be the focus of national attention this year because we have been asked to represent Thames and Chilterns region in the finals of the National RHS Britain in Bloom competition. It is our plan to improve the appearance of the roadside areas by the village 'gateways' and by the lock. We will be visited by the RHS judges in July and August, so all the improvements by ourselves and the council will need to be ready by then.

We mainly use the council's financial support to buy materials for use in the areas for which it is responsible, but we also raise money for our ambitious improvements in other parts of the village by applying for grants and by other fundraising, donations and by growing our own plants. We negotiate with property owners and are currently dealing with Network Rail and Great Western Railway and an international engineering company to achieve even further improvements to green up our predominately grey railway station. Thousands of voluntary man hours go into the work we do. We are pleased to report that the bloom effort is very popular with residents and visitors who regularly express their gratitude to our volunteers. Nationally, statistics show a reduction in vandalism, littering and graffiti wherever Britain in Bloom is active so Blooming Goring is certainly paying its way!

We have several exciting projects that are already underway for the National competition and will involve many extra volunteers from several local groups, including the school. Some of these projects are less about gardening and more about the environment and the community working together and promoting Goring as a wonderful place to live and visit. These are all important aspects to the RHS Britain in Bloom scheme and we are very grateful to RHS for the encouragement they provide.

We hope councillors will enjoy our efforts around the village this year.

Stephanie Bridle

Chair, Goring-on Thames in Bloom

2 April 2019

Goring & South Stoke Annual District Report Councillor Kevin Bulmer 2018-2019

Quick run through of the years events at District

What I've been up to

Apart from my basic councillor duty's I was sitting on a couple of Committees at District. I did Chair the Joint Audit & Governance Committee with a Vale Cllr and also sat on the Licensing Committee.

However I stood down from these when I was appointed to the cabinet as cabinet member responsible for Corporate Services.

Time to choose who represents you on local issues - make sure you're registered to vote in time for the local elections this May

On Thursday 2 May, residents aged 18 and over in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will go to the polls to have their say on who represents them on local issues. People will be asked to vote for a district councillor who will represent their local area and help make decisions on issues such as recycling collections, planning, housing, parking and leisure.

In some areas, residents will also have the opportunity to vote for a town or parish councillor who will represent their communities on issues that affect them, by commenting on planning applications and other proposals, and maintaining community buildings, land, play areas, allotments and cemeteries.

To vote on 2 May you need to be registered by Friday 12 April. Residents not already registered at their current address can do so now at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) or by calling **01235 422528 for a registration form.**

Anybody who is not sure if they are registered to vote can check by emailing elections@southandvale.gov.uk with their name and address or by calling **01235 422528**.

Key dates for this election

- 4 April – details of who you can vote for published
- 12 April – deadline to register to vote in this election
- 15 April – deadline for applications to vote by post (5pm)
- 24 April – deadline for applications to vote by proxy (5pm)
- 2 May – voting day (7am to 10pm)
- 3 May – election results

These are local elections and nothing to do with Westminster, there important so don't let any frustrations with Brexit prevent you from taking part.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan submitted for examination

South Oxfordshire District Council has today submitted its Local Plan 2034, and associated documents, for independent examination.

A Planning Inspector, appointed by the government, will set a timetable for a series of public examination hearings, expected to be held later this year.

People will be able to attend the examination to witness the proceedings, however only those invited by the Inspector will be able to participate in the hearings. Dates and a venue for the examination will be confirmed after an Inspector has been appointed.

After the examination has finished the Inspector will issue a report containing recommendations to either accept the plan as it is, accept the plan with modifications, or reject it.

The Local Plan identifies where housing, retail, and employment land should be located, as well as the infrastructure required to support this growth, such as new roads, schools, health services and sewerage. The policies in the plan are used to help make decisions on planning applications.

This helps protect our 5 year land supply and prevent uncontrolled development.

Didcot Garden Town continues to move forward and receives £218 million investment

The nominated Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board met on 11 March to discuss the proposed operation and structure of the board and the three sounding boards it will be setting up.

The separate sounding boards will consist of a:

- a parish council board, to include parishes within the garden town area of influence,
- a business sounding board made up by representatives from local business based in the vicinity and,
- a community sounding board with people from community groups and interested parties.

Each of the sounding boards will meet regularly to discuss various garden town projects and give constructive feedback and ideas on how they might work. This feedback will be used by the advisory board to make their decisions on what they recommend to the authorities that fund and approve the garden town plans.

Since the meeting, the government announced that £218 million has been secured from their Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and we will work with Homes England to help bring much-needed transport improvements for residents living in and around the garden town.

