

I'm very pleased to see the progress being made towards better amenities for teenagers in terms of recreation spaces, particularly the skate park / pump track.

Thank you for circulating the proposed plan for open spaces strategy for all of us to consider. The main point it highlighted to me is how desperately all these changes are required, and how wonderful it would be for the village if they were able to be achieved in the not too distant future.

All appear well thought out, would benefit the village hugely and would receive my full support.

On a separate issue, it would be highly desirable to have at least one more street light along Upper Red Cross road, which is used by many pedestrians in the evening, all year round. The challenge of getting the potholes sorted out seems intractable: the council come along once or twice a year and do their best with the deepest holes, leaving baby holes left, right and centre to become big holes within months. This is a serious hazard to the elderly at night, when it is pitch black along there. Apart from all the damage it causes to vehicle tyres and steering racks.

Just wanted to commend the parish council and thirwall associates on the report. Its incredibly thorough and very interesting. Especially excited to see that most of the suggestions get nearly 3 out of 4 people supporting which is a brilliant mandate for change. I hope it won't be too long before we see the changes suggested especially at Sheepcot.

Thank you for all the hard work and I look forward to the Parish Council moving forward with popular sports within the village.

I am very much in support of making improvements to the existing parks and leisure spaces. This will benefit the mental and physical health of all in the village.

As a local resident with young children, I would be very much in favour of the proposals to improve the recreational facilities in Goring and sincerely hope that this work is made a priority.

Firstly I would like to commend the producers of the report. They have done a very thorough job and it is clear to read and understand.

Regarding section V4.5, please can I add a request that a changing table is added to BOTH the mens and ladies toilets as there is no baby changing table facilities at the public toilets. Section 5.3 - there are letters in the PC archive from the 1990s objecting to skate park plans and roller-blading, describing them as a passing fad. < this couldn't be more important in my opinion! The parish council would do well to take a lesson from this when considering the amount of time it has taken us to even get to this point with new play and open spaces. What individuals feel is a fad, or not to their liking is nothing in the passing of time and those children in the 90s asking for a skate park now have children of their own ... and are still asking! Some of them I am sure would still like to have a go!

Section V22.1 – it should be noted than more formal meetins should be held wither at a time or through a means that allows parents to attend. The parish council meeting as it stands is exactly at the point I am putting my young children to bed. A zoom facility (I apologise if this exists, but I am not aware of one so if it does could it be advertised better?) would allow me to attend.

Having read the green space document I would like to say I support the parks proposals and I am pleased to see this progressing.

I was delighted when the Parish Council announced that the open spaces of the village were being reviewed and was unsurprised to read in the Thirwall report that the consultation showed many residents are unhappy with the current provision. I too resort to travelling by car to better play spaces, which, in an age of managing our carbon footprint, is quite poor; our children's play needs should be met within our large village.

It would be useful to combine this with the 20 is plenty approach to the roads so that the children can be allowed to travel with less supervision throughout the village.

The detail of the playground equipment is vital for the success and so is sufficient seating and tables so families can bring their own snacks.

It would also be useful to ensure that dog walkers and children can coexist. That means that when children are on the fields dogs should be on leads, plenty of dog fouling bins and ideally better signage on e.g Sheepcot as we always have to clear the pitches from dog poo every weekend, on one occasion even off the goals. It's not nice for the children to roll around in it.

I support a pump track somewhere in the village.

I am writing to provide feedback on the recently circulated public spaces review. I would firstly like to applaud the effort taken to get this moving forward. I moved to the village [] years ago & have had & brought up my 2 boys here, & have always considered the facilities particularly for children in need of great improvement. We have regularly travelled outside of Goring to access more suitable facilities

We also saw Padel courts mentioned in the report. This is a great idea as again is a fast growing sport played by all generations, being a little easier on the body than tennis. The village would hugely benefit from this as an extension of racquet facilities in the area as the nearest padel court I believe is in Oxford - this would definitely enable a reduction in carbon emissions by stopping people travelling out of the area to play.

Firstly I'm absolutely delighted that this has been actioned, well done to you all for moving this on - the state of many of the facilities in the village is deplorable (particularly those aimed at children and teenagers)

This is a huge, complex report which requires much time and effort to properly review. As such I think the chances of thorough feedback from many Goring residents in the very short timeframe available is extremely unlikely. There should be a much shorter, simplified summary of the suggestions with a much longer timeframe for people to respond. And anyway I think there are some much more general matters for GPC to answer before getting into the specifics of detailed proposals. The following questions immediately come to my mind.

1. Why do we need a strategy?

Goring's wonderful open spaces have evolved organically over the 30+ years that I have lived here and seem to me to have kept pace with the overall needs and preferences of the vast majority of people in Goring. So I don't understand why suddenly we would need a grand plan led by GPC and created by external consultants, no doubt at considerable cost. I think GPC would serve the community much better by focussing its efforts on more mundane practical matters that impact all our lives, for example a coordinated campaign to get Oxfordshire County Council to fix the deplorable state of our roads and pavements.

2. What problems are we actually trying to solve?

For the most part I think our open spaces serve us well as they are. Rather than try and change everything at great expense, it would be better to my mind to outline a few key priorities, determine whether there is public support for these and if so proceed with planning appropriate solutions in agreed priority order. Perhaps it's improvement to children's play areas, or the requirement for additional cricket nets, or the need for better pavilion facilities. A simpler approach that engages with residents on a few important needs would be vastly better I believe than presenting such a grandiose plan. Not least because it would be a much better framework for the determination of affordability against agreed priorities.

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3. What about the character of our village?

I would be totally against any development of our open spaces that changes the character of Goring. It seems to me that much of the report represents an urbanisation of our rural environment that is both unnecessary and unwanted. I believe the majority ("silent" typically) of local people do not want projects that will litter our relatively natural, informal spaces with paths, shelters, picnic tables and the like.

4. Why do we need to respond to external influences?

The report embraces all sorts of talk about climate change, health and safety, diversity and so on. These things are no doubt important in their place but beyond the basic requirement to ensure our open space facilities are inclusive and safe (which I believe they generally are already), I don't believe we have to be led into development for the sake of conforming to some external idea of what is necessary.

So to summarise, I would suggest: abandoning the grand plan; identifying a few priorities; gaining public support for these where necessary; determining and agreeing funding; and then proceeding to implement a small set of practical projects that the people of Goring actually want and need.

I do not want to see more signage around the place. Why is there to be a complete suburbanisation of a village? The proposals sound more suitable to Disney than a rural environment. Likewise shelters. I suspect these would shelter more illicit smokers and drug dealers than any intended users. Has anyone actually requested any of these things to be done? I have spoken to numerous people on the Gardiner field and Sheepcote field, and asked about their views, and most would like things to stay as they are, but be properly maintained. Looking at the survey it seems under 800 views were received, which is less than half the village, can such major works be undertaken without a majority in favour?

The main item that everyone I've encountered brought up, was the provision of more, larger, regularly collected waste bins. You could make a large section of the village very happy, at limited cost, if you could tackle this one!

I would like to add my support for transforming the Open Spaces in the village. I think all the areas are worthy of care and attention, however if priorities have to be decided I would like to support the mutually beneficial changes to the Cricket ground (particularly more nets over the existing bowling green area) and Sheepcote, including the pavilion proposal, followed by Bourdilon.

Comments on Open Spaces Strategy report.

This report usefully chronicles the known deficiencies in GPC's open spaces. However, it is difficult to work out the details of what is being recommended and I think people will find it time-consuming and challenging to comment on. A summary of recommended actions is needed for public comment.

By simply measuring each site against the same set of criteria, the report doesn't relate them to the overall picture. The Green Flag criteria, while 'flagging up' some useful general environmental and accessibility points, don't reflect the adjacent presence of the rest of the open land, paths and riverside that Goring enjoys. The report shows limited knowledge of the wider environment of the GPC open spaces.

'The Objectives'

It is not clear how the stated objectives are justified by the report since they are not referenced.

A lot of the objectives seem to refer to the whole village - but the whole village is only briefly covered in the report which provides a bit of a jumble of ideas because the Green Flag criteria were used again, but this time for a settlement not a park.

These are my main concerns about the 'objectives':

Objective 4 Footpath signs and some other basic signs are useful. In my experience information boards soon get damaged by weather etc and in these days of smart phones I think well-maintained web information is more sensible and economic. There already is a lot of online Goring info that could be used, with walks and history.

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Objective 5 'Recreation Trust' - Why do we need this? The large sports clubs have national governing bodies to advise and monitor them. All the clubs will want to control their own funds and raise money for their own sport. Surely this is an unnecessary layer of administration and more work for GPC?

Clause 3 – promote through Parish Council channels – why is this needed? The consultants don't seem to be aware of the Arcade boards, Genie and GGN, let alone the internet. I've not heard of anyone having trouble finding out how to join the sports clubs.

Objective 8. My view is that Councillors time would be better used attending community events, rather than holding them. To run a successful community event on a budget takes a lot of time and experience and parish councillors may not have the time or the necessary skillset. Councillors could ask opinions while making planned visits to events, meetings, classes, the school gate etc. This would be easier and probably as productive.

Walkers, with or without dogs, are the people most frequently found on the GPC open spaces. Goring's network of footpaths, their maintenance and safety and relationship to the open spaces, appears to have been barely considered in this report. The paths may not be GPC responsibility but they are an important resource and pass through the GPC open spaces and impact on them. In asking people about local available outdoor exercise options, walking would be the most commonly mentioned. So, although GPC don't have direct responsibility for the path network, it is relevant to their open spaces' strategy.

I would have liked to see suggested an online system for monitoring footpaths (on the GPC website?) and reporting problems to the responsible body. This could also cover reporting any problems with the open spaces. I also think that the provision of a safe space for walkers on roads without pavements (such as Reading Road) is needed and as part of the open space strategy GPC could work towards this.