The four major projects include a Didcot Science Bridge and improvements to the A4130, a new crossing over the River Thames at Culham and a bypass at Clifton Hampden.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth, chair of the nominated advisory board, said: "We are delighted that the government has demonstrated its commitment to investing in Didcot Garden Town. This is an exciting and important stage in the progress of the garden town projects - it is vital that representatives of the local community are involved as we lay the foundations for the future of Didcot and its surrounding villages."

Now that the funding from HIF is secured, the Didcot Garden Town team will continue work to prioritise the over 60 projects identified in the delivery plan and, once the sounding boards are formed, the team will start to talk to the members for their input.

Once set up, all advisory board meetings and annual general meetings will be held in public so that everyone can hear about and get involved with the plans for the town to make the Didcot Garden Town vision into a reality

£100,000 to tackle air quality issues - Reminder

We've allocated £100,000 to help tackle air quality issues in our district. We're working on a number of projects including studies to install more electric charging points in our car parks and will be running an 'anti-idling' campaign to encourage drivers to switch off their engines whilst parked or waiting at traffic lights.

Funds have also been made available to support town and parish councils to address air quality issues including known trouble spots in Wallingford, Henley and Watlington.

If you know of a project that we could help fund, please contact the environmental health team.

env.health@southandvale.gov.uk

Crowmarsh consultation update

Thanks to everyone who filled in the survey about our new building. The survey is now closed and we received 266 responses. We will send these feedbacks to Ridge, our contractors, to help inform the design for the new building.

We have also contacted Crowmarsh site's immediate neighbours, Employees, local parishes and communities to take part in a survey on the design of our new offices. These two consultations were open until 10 February and we will send the results over to Ridge.

We'll keep you up to date on the project as it develops, but hope to have moved in by 2021.

Goring joins the Safe Places scheme

The Care Hub, run by Q1 Care, has become the first venue in Goring to sign up to the Safe Places scheme. Registered Safe Places offer support to vulnerable people feeling scared or at risk by providing assistance and by calling a family member, carer or emergency services.

There are now 56 Safe Places in our district, which are easily identified by a logo displayed on shop-front windows. To see all the locations of the scheme, visit the Safe Places website.

<https://www.safeplaces.org.uk/>

Huge government investment in infrastructure in southern Oxfordshire

The government has announced significant investment in transport infrastructure for southern Oxfordshire in the Spring Statement. South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Council have welcomed the money that will make a significant difference to the two districts. The councils were part of a £218million bid for Housing Infrastructure Funding from the government, relating to four major transport schemes for the southern Oxfordshire area. They are:

- a Didcot Science Bridge on the A4130 – going over the railway line and Didcot A Power Station site and joining the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road
- improvements to the A4130 from the Milton Interchange by making it a dual carriageway
- a new river crossing at Culham
- a Clifton Hampden bypass.

The transport schemes are an important part of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Local Plans, both of which aim to bring new homes, jobs, schools, health and community centres to support the predicted growth in the area. The HIF money will help the councils to deliver new homes in Didcot, Culham, Harwell and Berinsfield.

Cllr Jane Murphy, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, said, “This is a significant moment for everybody living and working in Didcot and surrounding villages. I’m delighted that we’ve been a part of this successful bid to bring much-needed infrastructure to our district – this award demonstrates that by working closely with government, delivering on growth, and building positive working relationships with other councils, we can deliver much needed improvements for our residents.”

Cllr Roger Cox, Leader of Vale of White Horse District council said, “This is great news for the local economy – by working together with our colleagues in the councils across Oxfordshire, we have helped to secure the infrastructure investment we needed to ensure that the Science Vale area continues to thrive, offering lots of high quality jobs and career opportunities for our residents.” All the projects will need to go through the appropriate planning permissions and the district councils will be asking residents what they think about the proposals throughout the process.

Waste and Recycling - Reminder

Cooking oil recycling

We've just introduced a new cooking oil recycling service for residents as part of our food waste collections.

After cooking and once it has cooled, any leftover oil can be poured into a plastic bottle no bigger than one litre in size. The bottle and its contents can then be placed into the kerbside food waste caddy, along with other food waste, and put out for the weekly collection. For those who don't want to use a plastic bottle, oil can also be poured straight into the caddy along with other food waste.

One litre of cooking oil can generate enough electricity to make 240 cups of tea!

Oxfordshire to get business and community boost from major women’s cycle race

Oxfordshire is expecting economic and health benefits from hosting the prestigious OVO Energy Women’s Tour professional cycling race, which will pedal through the county on Wednesday 12 June, it was announced today (Wednesday 20 March).