Thanks to GPC for offering an opportunity to comment on this report.

Firstly I would like to thank the Parish Council for their hard work on the open spaces review. Many of the outcomes appear to make perfect sense and it is wonderful to be part of such a thriving village and community as Goring.

I've read the Open Space plan in some detail and commend the work that has gone into creating it and support many aspects of it. The focus on children's play, teens, exercise are the right priorities and I'm behind the broader list of objectives. I have broken my feedback into themes and I will focus on provisions to meet those priorities.

Competing uses of the spaces:

Within the document there is no quantifiable information about the scale of use by different groups. This has created a false equivalence when assessing how the space should be used and developed. For example, the Goring Robins football club has over 360 players, over 50 volunteers as well as many under 6s who aren't included in those numbers. The cricket club is equally vibrant with fantastic participation from 100s of children and adults. This is presented as equivalent to the needs of activities like bowls and croquet, despite my understanding is that those clubs have very low participation and may even fold. While I agree that a broad provision of facilities must be considered any development and investment must focus on maximising benefit for as many in the community as possible.

Just looking at these 3 spaces and whats involved i think the best options to tennis cricket football is to look at shepcot first.

1. new pavilion to accommodate tennis this allows them to move foward and first to have there ideas put into place first and completeing there project.
- 2.This may also help housing The croquet club at shepcot.
3. It would provide more parking and help that matter as well.
4. It would sort the parish Council office to be house at shepcot.
5. if a 3g was installed this would provide added playing time on pitch and give Goring united somewhere to house there games from gardeners while you look at Levelling and drainage takes place this could be started at the end of cricket season so the following season it would be ready in time for cricket to be played with no break the football pitch would not be playable for a whole season giving it the best chance to take and bed in.

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6. Gardeners would be done no football that season moved to 3g at sheepcot it would be a struggle to house but for 1 season we can accommodate Goring United from September then a year later football returns to gardeners.

7. Bourdillon then would be done to finish of the 3 open spaces required by sports clubs

This would be the best options to not encroach on each club and give the best opportunity to all with regards development depending on what we go for going forward

This would be in order to finishing the projects

1st Tennis

1st Croquet

1st Parish Council office

2 nd Cricket

3rd Goring united

4th Goring robins

If this was done in any other order we could all be impacted different in terms of playing time lost playing wise.

Please pass on our thanks to the Parish Council for completing this review and consultation, it is long overdue and any of the above developments of open spaces will make a huge difference for all the residents of Goring and Streatley.

When the time comes, I'd also be interested in helping to fund raise for developments if this is needed.

I read the recent Public Spaces Review and Open Spaces Strategy document with interest. It provides a good review of the open spaces in Goring and has some excellent suggestions on the use of these resources for the community.

However, I was disappointed that there is no acknowledgement of the need for open space for local people to use as allotments.

In a small village with many newer properties that have little or no garden space it would seem obvious in a discussion about open community space to include an element of communal gardening.

The report lists a wide range of benefits including community engagement, climate action, getting exercise and inclusivity for all ages/disabilities. The provision of allotments is regarded as an effective response to all of these needs. The recent cost of living crisis and supply problems during the COVID 19 Pandemic have highlighted the need for all households to have access to growing their own fresh food.

At present Streatley Allotment Society have a long waiting list and many of the people on that list live in Goring. This provides a clear indication that Goring is not providing adequate space for this important community benefit in its own area.

My understanding is that if residents request it then there is a statutory duty to provide allotments – there appears to be a gap in this process if no mention of allotments has been made in this review.

I would ask that further action be taken to address the need to provide this important community resource.

I am writing in response to the Public Spaces Review that was published on the Goring Parish Council website, and I am responding as a Goring resident.

I am concerned that the report which was written by Thirlwall Associates in December 2022 is now based on out of date and inaccurate information from the moment of its' publication. The report refers to, and takes into consideration, the Bowling club that was located in the Gardiner Recreation area. Indeed the recommendations for this area is explicit in considering the Bowling Club, and of course the Goring Bowling Club has now been wound up in December 2022 (as published in the Goring Gap Magazine – January 2023). Therefore, the recommendations should be reviewed again by Thirlwall Associates as any consideration of the report by the Parish Council at the proposed meeting in February 2023 will be inaccurate and misleading.

As a family with [] children ([ages]), goring is currently lacking in park and entertainment spaces for children and young people. Compared to other ares such as south stoke, crow marsh Gifford, blewbury and checkendon and woodcote, the parks are not adequate and there is no spaces for outdoor activities such as basketball courts, skate ramps and even football pitches with goals that can be used without being part of the club.

We welcome the review and hope that the needs of families with children is taken into consideration

From the Streatley Allotment Association:

Thirlwall Associates and Goring Parish Council have undertaken a thorough appraisal of open spaces in Goring, and community benefit, full of excellent suggestions.

However, we remain disappointed that there is no acknowledgement of the need for open space for local people to use as allotments.

The report says that 'most homes have a garden' but there are many in Goring with no garden, or very small gardens.

Allotments meet a whole range of benefits as listed in the strategy and report. They are important in terms of community engagement, climate action and bring many other open space benefits.

As life gets tougher for many they also provide a real way of offsetting increasing food costs.

Streatley Allotment Society currently have 14 individuals and households on our waiting list, 9 of whom, the majority, are from Goring. The person at the top of the list has waited 3 years to be offered an allotment. The second person has also waited 3 years so far. It is therefore likely to be many, many years before the person at the end of the waiting list has a chance of an allotment, and Goring residents continue to ask to be put on the list, despite knowing the wait is long.

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These requests for allotments have not come from us inviting interest; people have found us because they really want the benefits of having an allotment.

We are therefore surprised that no reference is made to this form of open space community benefit, particularly since there is actually a statutory duty to provide allotments, when residents ask for them.

We are not asking for this for ourselves. We on the allotment committee are fortunate enough to already have an allotment. We are asking for the people in Goring who are likely to have to wait many years before they will be offered an allotment in Streatley.

We do hope that Goring Parish Council will carefully consider our feedback, both with regard to current action, and to ensure that this Goring community need is included in future planning. Thank you.

That said, my main feedback is in general I think a good deal of key issues have been addressed. I do worry however that without consultation from people in the village from the respective demographics some of the changes will affect, and due to the scale of proposed improvements, the agendas of those on the council will be pushed through and as I have been told has happened in the past, key requirements will be pushed to the back of the queue. This is of some concern considering the average age of the councillors.

The group of parents I know in that village are largely concerned with the general safety, accessibility and quality of the play areas. Having to drive to another village to use their playground is quite embarrassing for such an affluent area and I think it is high time this was given some priority and funding. So if there is an opportunity for locals to consult on what is actually going to be used by children, please use us as a sounding board before hundreds of thousands are spent. Like a new pavilion costing millions, over a new playground would go down like a lead balloon.

Lastly, considering the amount of money spent on the jubilee gardens, I think if people don't see that come back to life in spectacular fashion come spring there will be uproar if money is spent on anything else equally frivolous and seemingly not beneficial at all.

I don't mean to sound overly negative as I think it is great that all of these issues are being brought to light, and appreciate the amount of work a document like that takes. We just feel like it's a case of picking the most impactful actions that will benefit wider/ different demographics that have been otherwise overlooked a little historically...and I can't overemphasise enough just consulting actual parents before spending lots of money on something to gut check it will actually be used/ taken up (e.g summer of fun).

How amazing to finally see some exciting plans for the open spaces of Goring! I have lived in and around Goring for over 40 years and these plans are long overdue.

Firstly, I'd like to say that I was pleasantly surprised by the report and its objective approach. Using the Green Flag Award Scheme objectives and criteria was sensible and a) sets a starting point (where we are now) and b) shows us where we aspire to be. The tables provide some very useful, practical thoughts and comments, covering many points that had passed me by, but I'm guessing that achievement of all these objectives will be beyond the Council's financial capability, at least in the short/medium term. I imagine GPC will need to 'cherry pick' its priorities from the proposals, but the tables provide a useful, practical tool for implementation.

P3: Bourdillon is not in the Goring Conservation Area.

Why is there no base map of the village and its open spaces included in the report? Google map (P97) is not a substitute. It is customary to indicate north points on plans of sites.

Teenagers: I see nothing in this report to appeal to teenagers, other than a small pump track proposed for Sheepcot. Where is the MUGA (multi-use games area) that SODC's infrastructure report says Goring needs? Why is there no skate park facility associated with the pump track?

Adults: I expected to see some adult/teenage exercise equipment included somewhere - I can't see any.

Too much emphasis on signs and signage which can be intrusive, especially in the Conservation Area. They also require costly maintenance.

Thank you for all your hard work, hopefully it won't be too long before the village community, especially the children, begin to see some of these plans in action.

A review of Goring's open spaces is very much welcomed and we think it is important to review all open spaces together as has been done. We have lived in Goring for over [] years, moving to Goring shortly after our children were born. We have felt as though the provision of play equipment for children in Goring has been seriously lacking, and have therefore often driven our children to playgrounds in other villages. Despite some of these villages being smaller than Goring, their playgrounds are far superior.

Our children are members of Goring Robins football and also the tennis club. We have visited a lot of other football pitches around South Oxfordshire to watch our children play football and the facilities at many of those locations are again far superior to ours, despite some of these villages again being smaller than ours, and possibly less affluent.

Our family enjoys paddleboarding in the Summer and I enjoy open water swimming. We don't feel as though there is anywhere in Goring that provides easy access into the river and again, will often drive to other villages for access to the river. It would be great if we had better access to the river locally and were granted bathing status that would then provide an indication of how clean the river was for swimming.

Parish/village - It would be great to see some cycle routes around the village, even better if those cycle routes could connect to other local villages.

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Finally, although we have enjoyed the Summer of Play, we don't feel as though this is a good use of money as the benefit is short lived with us spending no more than 2 hours a year here. Depending on how much it costs to put on this event, the money may be better spent improving facilities that could be used all year round. We appreciate we don't know how much the Summer of Play costs, and so it may well be that the cost doesn't outweigh the benefit.

Thank you for commissioning the review of Goring's open spaces and inviting feedback from residents. We sincerely hope that this results in much improved facilities for residents and visitors to our lovely village to enjoy. We hope we are able to secure sufficient funding and that the timeline for upgrading our facilities isn't too protracted.

Thank you for releasing the Groing-on-Thames Open Spaces Strategy. Firstly let me please stress that I welcome local government strategies to improve the amenities and facilities of the village, facilities such as the local playgrounds are looking dilapidated and need addressing. However, as a local resident I do have concerns about the methodology and proposals outlined in the document.

For context I am a resident of Gatehampton Road and the [], so the proposals for this area will have a direct and ongoing impact on my property.

As I mentioned I do have concerns about the methodology used for the initial consultation with the public. It would be helpful from this to understand the following ...

1. How and when was the public consultation undertaken?
 2. Was any provision made to specifically consult local residents who live adjacent to these sites?
 3. Could you confirm the 776 people consulted for each site are in fact the same 776 for all sites.
 4. If so, does this not undermine the validity of respondents by not taking into greater account the needs of those using or living at the individual site?
 5. The report was only published in December and a deadline of 31st January to provide views, this seems quite an aggressive time frame for the scale and cost of the proposals. Why has such a short window been provided to respond?
- Although I think 776 people is a reasonable sample it does concern me that anecdotally it seems no provision was made to talk to those using and living adjacent to each site.

I am not in favour of welcome signs in these specified areas around the village.

We are a village and I do not see the necessity.

We were very glad to see that the Open Spaces review has been carried out in the first instance - in my view (we have only lived here for [] years, having left London with our [] young children), the facilities & open spaces for the children and young people of our village have been woefully neglected for a very long time and improvements are long overdue. You only need to compare the outside public spaces and facilities of local villages to see that Goring needs to modernise & update its open spaces (Blewbury, Upton, South Stoke). I think in the past the older generation (who perhaps have more 'sway' over the council) have had a stronger voice and those who have tried to speak up for the younger generation have been ignored, if not rudely dismissed. So, we would very gladly welcome an improvement to all of the facilities for children in our village.

I have reviewed the open spaces strategy and wish to share my views having lived in Goring for over [] years. It is vital that there is sufficient recreational space for all those living in the vicinity of Goring, not just for the younger generation but for the older generations too. Sheepcot has by far the most opportunity for development and can offer a wider range of facilities across the generations compared to other open spaces in the village. Given how proud we all are of our village surely, we need to commit significant investment for recreation?

Firstly I would echo the comment in the report that the current facilities for children in the village are embarrassing. We regularly drive to other villages to use their play facilities given the poor quality of those available in Goring today. Given Goring is an affluent village with a large number of families with children of all ages, it seems crazy that there hasn't been more local investment in the sports and play facilities for those aged 18 and under. In terms of the plans themselves, I am broadly supportive of the themes discussed in the report. My hope is that most if not all of these plans can be realised in a sensible time frame so we along with the rest of the local community can benefit from them. I look forward to seeing how the council delivers on what I imagine is going to be a very well supported set of proposals.

I have read the Open Spaces Strategy with great interest and thank you for arranging for it to be commissioned. I live in Streatley and have [] who attend the primary school here. As a family we are very into the outdoor lifestyle and sport, which is why we moved here from London [] years ago. Our [] are very sporty and we have always supported the community by playing on every sports team available to them in Goring, as well as attending Goring Free Church children's events and of course Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Very little is available in Streatley itself. Our [] are members of Goring Robins Football Club, Goring Cricket Club and the Tennis Club. We also take part in the Goring 10km and Hairy Legs each year. My husband has been involved in coaching at both the cricket club and the football club. We have benefitted hugely from being part of all of the activities Goring provides which has led to our [] playing sport at a county level, despite only attending the local primary school. Unfortunately, the facilities for sport in Goring have just not kept up with the demand in the community. Cricket and Football have a huge local uptake - especially cricket, as it is played in huge numbers and at a very high standard compared to many other villages and towns in the area. For example, there were 40 U9s last year who played in cricket matches! I have no comments on Ferry Lane, and Rectory Gardens - I do not see that resources need to be directed there. Has croquet at Rectory Gardens been considered as an option?

Some recommendations are only one or two of the plans but I think would be great in multiple locations, the provision of water fountains/ drinking water refill stations I would be beneficial in at least the three areas where active play and physical activity is planned (Bourdillon, Sheepcote & the Rec), but also I can see there would be a benefit to water at the Rectory Garden and even perhaps the riverside at Ferry Lane. It would be good to understand more on some of the design principals or planting examples so that we could have a better idea of what is being referenced. Overall there feels to be a little too much focus on signage and 'colours' to differentiate things. I'd rather the impetus went on the more pressing items that really need addressing and upgrading, and those things I would see as a lower priority and nice to have. Would be good to see a proposal which makes accommodations for most of the key recommendations, but within a time frame which means that they are achievable i.e. these things happen in year 1, these in year 2, and this is an upgrade that comes in 5 years e.g. 3G football pitch. I don't really understand the proposed order of priority of things identified in the doc, between the sites. I understand there are highlighted priorities within each section but the rest feels a little subjective to 'in need of upgrade', how in need? Are things broken (e.g. actually broken and not functioning like the bench and 'swing' in bourdillon playground), or just a bit tired and in want of upgrading eg changing rooms in sheepcote pavilion? Fitness trail referenced in Sheepcote plan could also be a lovely addition to the Gardiner Rec, and perhaps a 'nature' trail or activity trail could be subtly woven into Bourdillon and Gardiner as well as Sheepcote to give children and families another form of focal activity, centred around the nature and natural materials of the area. Bike racks/ somewhere to lock a bike to in all of the parks would be great. In the final section the report mentioned a 'Miles without Stiles' – again, not covered in this report but the river section between the edge of Goring tow path and Gatehampton rail bridge is a lovely walk, but inaccessible for anyone with anything other than a fully functioning body with two legs! The kissing gates aren't suitable for pushchairs, nor wheel chairs, and whilst many wheelchair users might not expect to be able to go along an unmade up field, buggies are designed for 'off-road' walking and activities so would be great to widen these gates so that families can enjoy the fullness of this part of the village.

While I welcome the release of The Strategy for views and representations, I am disappointed that prior consultations were not so well advertised meaning that I have not been able to tender my views before now.

I note The Strategy refers past consultation respondents in the order of 744 local residents. I would suggest that the ratio of respondents/views sought to Goring's population, for plans aimed to benefit the whole local community, is rather low (I'm assuming a sample of 744 represents c.20% of Goring's population). Can The PC provide clarity on the sample's demographic?

Just giving my feedback to the new village plan.

I am [] years old born and brought up in Goring, as a child growing up we had nothing in Goring to play with we used to travel to South Stoke, Blewbury and Woodcote.

Goring as such an affluent area always had the worse facilities!

Fast forward I now have an [] year old and the same problem remains, it's crazy really

Is there a time frame for anything to happen? The consultation and review have taken long enough.

I would also like to register disappointment that there has been no consideration of provision of allotments, or even a community garden which could perhaps be in place of one of the suggested wild life areas.

Will the Council please make use of the G in Bloom volunteers.

I'd like to thank the council for sharing the Public Spaces Review report and I am largely supportive of its objectives and findings. The report rightly highlights the woeful underinvestment in facilities over recent years/decades.

We have an []-year old and for years have bemoaned the lack of suitable play equipment here especially as smaller villages in the surrounding areas seem to be able to provide so much better. I welcome the proposals of refurbished play areas in Bourdillon and Gardiners although it is likely to come too late for our family.

A pump track/stake park would be another welcomed addition to the village which has nowhere for children to play to congregate safely. I do question why the report didn't consider Bourdillon as a location - Sheepcot space is already at a premium and, on Bourdillon, it would be conveniently accessible as an after school activity for children at the primary school. I am not convinced the report has provided options for older children and teenagers who do not have anything dedicated for them and their specific needs.

I welcome the recognition in the report of the work done by the volunteers in the sports clubs. It is important the council invest in ensuring that these precious clubs continue to be a vibrant success.

I think this is long overdue.

I like the proposals to properly define the sports area at the Bourdillion and replace the play equipment. I agree that the area is mainly used for football. I am not sure a toilet block is necessary, but appreciate that for some accessible toilet facilities is essential.

The tree planting is a great idea, we need to ensure there is also a plan to look after them while they establish.

I support the proposal to keep this space child focussed.

Thank you for taking the time to put together the open spaces plan. I think the general consensus is lots needs to be done to get Goring up to the standards of other local villages in its provisions for local families and active users - so first and foremost it was wonderful to see this detailed plan shared with the village!

Every area of the village is long overdue for an update and an upgrade, and to a certain extent anything above and beyond the provisions we have currently would be an improvement.

Particularly with initiatives such as the new more 'affordable' housing being built off Manor Road, there needs to be more local support and provisions for families and young people. Nearby villages such as Benson, Blewbury, Crowmarsh and even South Stoke get regular visitors purely for the playground areas. I firmly believe that an overhaul of the recreational facilities in the village would drive more custom for local shops, eateries and businesses.

It would also help to provide for the many young families that live here, but feel they have to leave the village in order to fulfill any recreational activities with their children - which very much contributes to a feeling of 'us vs them' when it comes to an age divide in the village

It would be good to understand more on some of the design principles or planting examples so that we could have a better idea of what is being referenced.

Overall there feels to be a little too much focus on signage and 'colours' to differentiate things. I'd rather the impetus went on the more pressing items that really need addressing and upgrading, and those things I would see as a lower priority and nice to have

Paying all that money for the flower display on shepcote in my opinion was a waste of councils money.