A stage of the high-profile British cycling event has been secured for Oxfordshire by the county council and five districts in a three-year deal with the race organisers SweetSpot. They expect cycling fans to visit Oxfordshire to watch the race, generating additional business for restaurants, bars, hotels, B&Bs and shops.

In a comparable stage in last year's race in Warwickshire, additional local expenditure linked directly to the event totalled £2m by around 100,000 spectators. Nearly two-thirds (63%) came from outside the county and 67% of spectators said they were inspired to cycle more often.

The race will start in South Oxfordshire and end at one of the county's most iconic locations, Blenheim Palace, with large crowds expected to cheer the winner over the line. Details of the exact route, which will pass through the Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire, will be revealed in coming weeks.

About 100 professional riders will weave their way through towns, villages and rural areas, inspiring local schools to organise themed sport and fitness lessons. Highlights of the race will also be screened on ITV4.

Families are expected to line the route to cheer on competitors, turning the event into an exciting community spectacle. Spectators will be encouraged to use healthy and environmentally-friendly transport to reach vantage points to watch the race.

Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, said: "We're delighted to welcome the Women's Tour to Oxfordshire because it will bring an enormous economic boost to our thriving communities, inspiring more people to get their bikes out of the shed. Oxfordshire is the perfect backdrop for this race and we look forward to showing off the county at its best."

Councillor Jane Murphy, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "This is wonderful news for residents and businesses in South Oxfordshire – the economic benefits will be huge. It will hopefully inspire lots of people to take part in healthy activities like cycling, but just as importantly it is going to be a lot of fun. I'm looking forward to watching it."

About the OVO Energy Women's Tour

Created by SweetSpot Group in 2014, the OVO Energy Women's Tour is the UK's first international stage race for women, bringing the world's top riders to compete in Great Britain as a part of the UCI Women's World Tour.

In addition to its wider aims of promoting active and healthy lifestyles to women, the event has championed equality in sport, notably offering the same prize fund pro rata as the men's OVO Energy Tour of Britain. The race will expand to six days for the first time in its history in 2019.

The race, which has been won by the likes of Marianne Vos (2014), Lizzie Deignan (2016) and Coryn Rivera (2018), attracts an annual roadside audience of 300,000, as well as over three million fans through linear and online platforms.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS GRANT FUND

I was able to support 2 projects with my £5k Fund one in Goring (Village Hall), one in South Stoke (speed measuring equipment).

Leader's Report to South Oxfordshire District Council – Thursday 14 February 2019

Released on February 18, 2019

Report to council by Cllr Jane Murphy, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council

I recently attended the District Council Network conference to represent our council, at which the Secretary of State for Local Government gave a speech.

Oxfordshire, working together to achieve better outcomes, was mentioned several times, and it made me very proud to hear our council being spoken of as a shining example of the good work local authorities can do on behalf on their residents.

He particularly spoke highly of work we're doing with our partner authorities on the Growth Board, including the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, and our Local Plans, which support it.

At the conference, all councils were raising the long term financial challenges they might face in the coming years, something that has been discussed here tonight. It was mentioned that one way that government could help address those challenges was by supporting our ability to raise revenue locally. Liz Truss MP, who is leading the fair funding review, indicated that a review of the cap that currently exists on changes to council tax rates was one option under consideration to better empower local councils to make the right decision for their residents.

On a different note, I'd like to say how pleased I was to see South Oxfordshire ranked as the sixth best place to live in the country in the latest Halifax Quality of Life Survey. I'm sure this wasn't a big surprise to any of us, as we all know what a great place to live it is. But I do want to say that these things don't happen by accident, and I believe our administration of this district council has contributed very strongly to maintaining and improving quality of life over the years.

This aim is something that drives everything we do, including the work we're currently doing with our partner authorities in Oxfordshire around the future growth that is needed to ensure we secure the infrastructure we need. Whether this is the right roads in the right place, improved health care and leisure facilities or the schools which are vital to support high quality education so that future generations continued to grow and prosper.

Some of these things you may feel are beyond our remit but we have a part to play in all this, and that is why districts are so important.

We're also doing our bit to contribute to bigger international issues as well, like climate change. Once again, we're up near the very top of the national recycling league tables – the competition at the top has been fierce in recent years with many areas upping their game to catch up with us, but we're currently the 4th best recycling area in the country. I'd like to thank our Environmental Services team for the hard work they put in, as well as our contractors Biffa and all of their extremely hard-working staff – but mostly I'd like to thank our residents for their ongoing commitment to recycling as much as they can.