I live in Streatley with my wife and [children]. Our [children] love sport and are members of the Goring Tennis Club (as is my wife), the Goring Robins Football Club and the Goring Cricket Club. Our boys have grown up in Streatley so I have been involved as a coach for several years with both the Football and Cricket Club. We count ourselves very fortunate that there are such fantastic opportunities for our children to play sport locally, thereby enabling them to keep physically fit, learn the importance of a team-first mindset and form bonds with other children and families in the community.

Due principally to the dedication of countless parents in the community, we have witnessed exponential growth within both Clubs. The Football Club now has many more teams than before, including several girls' teams, which has been a fabulous development. The Cricket Club has become a standard-bearer for cricket in the area, with a huge number of boys and girls benefitting from regular, professional coaching and participating in matches every weekend, to the point where the Club is now a regular feeder into the Oxfordshire Cricket squad. Oxfordshire coaches I have spoken with are amazed by the sheer number of high quality cricketers the Club is producing.

However, in many ways the Football Club and Cricket Club have been victims of their own success in developing such fantastic participation, in that the standard of facilities for both Clubs have not kept pace with the increasing demand. Taking each in turn:

[pasted to sheets]

I have no particular comments on the proposals for Ferry Lane, Bourdillon and Rectory Gardens (save for my question above over whether the latter could form an alternative location for croquet), but I would reiterate that I do believe that Gardiner's Field and Sheepcot should be where resources are focused.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments and also for arranging for the Open Spaces Report to be commissioned. I await the outcome with interest and hope that the Council is able to support the opportunity to make some once-in-a-lifetime improvements to the open spaces and sporting facilities in the Goring area.

We do support in principle. Mostly make use of the Gardiner and Bourdillon, good ideas there. Interesting proposal re Ferry lane as this is definitely an underused area that will benefit from some work. I suspect that the Thames Path is not for the parish council to address but it would be good to put some pressure on improving the path by the river.

We have two children [] and would like to see improvements actually implemented within their childhood years. That is my biggest worry. The consultation takes a really long time and still, with many options on the table will require further discussions, undoubtedly. Also, it would be good to know how will those improvements be funded.

Thank you for all the work to date and hope the momentum will not be lost on this amazing project.

As an invested local in the village, who has young children, I strongly support ALL the open spaces proposals. Also, both the recommended options by Thirwell Associates for Gardiner and Sheepcot Recs.

I live in Goring and have read the plans for the open spaces and am delighted to hear this news. It has been a long time coming, providing much needed equipment and facilities for the children in this area and surrounding areas.

I was brought up in Goring myself and moved back to Goring in [] with my two children. I found myself driving with my kids to Blueberry, Crowmarsh and South Stoke regularly to enjoy provisions and play areas with them.

Goring play areas are small and out dated and do not provide the village with the quantity and quality of other play areas in the area. Areas that are somewhat smaller than Goring.

I'm writing to give my whole hearted support to the proposed Goring Open Spaces Strategy. Getting the most out of our wonderful village spaces is vital to the community, for everyone's health and wellbeing, and for our children's development in particular. This is a brilliant opportunity to add value to our daily lives and to our village. As a mother of two children who are growing up in Goring, I am delighted that such careful thought is being put into developing areas for play and sport to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle for all ages, while also considering things like parking and facilities like the new pavilion. The proposals to plant for shade in different spaces is excellent considering the increasing numbers of heatwaves. I very much hope the recommended options in the plans to improve our shared spaces will go ahead.

We should be focused on making green spaces more welcoming of children.
We should be focused on the future and the health aspects of well-run and accesible facilites.
We should be embracing the wide range of sports that are undertaken in the village with particular focus on mass participation and not the minority.
Goring Robins Football Club should be celebrated and supported wholeharterdly - they need better facilities and more investment.
Better river acces for the wider commuinity. Again, focusing on the marjority, we don't all have river facing properties!
Children are the future and we should have them as a key point of focus when considering how we evolve our public spaces.

Thank you for providing the recent open spaces report and subsequent options. I have been really eager to support these types of improvements since i moved to the village so am ecstatic to see so much hard work has already been carried out. My opinion is any sort of improvement to children's facilities in the village is a win, Goring is such a lovely village, well known by many, but the quality of parks has also been a let down. The park is in well known disrepair, is most central to the highest population of goring and, due to it's relative hidden location, shouldn't attract a vast footfall from other areas (that i appreciate would otherwise have an impact on other factors). As I said at the beginning I am very eager to support this review, I look forward to hearing (crossing everything I have) that the outcome is positive for the younger generations of our village.

Thank you for giving the community the opportunity to comment on the Parish Council's Open Spaces Survey.

I strongly support the proposals to redevelop the open spaces. We moved to the village [] years ago and it is clear that our open spaces are lacking compared with other villages. I look forward to seeing these plans come to fruition.

We live in Streatley and are regular users of Sheepcot and all of the other sites in Goring (and in Streatley). We have a [children].

We were delighted to see all of the hard work by the council to meaningfully improve the open spaces in the village. We firmly believe that investment into the infrastructure of these open spaces will provide a dramatic improvement to the mental and physical health of the children and in fact all people in the community.

We agree that many of the current facilities are dated and sub optimal.

Please do let us know if we can be supportive in any other way.

Again, thanks to the council for the hard work and positive momentum. The community is excited and very positive discussions amongst locals about these developments seem to be at the centre of many discussions!

We have [] children age [], and would like to see improvements actually implemented within their childhood years. That is my biggest worry. The consultation takes a really long time and still, with many options on the table will require further discussions, undoubtedly.

I wanted to email to say that I fully support the recommendations made in the open spaces document. We are a young family who moved to Goring in []. We have a [] year old and have recently had our second child. I would agree that the play spaces need some development and improvement. We have found that nearby villages (eg Benson) have been better to visit for the parks. This is a real shame that there is not better provision within Goring. When friends with young children have visited us in our new home we have felt that it has been a shame to not be able to take them to a well equipped local park. The closest one to us is at the rear of Goring Primary and showing them a park with run down equipment and removed swings has not really shown off this lovely new area that we are proud to have moved to! It would be great to show Goring as an appealing village for young families and have better spaces for us to take our children.

I'm writing to you to inform you of my support for several of the ideas that are proposed within the Public spaces Review. I was extremely disheartened to hear today that many of our villagers are against the idea of improving the facilities for the children in our village. With reports that some people do not wish any money to be spent on improving areas which are ultimately used by the whole village but especially children, I wonder if these people will stand up and voice their opinion's at the planned meeting. Goring is a beautiful place to live, which is why so many families with young children/primary aged children/secondary aged children and teenagers live here. The facilities for these children are clearly inadequate (as shown by the review) and I whole heartedly support many of the improvements that are proposed.

If you require any further information from me I would be happy to help. I am pleased that Goring is finally addressing the facilities for future generations. What a shame that certain members of our village 'community' feel that it would be a waste of money, to invest in making the village a better and safer place for the children that live here. After all they were children once.

The open spaces plan with improved spaces for the children in the village would be hugely welcomed and has my full support

My first concern in relation to the Open Spaces strategy is the glaring omission of any mention, let alone plan for allotments in Goring. In the guidance on researching and scoping local area open spaces, the provision of allotments is clearly mentioned yet GPC has not made any mention of the need for this amenity. There is a well-known current and historic demand for allotments in the village. Over 10 years ago a local campaigning group realised the need for allotments and in the subsequent years the demand for allotment plots has continued to rise. The current provision in Streatley is oversubscribed with a long waiting list. However this is not the only demand, current plot holders would like more allotment space (the plots on the site in Streatley consists of ¼ size or smaller plots than a standard allotment plots). The rationale behind small plots was to ensue successful tenancies and to provide a larger number of people the opportunity to have a plot than if standard sized plots had been created. This however leaves many plot holders wanting larger plots. There seems to be an assumption by the council that residents of Goring have gardens but this is not always the case and not all gardens are suitable or large enough for veg growing.

I therefore urge GPC to add the provision of allotments to its open space strategy.

Thirdly, the children and young people of Goring need the provision of imaginative and creative play spaces and spaces to socialise. The proposals within the plan are unimaginative and bitty. I look at some of the provisions in neighbouring villages, for example Blewbury and wonder why Goring with all of the money, skills and talents of local people cannot be more creative.

I therefore urge GPC to add the provision of imaginative and creative children and young people's play and outdoor activity sites to its open space strategy.

I think the Open Space Strategy ideas are fantastic. Lived in the village for ten years . Great for the well being of our children and many adults as well.

As Streatley residents, with a [] who attends Goring Primary School, we are please to send in our feedback in response to the open spaces review and proposals.

It is incredibly welcome that the improvement of open spaces across Goring is being prioritised and invested in and the report from Thirlwall Associates achieves this by considering the merit of the spaces to all those whom the open spaces will benefit - from families with young children through to older residents. This holistic approach to improvement will achieve positive impact through increased levels of civic pride, future engagement with (and care of) public spaces within the village.

Thank you for the opportunity to feedback on these proposals, we are very excited about the proposed developments and the value they will add for residents of Goring and the surrounding villages.

One final comment is that the strategy document highlights that there is no play provision for children with a disability, including neuro diversity. The introduction of accessible play provision, including areas for children who need respite from noisy play would be of huge benefit to the children in our community who have additional needs.

I am so glad that the children and young people of Goring are being given proper consideration in this plan. There is so little for them here and they cannot use the river as a facility for obvious health and safety reasons.

I am writing to let you know I am very much in support of the plans laid out in the Goring-on-Thames Open Spaces Strategy. As a mother of [] young children I am especially in support of the plans to provide/refurbish child friendly spaces and playgrounds and I know there is overwhelming support for this on my street.

In summary, my family and I are recent arrivals to the village. We have [] young children, and I think the proposed changes would go a long way to improving the facilities on offer, whilst also providing environmental benefits.

As a mum to a [] year old, we do not use the village. We travel to Checkenden, Benson and Pangbourne. The facilities in Goring are poor and outdated and I look forward to seeing and supporting the final plans for the refurbishments.

I am particularly concerned over the current lack of Play areas and equipment provision for toddlers and young children of preschool and primary school ages, in that the Strategy does not show any significant expansion or improvement other than replacing existing out of date equipment.

It was noted in the INTRODUCTION that the consultation showed that many residents were unhappy with the existing play provision, mentioning that there were "no decent play areas and many families travelled outside the area to use play areas in neighbouring parishes, and said they felt embarrassed by the poor play provision in Goring when friends visited from other areas."

OBJECTIVE THREE of the Strategy is "to provide a welcoming place and to provide high quality attractive well maintained play facilities for children and young adults." Unfortunately, this does not seem to have been addressed with as much enthusiasm as I would have hoped as illustrated below in Bourdillon and Gardiner

One final point, there is much mention of signage for all sites throughout the strategy document. We are a small village within an ANOB any increase in the number of signs would be unsightly possibly unnecessary. Signs would of course require maintaining which would incur additional ongoing costs.

We have been part of the Goring and Streatley community for the past [] years and are enjoying bringing up our children up in the area. However it's noticeable whilst other local villages such as South Stoke, Blewbury and Crowmarsh are investing in outdoor spaces for future generations, the children of Goring and Streatley are getting left behind due to years of under investment. It's also clear that there are some extremely well supported sports clubs in the village that need better facilities. The Open spaces plan therefore is most welcomed and I have heard only positive things from those in my demographic in the villages.

I am a local resident [village centre] and reside in the village for nearly [] years. I have [] children, [], both do use the various open spaces irregularly and would certainly use these more often, if they would be equipped more appropriately, not only appropriately for child pay, but also if these would be more inviting to linger. One of the villages biggest problem for years now is, that it does a lot for the elderly, but it doesn't show that it is the younger generation, which has the potential and will to make and keep Goring a lovely and vibrant community. This survey and what will effectively come out of it, is a good chance to improve our open spaces and to show the world we are village who cares not only for the elderly but also for children and young families.

As so many residents I sincerely hope that the [Parish] council will start the works on our open spaces as soon as possible, it is something long overdue and it will be much appreciated. I'd like to stress again what I had mentioned already above - the open space improvements should be done with predominantly children and younger families in mind, I strongly believe this to be key for the village to strive going forward.

As a Goring resident with [] children, I feel the playground facilities are inadequate currently. A richer playing experience benefits children's mental as well as physical health.

We are not in support of any material investment in planting. We have yet to meet anyone who thinks the Jubilee Gardens at Sheepcot were good use of local funds. We are also not in support of exercise equipment - it rarely gets used and doesn't offer anything that bodyweight exercises can't deliver. When they are used, it tends to be by kids playing on them, so our strong preference would be to invest in dedicated play equipment at Gardiner instead.

Here is some feedback on the Open Spaces Strategy document.

1. Overall points

1.1 I think covered areas should be avoided at all locations. They are unnecessary and will attract vandalism and maintenance costs.

1.2 I think adult exercise equipment is little used and an unnecessary use of funds

1.3 New planting should be avoided if it attracts ongoing maintenance costs (as does the unwelcome jubilee garden at Sheepcot).

1.4 Any building which is constructed should be fully sustainable. Heating , lighting, water should all be zero carbon as an example to the community

We are residents in Sreatley who have[]children, []. All [children] have grown up using the local parks, public spaces and playing football.

As mentioned in the report we often used to drive to Upton, Pangbourne and Blewbury due to play areas being better so would thoroughly support investment in these locally.

Firstly I would like to thank you all for carrying out the review on the public spaces in Goring. I hope that it will bring some much needed investment into facilities for the village and especially for our younger residents.

I have read the Thirwall Associates report and wholeheartedly support their proposed changes to all of the spaces which are included in the report.

If I were to prioritise I would favour the proposed improvements to the play equipment at Gardiner and Bourdilon followed by improvements to Sheepcot Rec.

Goring is a destination village for all sorts of visitors - walkers, cyclists, tourists - but the ones least supported are those with children and it would be great to see playground on the Gardiner Rec as good as, if not better than, those in the surrounding villages.

I have lived in Goring for about [] years now and have [] children at the primary school. In our time here we have hoped that improvements like the proposed would be made so my children and their friends are adequately provided for now and in the future.

This is a wonderful village and a great place to bring up children so it would be fantastic to see changes made which mean it continues to be so

Signage: there are already maps at appropriate places around the Village for visitors to find their way around; most will be able to use the maps on their mobile phones

I hope these comments will be useful, and I trust that the Council will do the utmost to preserve the rural character of this beautiful part of the Thames Valley for residents and visitors to enjoy for many years.

As a resident of Goring I strongly support the proposals outlined within the Open Spaces Consultation, particularly the recommendations of the landscape consultants and all other plans. It is imperative we look after not only our aging population, but our young and future generations in our community.

In general there does seem to be a very limited range of facilities and equipment in the village for young people, especially compared to some of the amazing spaces recently created in surrounding villages. I do not think this reflects well on the village or its people at all and could even be considered as a child unfriendly approach. I do hope this review highlights and instigates change in this respect.

I have read the Public Spaces Review and support the findings and recommendations. I consider the report to be balanced with clear analysis of the issues and opportunities for the public spaces in Goring.

Improving the public spaces around Goring will have a positive impact on the well being of all residents. In particular providing a space for young children and teenagers should be a priority. Encouraging our younger community to engage in open spaces is a critical part of their personal development. It should also be noted that the existing facilities have lacked any investment for a very long time.

We should welcome our younger community to be part of our society and provide safe and fun open spaces.

I've read through the open spaces strategy document and I have the following notes:

As a parent of a []yr old [child] I am dismayed with the current lack of detail concerning play areas and equipment for children. The Strategy does not show any significant expansion or improvement other than replacing existing out of date equipment.

With the time taken to produce this document I would have expected to see some design options or at the very least some mock-up examples of play spaces, which would give us all a clear idea as to what the budget will be spent upon.

Play equipment has come a long way in the past 15 years, with natural materials like chunky wooden frames and natural aesthetics. A well designed play area can elevate the look of a village and I'm sure if the people opposed to the plans could see some modern designs they might be happier about things.

I noted in the Introduction section that during the consultation period, many residents expressed their unhappiness with the current play area situation and that several families travelled outside the area to use play parks in nearby parishes. We are one of those families. We frequently travel to Crowmarsh to use the excellent play area there and we also pay money to visit Beale Park, often with the express purpose of using their brilliant play area.

Having to travel in a car in order to use a modern play area when we live in an affluent and populous location, with many families in residence, has always grated with me and my wife.

It is stated that Objective 3 of the Strategy is "to provide a welcoming place and to provide high quality attractive well maintained play facilities for children and young adults."

Unfortunately, this does not seem to have been addressed with much detail at all in the strategy document, especially in the case of Bourdillion and Gardiner recreation grounds, in fact the majority of the detail seems to be concerned with signage, which I see as a very low priority.

This lack of detail does however provide an opportunity for parents of young children and children themselves to help decide the type and purpose of the new play equipment, taking into account experience from other well equipped play areas in other villages nearby.

Could focus groups or another type of consultation with local families take place? followed swiftly (in weeks not months) by some concept designs and approximate costs?

I support the proposals for improved sports and play areas in Goring

The demographic in Goring is changing, new families are moving in and we need to update our public spaces to welcome everyone and grow as a community.

Please can I implore the council provide safe spaces for our children of all ages to play. If you don't invest in the next generation, where other villages have, we will be forever known as the village that seems to hate children. For a village that has so many families and benefits from their investment, we are not doing enough to provide safe welcoming spaces for them and their children.

My children are now [], I have been asking for safe places to play for 10 years. Please do something for our children now before another generation grows up without places to play in our village. Don't spend £10k on flower beds for a park that no one looks at, or one off events like the summer of play, where it was too late to make arrangements for (as anyone with children has to book months in advance activities and the notice was too short to change arrangements) . Instead focus on facilities that make a difference long term and give families the freedom to play when and where they choose on equipment that is modern and fit for purpose.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Open Spaces review and what looks like a very comprehensive piece of work.

I have a [] year old [child] who plays with Goring Robins and is also a very enthusiastic netball player as is [their sibling].

It is great to see that the parish council is undertaking a review of the open spaces we have in Goring, in my view there is a tremendous opportunity to make better use of areas we have in the village. Below is my feedback on a few areas of the strategy document.

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I really hope these great ideas can be achieved as it would be tremendous for the village, and thank you for all that the Parish Council does for our village.

Currently the Gardiner Pavilion is used as GPC office. It was built for sports provision. Does the decision on the future site of the GPC office affect the plans for the open spaces?

There is a lot to be commended in this review but, looking at some of the costs, changes need to be done with careful consideration.

(Received Twice)

I enclose comments below by area in respect of the open space strategy.

I also have general comments regardless of the specific area.

- More sustainable benching/tabling is required as you intend in various green spaces. However the provision of covered spaces is effective provision of climbing frames/WC's! I suspect that few people require rain/sun shelter as this can be sought beneath tree coverage when needed where this is in place. The effective WC issue was the case in the former timber roofed seating at Northern perimeter of the Gardiner recreation ground until vandals set fire to it!
- Improved lighting &/or foliage cut back is required to all footpaths in the village.
- Pavement parking & overgrown hedging to be dealt with
- Better village signage in respect of direction to all 5 green areas. Likewise to village WC facilities.

I am emailing to express my support and that of my husband for the plans to refurbish and develop outdoor spaces in Goring including Bourdillon, Gardiner, Sheepcot and Ferry Lane. We are elderly, but have granddaughters in the village and although they are now a little older, we appreciate the need for better facilities for sport, play and outdoor activities for children and teenagers in Goring.