Give our recycling wheels a spin!

Released on February 18, 2019



South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have made it even easier for residents to check which bin their waste items go in by using the councils' new recycling wheels.

The councils have produced the wheels to help increase recycling rates by promoting the kerbside recycling collections and making sure residents are putting the right things in the right bins.

The wheels are the latest of the councils' recycling promotions - they also have a smartphone app called Binzone, which tells users which bin is due for collection that week and includes a waste item search function to find out which bin to throw their rubbish into. The new wheels are recyclable and are available in libraries across the districts. They will also be offered to community groups to give to residents and to schools as an educational tool.

Cllr Caroline Newton, cabinet member for Housing and Environment with South Oxfordshire District Council said: "Around 80 per cent of household waste can be recycled and while the councils have very good recycling rates, there is always room for improvement. These are designed as an easy-to-use reminder for people to keep at home when they are sorting out their waste."

CLlr Elaine Ware, cabinet member for Housing and Environment with Vale of White Horse District Council said: “By helping residents recognise which items go in which bins, the councils aim to increase recycling rates and at the same time reduce the amount of recycling which is contaminated if the wrong thing is accidentally dropped in.”

How do they work?

- The outer wheel has the item to be recycled eg.plastic bottles
- Spin the inner wheel until the arrow points to the item
- The cut-out window on the inner wheel will reveal a colour
- This colour corresponds to a key which tells you where to dispose of the item eg. plastic bottles go into the green wheelie bin

The Binzone app is available by searching for “Binzone” in the Apple Appstore on iPhones and on the Google Play store on Android smartphones.

Schools or community groups in South or Vale who would like some recycling wheels can get in touch with the councils’ waste team on [01235 422146](tel:01235422146) or waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk.

Obviously this isnt all that’s happened but gives you a good cross section but please visit sodc website for more storeys and information.

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Goring Division County Councillor Kevin Bulmer 2018-2019 Report

I'm not going to repeat what's in my April report and this is a quick highlight of the year at County

Apart from my basic councillors duty's I sit on a number of committees at County I'm Chairman of the County Pension Committee, Vice Chairman of the Brunel Pension Fund oversight Committee, Vice Chairman of The Remuneration Committee (not Cllr Remuneration but Officers), member of the Oxfordshire Health Oversight Committee and I sit as the elected member on the Children's Adoption Panel.

The Brunel Pension Fund is a government initiative for Public bodies to combine the pension funds to achieve savings of scale and cost. We've combined with 8 other similar minded County's and the environment agency to create a fund of approximately £29billion.

INVESTMENT IN REPAIRING OXFORDSHIRE'S ROADS CONTINUES

OCC will be spending an extra £13m on capital funding on road maintenance in the coming financial year. This is on top of its existing £18.5m programme of work and follows last year's additional £12m boost which saw more than 37 extra miles of road being resurfaced through a range of methods including surface dressing and micro-asphalting – both of which make road surfaces waterproof and extend their life. This year's additional money will be spent across Oxfordshire on resurfacing, drainage, bridge repairs and footways.

OXFORDSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY SURVEY IS LAUNCHED

People living, working and studying in Oxfordshire are being encouraged to help set the future direction of the county's health and wellbeing strategy. A draft strategy has been developed by Oxfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Board – the partnership between local NHS services, local councils and Healthwatch Oxfordshire. The board's joint working approach aims to improve everyone's health and wellbeing, but especially of those people who have health problems or are in difficult circumstances due to age or vulnerability.

COUNTY COUNCIL TO INVEST IN SCHOOLS, TRANSPORT AND STREET LIGHTING

Residents of Oxfordshire will see highway improvements, new school buildings and energy-efficient streetlighting thanks to a £1 billion investment over the next ten years as part of the county council's budget. However, the county council is also warning that funding pressure on services remains as demand for social care for vulnerable children and adults continues grow and continued financial prudence is required to meet those demands.

MORE THAN 40,000 ROAD DEFECTS REPAIRED IN OXFORDSHIRE SINCE LAST WINTER

OCC's highways teams are out daily relentlessly resurfacing roads and pavements. They have been able to more work than last year thanks to the county council putting in extra cash over and above the normal budget in response to the problems caused during the last cold spell. Since January 2018 the council has repaired 40,117 defects. That's an average of 3,652 repairs a month which is quite colossal compared to what was needed during the same time period the year before – a total of 34,677 defects were repaired between Jan-Dec 2017. Due to severe weather last winter, pothole fixing peaked between February and May with nearly 18,000 being repaired. The county council this year invested an extra £10m in road repairs which has resulted in extra major resurfacing projects being completed as well as smaller, but no less important, repairs being completed across Oxfordshire. The county council has increased the amount of relatively small-scale work it does to put right local roads that are suffering from potholes, cracks and worn out tarmac. The number of completed defect repairs between January and October this year is 37219.