We strongly support this venture and look forward to seeing these facilities develop.

I understand that you are welcoming comments on this report. I found it a really impressive and well balanced piece of work on the whole and agreed with many of the proposals. There is a definite need for the upgrading of the sites.

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All areas should be as accessible as possible for all.

Please can we have a crossing down the High Street near the shops!

First of all, thank you for commissioning this report. It is thorough and well-considered and addresses a very important issue for the village. I've lived in Goring for over [] years and love the place. I have [] children, mostly grown-up now, and my only criticism of the village over this time has been the poor quality of open space provision for kids.

I wholeheartedly support a positive environmental and climate approach by GPC. I agree with your Objective 2. I do also appreciate that Clear Signage is necessary as noted in Objective 4, but I would like any signage not to be obtrusive, please.

We are young parents in the area and shocked by the current lack of provision for children.

The playparks are substandard and very limited. All change which is positive is welcome and the report looked encouraging.

If you look at Benson, wallingford, warborough, south stoke - all these areas have substantially better areas for children than Goring has.

Let's please focus on providing good/ upgraded opportunities for the main users with needs (football, cricket, young children, teenagers) without introducing a lot of unnecessary cost or signage/ equipment clutter that might ruin the natural landscapes and environment of our beautiful village

Although Goring Parish Council eventually provided some funds for the establishment of Allotments in Streatley over 10 years ago, there are still no allotments in Goring despite demonstrable demand. The waiting list for the first of more than a dozen new applicants for a quarter size standard plot or less in size at Streatley is in excess of 3 years

The parish council has a duty to do provide allotments if there is sufficient demand (section 23, Allotments Act 1908). Whether or not such a demand exists is for the authority to decide, but it must take into account any representation in writing made to it by any six electors or council tax payers resident in the area, to the effect that the circumstances of the area are such that it is the duty of the authority to take proceedings for the provision of allotments (section 23(2), Allotments Act 1908).

Also on page 3 the report states “All the sites, except Sheepcot, are in the Goring Conservation area, a designation which adds stricter planning controls”. I do not think this is correct as the Bourdillon Field is also outside the Conservation area.

In response to your Open Spaces strategy paper, I strongly support the village-wide approach you have taken. Provision of good play and sports facilities as well as access to great natural areas is so important for the health and well-being of everyone in and around Goring, particularly our children and young people.

My children are both members of the Goring Robin’s football club. They get to spend time doing an outdoor team sport in a supportive environment close to home. The community that exists around the Robins is an invaluable asset to the village. However, the facilities and lack of parking do let the club and village more generally down. I strongly support the upgrades proposed. While this is a good start, there is also a need to maximize pitch space as, due to the phenomenal success of the Robins, it is at bursting point for weekend matches. All year round training facilities are also essential to meet the needs of the club and the village.

I am also supportive of the idea of providing a skate park or other facility aimed at teens and young people. A safe space for young people to exercise and socialise is in everyone’s interests. Equally, the upgrade of playground facilities for younger children is also essential - they deserve fun places to play.

After all, they are the future of the village and will be more likely to raise their own families in Goring if their memories of outdoor play and sport are positive. If investment in our green space is going to happen, children and young people should be placed at the centre of any plans.

The incorporation of natural areas and ecologically sound development and maintenance of these places is also particularly important given the climate crisis.

Thank you so much for putting forward such a comprehensive and thought through proposal for how we can get the most out of our open spaces. It's such an opportunity to really invest in the next generation of the village and make living here even better. I have to say I was really surprised to hear that there have been many people in the area against the proposal specifically investing in the children of the area. It's so important that we look after every individual in the village and sharing any form of hate really shouldn't be tolerated so I hope that the council looks to support those who are eager to improve the area.

I'm completely in support of improving our open spaces. The playground provision here does not match the change in demographics and neighbouring towns and villages have done a much better job of keeping a pace so it is great to see a strong motivation for change. The playground areas need financial support to improve them and give our young people safe and fun environments to enjoy.

Finally I would like to say one final time how grateful I am that these proposals have been put forward. It's such an amazing opportunity to really positively impact so many peoples lives and I truly hope there is enough support to bring this to life.

These plans have been extremely well thought through, well presented and are reflective of the needs of `Goring today and for Goring over the next 20 years.

My children will benefit from these changes today and others will over the years, we will have a village of healthy, balanced, social and outgoing children and who wouldn't want that?

There are provisions for adults of all ages too, and the improving of these areas will reduce the need for children to start 'looking' for alternative ways to keep themselves amused. .. this will no doubt lead to anti social behaviour that no one needs. I cannot support these ideas enough

With regards to the other areas within the report, I would support anything that improves our local facilities, with particular focus on children and activities. The more we can encourage people (old and young) to be outside and active the better.

Whether that's playgrounds, outside gyms, crown green bowls, anything that promotes well being and being outdoors is great in my book.

I wish all involved luck with proposals, and hope that we don't have too many naysayers who don't like change and want to see everything blocked.

The public spaces report proposes a number of developments which will significantly enhance the ability of Goring residents and visitors to take fuller advantage and enjoyment of Goring's incredible natural features. Currently, although Goring's magnificence is clearly enjoyed by many, there is limited obvious space for community congregation, family time and public togetherness. The facilities and spaces that do exist feel fairly fragmented and with a lack of demarcation and attraction in terms of seating, signage, child play facilities etc - despite the natural beauty, the sites/areas feel in some ways under-utilized... as if folks are unsure of where they should go to congregate. The lack of a clear area for accessing and enjoying the river in Goring seems a travesty given it is our most central feature. By comparison, the riverside in Pangbourne hums with activity, picnic-er's, people launching small boats and swimming, dog walkers, people exercising etc - it gives an extremely communal and lively feel to that village which Goring is missing, despite its significant advantages over Pangbourne as a location. The lack of and agedness of the child play equipment in Goring is also clear, especially given what appears to be a significantly increasing population of families with small children in the area.

The proposed plans will go a very long way rectify the above and we are very much in favour of them. They will help to keep Goring up to date and evolving in a measured and sympathetic manner. Very much in favour and appreciative of what has been proposed!!

[Continued From Above]

One additional point which was not discussed in the plan (and I believe scoped out following the neighbourhood plan referendum) is the school itself. Our thoughts are thus:

1. The school has been rated as "Good" in its most recent assessment - when is this due to be revised and is there a view as to how it may have developed since the last one? Better or worse?
2. There appears to be a large number of young (pre-school) age families in Goring now - has any consideration been given to the size of this population, how it compares with the current carrying capacity of the school and whether the school will be able to cope infrastructurally with the numbers?
3. The age of the school, since last redevelopment appears to be lengthy - is there a risk it is left so long that critical updates are needed such that there is a risk of underperformance as a facility? The latest Ofsted inspection specifically called out the disrepair of the buildings
4. Given the growing demand, and the indications that upgrade / improvement is already required, should the parish council also be focussed on including a "plan for the school" on their agenda and public communications? Appreciating this is a complex area and not solely within the councils control, it would seem logical that there should at least be a drive to increase communication, discussion, canvassing of views and offering opinions to drive this consideration with the district council or other stakeholder who would need to be involved in the plan to ensure we have a school that is fit for purpose for some time to come.

I wanted to thank you for putting together such a comprehensive survey of the green space and play areas in Goring - it is a great document, really informative and with clear options for the community.

We live in Streatley, so outside of the village itself but so close to be regular users of the facilities. Our children are [young] but as they will be growing up here I imagine we will be participating in clubs and sports for years to come! We regularly use the Rectory Gardens and Gardiner Recreation Ground. I'm embarrassed to say I've never known where exactly Bourdillon was! I'm extremely supportive of new recreation areas for all ages of children. We regularly drive to Benson, Crowmarsh Gifford and Sonning Common to use their parks as there is so much more on offer. The play equipment in both Goring and Streatley is out of date, tired and very limited in terms of play value.

I would question the provision of adult 'green gym' equipment. There is a lot on offer in Streatley recreation ground but I have only ever seen children use this - never adults!

Mixed Play areas for pre-school and primary age children would make sense for siblings.

—
I loved your comment about making space for girls. You are right to comment that football/cricket are more male focused sports and we should ensure we have a space for teenage girls to access and take part. I'm afraid I don't have any ideas though... Have any surveys been done to see what they would like to have here? Perhaps ensuring a netball pitch as part of your all-weather pitch provision - there are a lot of local netball groups nearby.

I'm extremely supportive of any of the changes you are proposing - anything would be an improvement on what is currently provided. Thanks for taking the time to look into it.

The History Society:

We would be more than happy to provide any information required on the history of the Open Spaces and to work with the Council on the production of interpretation boards. We have plenty of experience of putting on exhibitions and displays and have, for example, worked with the Anne Carpmael Trust on signage on Withymead Nature Reserve. We would be very pleased to help to promote the history of Goring in this way. There are also sources of funding that we are aware of for this kind of project.

It would be helpful if all of the consultation comments from this and the first round are published so that residents can consider other input to help inform their own views. This will make the consultation a better and more open process. This current document is a useful start to help steer a discussion on next steps but the recommended options need to have a stronger justification.

The strategy and choices need to be EVIDENCE BASED, not based on personal opinion or simply based on the number of preferences for a particular facility or option. This evidence should include a proper analysis of the pros and cons and some analysis to demonstrate that the recommendations are genuinely the highest priorities for the village. The recommended options should drop out of this analysis. The current approach seems to be a wish list and then recommendations/preferred options pulled out of thin air with no evidence.

A new secure young children's playground is included in the Site-Specific requirements for the new Springhill Rd development (GNP6). This will be available for all residents of the village, not just those living in the new development

Thanks for sharing the Open Spaces Report. It is brilliant to see that we are prioritising the next generation with the proposals. As parents of a three year old that will grow up in this thriving, community focused village, we have always been disappointed by the facilities currently in existence in comparison to surrounding villages. Therefore we travel to access these facilities (particularly playgrounds) which obviously has an environmental impact.

Outdoor spaces, sports and play are vital to children's development (there is plenty of research out there to back this up!) and when you consider the % of the local population that will benefit from these proposed enhancements (parents, grandchildren, children, sports clubs, community groups etc.) there should be no questions around investing in facilities that will bring substantial cultural, health, and social benefits and enhance community engagement.

So we are strongly in support of the changes overall. But I would add some constructive feedback to support the delivery and approach to taking these forward.

I would encourage you to seek out input from relevant community groups to support the delivery and more detailed planning of taking these forward. e.g. gather together a group of parents (and grandparents!) representing children of relevant ages to review proposals for play equipment and feed into specifics on the choices of this equipment. Make this feel like a community project for the community (rather than a Council project - you'll get greater buy in). Just be clear and upfront about where decisions lie with the council and where we 'the community' can feed in.

Consideration is given to the life-time of the equipment and its maintenance. There is no point in investing upfront and it deteriorating over time. We don't want to be back here again in 5 years time!

Give careful consideration to the style and design of equipment / pavillions etc. creating something in keeping with the village but also that won't look 'tired' in future. Example of this is the current brightly coloured metal play equipment - paint peels, rust sets in and it looks very dated (90s!), so parents and children don't visualise themselves playing there.

[Continued From Above]

Think carefully about the play equipment - creating a safe but attractive, inviting, timeless and natural play space. Nature is so important for children's development - it encourages imaginative play and a respect for the environment. There are numerous examples of great outdoor play spaces (Dinton Pastures, Reading, for example) that use nature and natural resources to create play spaces. I've attached a few photos of another we recently encountered - this was covered in kids of all ages! I also feel a more natural style of playground would probably be more accepted by others in the village too.

Provide a timeline for making this happen! What needs to happen next? This would help the community understand what's involved in making something like this come to life. It's not just having budget, it's about community engagement and involvement, health & safety, compliance etc. its complex - but it is vital there are timelines to keep us all (this is a community project after all) on track and help make decisions when decisions are needed.

Strongly encourage consultation with girls (Make Space For Girls) and I'd suggest doing this before plans get too tied down! Finally, thank you for championing this project and continuing to push this forwards - let's get this moving though and not take another however many years to make it happen!

First thing i wanted to say is it's brilliant that the Parish Council is looking at this open spaces strategy so proactively. We have a changing demographic in Goring that is clear to see over the [] years we have been here. In that we have a growing population of younger families moving into the villages. increasing the need for more recreational space for young people, as well as keeping the older generations more active too.

I would like to provide my feedback on the Open Space Strategy Report. Overall, I wholeheartedly agree with the findings of the report and, having lived in Goring for the past [] years, believe that the improvement in Goring's green spaces is long overdue.

Another priority must be dealing with the crossing at the railway bridge where the High Street joins Wallingford Road. This has become extremely hazardous as the traffic on our roads has increased, and especially so during the winter months with the short daylight hours. This is the main route down to not only the Sheepcot playing fields but also to the train station and is the route a number of school children take to catch their school bus outside the station. I think this needs to be addressed as a priority.

I do hope the momentum on this isn't lost as I believe some decisions need to be made very soon.

I am writing to give you my comments after reading the public spaces report. My main points are:

A community management group might be helpful to take any additional pressure off the parish council and take some responsibility for helping organise some events and for fundraising for the projects eventually to be finalised and prioritised. There need to be better points for crossing the main road/high street and particularly near the bridge which is a difficult area for the less able and those with buggies.

We need access points to the river for swimming/canoeing etc and these would need a parking facility plus drinking water and toilet facilities.

We live in a lovely village which attracts a lot of visitors who would benefit from much more signage which should be an attractive and clear way of disseminating information.

Playground facilities - these have never been very good since we moved here in []. We and our friends used to take our children to the playground in Blewbury in those days and these days take our grandchildren to South Stoke and elsewhere as the playgrounds in Goring are just not good enough. I think we should have facilities for older children too such as the pump track referred to and ideally outdoor exercise equipment to keep fit.

Outside of [], I have lived in the village since [] and before that grew up as a child/young adult here between []. Therefore, my first observation is that it is great to see a detailed open spaces strategy and consultation performed. There are lots of good actions and objectives set out and I am encouraged by the desire of the council to effect positive change.

I have [] young children (ages []) and my overriding priority is that we do everything we can do provide great and varied facilities for the children of a village. The second priority is then for actions / projects that allow us to develop and build our community so that it thrives.

Improvements to signage and information boards at each open space would be very welcome – this would benefit the wider community and I can see a real benefit for villagers and visitors wanting to understand what is going on at each location, and will be happy to support this in respect of cricket at the Gardiner

My [family] and I have lived in Goring for [] years. My children are now [].

I have read the full Open Spaces report.

Please see my various opinions and feedback below!

OS Strategy:

The overall objective of the OS Strategy does not seem to be clearly defined, meaning we don't know what success would look like and therefore which options best serve the community?

I assume the aim is to maximise satisfaction with open spaces, evidenced by increased usage of open spaces by village residents? Or, increased usage particularly in age groups / demographics with current low usage? And so the decision on investments should be based on obtaining maximum return on investment of council funds, measured by increase in level of usage, which will show that the open spaces have been improved effectively.

To this end, I would have wanted a professional report on this to contain quantitative data, on which informed decisions should be made:

What is the actual usage level of the open spaces today?

Of the options suggested, which will be most used, by which age groups, based on data for similar investments elsewhere? (eg. Pump track in North Yorkshire which is referenced – no users pictured!)

[Continued From Above]

As an adult, the open spaces in Goring are a great asset and a vital factor in making the village such a pleasant place to live. They must be protected from any development, and maintained to a sufficient level that they remain usable and accessible for village residents. Current levels of maintenance meet this (not sure on wheelchair accessibility) but could be improved. I am a parent, a dog owner, a jogger, an active member of the Tennis club and my children attend Goring Robins, and we support many community events (Hairy Legs, Gap festival etc) so I make good use of the spaces and appreciate them!

Young children (~0-8?) generally enjoy the play equipment more than the 'open space' itself. Play equipment at Bourdillon, especially, is limited and in poor repair (making it even more limited with pieces missing!). Yet, I appreciate the existence of the swings, within walking distance, which we visited most weekends until my children started school. Young children don't need anything fancy to keep them happy – only a sufficient amount of safely maintained equipment.

As I note below, there must be independent research available in this area to identify the most effective play equipment for children and best value for money to invest in. Their strongest desire is to climb, as noted in report.

I wanted to share the following feedback on the Goring-on-Thames Open Space Strategy report of December 2022, of which set out proposals in relation to various open spaces in the village.

I have lived in and around Goring for the past [] years and have [] sons – ages [].

As a general point, I wanted to share my view that the various sports clubs we have in Goring, in particular the football clubs, Goring Robins and Goring United FC, and Goring Cricket Club, are at the heart of the community. They strive to provide access to sport for all, something which is important for health and wellbeing. There is also a huge social aspects for both participants and their parents – the clubs bring people together. They need to receive the full support of the Goring Parish council so that they can continue to thrive.

A further general point is that as the father of [] young boys, I can confirm that the playgrounds and related recreational spaces in Goring are a real let down, and are not befitting of such a great village. We frequently take our sons to neighbouring villages, such as Blewbury, Crowmarsh and South Stoke to make the most of their far superior playing areas for children. I am delighted to see that the Open Spaces strategy report acknowledges this.

I am writing in support of the proposals to improve Goring's open spaces, particularly those aimed at children, teenagers and families.

I hope that the parish council will support these ideas and look to improve the amenities for the young people and future of the village.

I would like to start by saying how genuinely lucky I feel to be living in an area where the local council are putting forward strategies such as these in the first place as I'm aware not everywhere is quite so fortunate, so thank you. Broadly speaking I'm very happy with the recommendations as I feel that it gives the increasing population of younger people more opportunities to enjoy their spare time without relying on a car.

Thanks again for all the work you've already done to get to this stage, really do appreciate it.

Thank you for conducting the Open Spaces Review, it's an ambitious piece of work that if delivered would improve the quality of life in Goring.

General point

I noticed that perhaps an undue weight was attached to the volume of views expressed in the previous survey, for particular options. That can be dangerous in a self selecting survey because certain groups can be neglected. In this case I would hope the PC and Thirwall made a concerted effort to reach young people by attending clubs and the various schools and seeking views - I think it is unlikely children and teenagers would have responded to such a formal process in proportion to their population size. I'm not suggesting any new work is done, just that the council bears the potential for under representation in mind as it approaches decision making.

I have been reading through the information in The Goring-on-Thames Open Spaces Strategy report and agree with most if not all of the proposals contained within in it.

Although I do not live in Goring (we live in Woodcote) my family uses the various different parks and green spaces often, there is a definite need for them to be updated and made more accessible to all also.

It would be great to see an improvement in the available things to do for younger children, older children and adults, looking at the various proposals for each site there seems to be an overall balance of this.

The pump track would be of great benefit to the village as it would give the older children something extra and different to do and mean that they aren't having to impede on other spaces where it may not be all that sensible or reasonable to be hanging around, I also think that a designated skate park even on a small scale would be of great benefit.

None of the changes, additions or modifications are outlandish or unrealistic and I would like to say that I am in favour of it going ahead.

Whilst I appreciate that not everyone will feel as I do it is important that I shared my views for the generations coming up who stand to benefit from this just as much if not more than we would.