WATCHDOG SAYS OXON HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES MORE JOINED UP

Significant work has been done to join up services across Oxfordshire that is already demonstrating improved outcomes for people, according to a follow-up review by the national regulator for health and social care published on Wednesday, January 9. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) found key improvements had been made eight months into an 18-month action plan that was agreed by Oxfordshire health and social care organisations

OCC CALLS FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY ON THAMES WATER'S RESERVOIR PLAN

Residents' interests come first – that was the resolute message from OCC as its cabinet called for a public inquiry on Thames Water's plans for a new reservoir. The council has concerns about the size and need for the proposed reservoir to the southwest of Abingdon, between Steventon, East Hanney and Marcham. It is also concerned about the length of time Thames Water has set itself to reduce leakages. Further clarity is sought from Thames Water on whether other potential sites have been fully assessed across the southeast region.

BOOST FOR A 'FULL FIBRE' FUTURE IN OXFORDSHIRE

Hundreds of businesses and homes across Oxfordshire are set to benefit from faster internet connections, following the launch of the UK Government's nationwide Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS). The £67m investment is in addition to the £200m allocated to the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme, and will provide future-proof full fibre connections for businesses and the residential communities around them. It follows a successful pilot scheme launched in four areas around the country late last year, which has already seen nearly 1,000 vouchers used up to date. ThinkBroadband statistics show that 8% of homes and businesses in Oxfordshire already have a full fibre internet connection. Superfast broadband reaches almost 97% of premises, and even-quicker ultrafast broadband covers 51.3% of the county.

£80K BOOST FOR KIDS' CYCLING SAFETY

Almost every primary school child in the county will now be able to get free cycle safety training after the award of an £84,500 [Bikeability](#) grant which will pay for an additional 2000 places. The bulk of cycling training in the county is carried out by a 700-strong army of volunteer instructors under the Oxfordshire Cycle Training Scheme, which has been running for more than 40 years. Training is offered to children from nine-years-old and up and is a mixture of learning about the Highways Code and practical 'on the road' tuition. Parents and carers who want their children to take part in training should contact their school's head teacher.

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY TRAVEL ENCOURAGED BY OCC

Commuters returning to work after the holiday period are being encouraged to walk or cycle, for all or part of their journey, by OCC. The council is championing healthy alternatives to the car, which will also help to reduce congestion and pollution on the county's roads. Exercise is widely recognised as one of the best ways to improve physical and mental health. Daily physical activity lowers the risk of depression and dementia by around 30 per cent according to the Department of Health. Exercise also reduces the likelihood of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and strokes. The council has appointed an active and healthy travel officer, using central government funding, to assess existing walking and cycling routes. Priority will be given to improvements and maintenance schemes designed to encourage active travel and reduce pollution.

OCC COUNTS THE COST OF THE CARILLION COLLAPSE

OCC is carrying out a detailed review of the costs and liabilities related to its properties following the Carillion collapse so that a robust financial plan can be considered by councillors in the autumn and included in the council's budget. Carillion provided services on behalf of OCC including maintenance of council buildings; property services, and building work such as school extensions. OCC made a net payment of £10.6m at the end of December 2017 to Carillion to cover work already completed as part of the final settlement to end the contract with the company, limiting any future financial liability. However, the costs of dealing with ongoing construction and property maintenance problems following the Carillion collapse have not yet been calculated but are expected to be "very significant". Surveys to assess defects in buildings including schools are continuing across the county council's properties. Compliance with health and safety requirements is also being considered, with any safety issues that emerge being dealt with quickly.

NEW PARTNERSHIP APPROVED BY OCC AND CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillors at OCC and Cherwell District Council have approved a proposal for a partnership between the two local authorities, including the appointment of a joint chief executive. The partnership arrangement will offer long-term opportunities to join up services for residents, reduce the costs of providing services, and secure investment in Cherwell to enable the continued growth in homes and jobs. The partnership proposal came after the financial problems in Northamptonshire County Council, which has implications for Cherwell's existing partnership with South Northamptonshire Council, created an opportunity to explore closer joint working. The joint arrangement was approved by county councillors on 10 July and Cherwell councillors on 16 July, and will come into effect on 1 October. Partnership arrangements under a single chief executive will make joint working more effective and deepen the partnership arrangements.

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

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