It is good to have an extensive overview of the public spaces in Goring. There are certain aspects of the report that can be applauded, indicating potential developments e.g. children's play area revamp, and new pavilions for football and one for tennis at Sheepcote Field. The notion of history/landscape interpretation panels of e.g. Rectory Gardens, Gardiner Recreation and Sheepcote Field would be interesting for residents and visitors alike. However the overall feel of the report is that it has been created by an urban design company with little notion of what makes Goring the VILLAGE that it is today. The ideas for interpretation come from urban settings and relate little to the Goring Gap. It seems as if everything has to be organised and made to look pretty e.g wild flower planting in Gardiner Recreation. The dogs will love them and pee on them, and the children will pick the now contaminated flowers!!!

There is mention within the document that people thought a forest school would be a good idea. My response is to say that there is one such school in Goring it is at The Withymead Nature Reserve. However it is not Council owned. The report made much of sustainability I would say if it ain't broke don't fix it and save money. The more developments there are the more they have to be maintained at a significant cost to the parish. Much of the report is urban in flavour, please don't make Goring urban. It is not a chocolate box village and has a unique identity, I for one don't want an identikit urbanised community.

First of all, thank you to you and the Parish Council for undertaking the study and allowing the time for proper consultation on this important issue.

I grew up in the village, moving away for university and work, and then moved back [] years ago to raise our family here. Our children our now []. Unfortunately, the provision in open spaces for families and young children in the village is inadequate and has fallen well behind what is appropriate or even necessary.

For example, families are currently required to drive to neighbouring, often much smaller villages like Moulsoford or Blewbury, to find play equipment of a decent standard. Provision of high quality, varied play equipment (consummate with the wonderful village in which we always count ourselves lucky to live) should be a priority within the strategy.

Finally, we would not support more areas being devoted to planting. The jubilee garden was unfortunately a misconceived endeavour, and in no way represents value for money if the figures we have heard are accurate (and appears to be a thinly veiled anti-parking measure given the many wooden posts). Our experience is that it has increased risk to children as they are now forced to walk down the road to sheepcote at busy times rather than being able to walk on the verge.

We recognise that these priorities will need significant capital expenditure, but if sensible choices are made consistent with the above, this will be a huge and long term improvement to the village for all.

I agree with the eight objectives for Goring's Public Open Spaces in particular Objective Three which will ensure that all open spaces are welcoming and safe for as wide a range of visitors as possible. This by definition is the function of a public open space.

I am in favour of more play provision for young people in Goring and have always taken an interest in the young people of this village having served on the committees of Goring Pre-School, Goring Primary School, 1st Goring Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Beavers and Cubs and for many years, Goring Youth Club. I was also involved for many years with youth activities at Goring Thames Sailing Club.

These are my comments on the report circulated in January 2023, starting with the public open space closest to my home.

I would suggest that the Council in making decisions on the installation and location of play equipment on both Sheepcot Field and other public open spaces should contact ROSPA and the Police Architectural Liaison Officer for our area. They can offer good practical advice and I will send an attachment tomorrow giving information that may be useful to yourselves and the landscape architects.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the comprehensive Thirlwall Open Spaces Strategy report.

Overall, the document is quite impressive in the amount of information and the different options. With Goring having these five open spaces, it is reassuring to know that there is a proposed plan to manage these public assets and to encourage greater community use. It is also reassuring to see the effort in improving some of the facilities, most importantly the playgrounds and the potential of a teen space - currently lacking in Goring.

Green Flag Award as an assessment tool

It was helpful to have the assessment criteria, especially as the document is so comprehensive. I would suggest that the headings under 'A Welcoming Place' are quite important and should have a sense of priority in the future projects on these sites. Goring does seem to be substandard in this area, and much could be done - rather simply - to improve. Environmental Management is also important to me, and it is good to see this being assessed. Some site recommendations seem to fall short on this, though, and should have more weight. (Specifically the idea of a 3G/artificial turf pitch. All should be done to minimise risk to our river and natural environment, and should be abandoned if there is risk of harm.)

[Continued From Above]

Objectives

I support the seven of the eight objectives highlighted in the report and suggest that these seven are adopted by the Council as guiding principles for all activity regarding the open spaces. I would suggest that Objective five would be unnecessary extra work.

Dogs

I feel more can be done to support households with dogs. As I understand it, over 50% of all Goring's households have at least one dog, and dogs are clearly a part of rural life. Providing dog poo bins is a bare minimum. More could be done to have watering places, dog lead ties near benches/walls, places for dogs to walk and exercise to name a few.

Adult Exercise

A small provision of adult outdoor exercise equipment at each location should be considered, and ways to include small areas on each open space is recommended. It doesn't need to be lavish. Something straight-forward and easy to use, especially some things that can be used by differently abled individuals.

As a parent with [] young children and [] that play for Goring Robins, I am very excited to see the open spaces strategy, which I feel is much needed.

Goring is a great village with much to offer but I feel it is not catering for the young people and there needs to be more in the village for the children.

Although we are lucky to have so much green space in the village, we still take the children out of the village to neighbouring villages to use their playgrounds.

There needs to be much better play areas for all ages of children. There is not 1 goal in the village for children to play footy outside of the Goring Robins, there needs to be a goal that is accessible and can be used by the children for a kick about.

I understand that we are an ageing population and that the older people in the village far outnumber the children, but there is a great community spirit amongst the parents of the children in the village, that volunteer to help at the Robins, Cubs, Beavers etc etc and I really do hope that these voices will be heard and that the development of the open spaces will move forward and move forward in a timely manner.

Please just don't forget the tweens in all of this as the younger kids are generally better catered for and easier to please!

First I want to say how it's really encouraging that the council commissioned this extensive strategic review of the uses and facilities of Goring's open spaces and I really hope the ideas and improvements can be implemented as they are severely overdue.

I have lived in Goring almost [] years and have [] primary aged children. In that time, I have seen surrounding villages get revamped playgrounds and amazing facilities, meanwhile Goring's have deteriorated and equipment has been removed and not replaced. As a result we will often travel by car outside the village to use play areas in other villages. It is very disappointing as Goring is such a lovely place to live otherwise and it makes no sense that other villages, even those much smaller, have invested in facilities for children and sports clubs when Goring has not for many years.

The priorities and the minimum that should be achieved in my opinion are replacing and extending the range of play equipment at both Bourdillon and Gardiners, improving the various paths and increasing benches around the sites and replacing the clubhouse and increasing the car park at Sheepcot. Whilst I have primary aged children currently that would benefit from these improvements, I see these are important for future generations in our community. And surely who would not support these projects to benefit the health, wellbeing and enjoyment of our community's children and grandchildren, current and future, with the many additional benefits in the proposals for the wider community too. Some thoughts on each open space individually are below.

I look forward to hearing how the open spaces projects will be progressed and really hope the sites can be improved so that the village has great facilities and playgrounds to be proud of.

The report is very helpful and I am excited about the potential to transform the open spaces in Goring to the benefit of the wider community. Please could you record my comments as detailed below and confirm receipt by the deadline.

Thirlwell's review makes interesting reading. The report's preferred options are largely proportionate and fair, with the notable exception of the bizarrely irresponsible proposal to destroy the Bowling Green (Gardiner Option 2). Serious, but not unexpected, concerns have been highlighted about children's road safety at the Sheepcot field which need urgent action and there are some 'nice to have' proposals which in the current economic climate are beyond the requirements or expectations of village sport (e.g. £150,000 for the levelling and draining of pitches).

It rightly places safety as a priority. Fortunately, it does not include the council's previous plan to shoe-horn a substantial 70 metre long play area along the N/NW boundary of the cricket field, the strong reaction to which eventually instigated this report. It also recognises that the areas under the control of the council should be well maintained and accessible.

The report is long. Its brief extends beyond that of the Terms of Reference agreed by the council in July 2020. In terms of transparency, no updated brief appears to have been published in the intervening years with the result that in total the recommendations appear financially and practically ambitious for a rural village of 3,335 people. In terms of its value for money the report is generally 'preaching to the converted' and is based on common sense. Because it contains no technical details or designs it could have been produced by the council or a group of volunteers as was the Neighbourhood Plan. It has identified the areas for improvement that have already been brought to the attention of the Parish Council by residents over the last decade, such as the need for improved play areas for the Gardiner and Bourdillon fields, a new Sheepcot pavilion, a provision for young teenagers (using the money donated by the Youth Club in 2016 and gifted to the village for that purpose) and green waste management. Having spent the money (Budget - £8-10k) it is to be hoped that the council will now move quickly to address these priorities as they are very long overdue. The expectation that the report would give some additional information about its proposals (such as the type of play equipment it recommends and a CGI of the of the cricket nets in the alternative positions) was not met. Hopefully the council will now engage with parents and other interested parties to work with them to fundraise, design and create the play spaces that the review has recommended.

[Continued From Above]

The report should have emphasised the importance of the surrounding environment. By using the Green Flag criteria it generally appears to have only considered the use of our open spaces to be commensurate with the requirements of urban settlements which have no immediate access to the countryside. Goring is in a valley within the Chilterns area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is surrounded on three sides by open countryside and on the western boundary by the River Thames and has an abundance of natural resources that are used for recreation such as health-walking, Nordic walking, running, horse-riding, cycling and wild swimming. These activities are pursued by residents and visitors of all ages. Goring has thriving sailing and rowing clubs with their own premises on the river Three ancient A145 routes intersect in Goring, the Thames Path, the Icknield Way and the Ridgeway which are used by large numbers of locals and visitors each year.

[Continued from above]

Some of the conclusions appear to be based on assumptions, rather than facts. Misunderstandings may have been prevented with wider consultation with the village's volunteer groups, land owners and neighbours of the sites under review.

The review recommends a proliferation of additional signage which requires regular maintenance and updating. In larger urban settlements signs may be necessary but with Goring's excellent information services in GGN, GGN directory and GENIE our local sports organisations have websites, they are not. It talks about dog fouling but does not mention all the existing signage requiring dogs to be kept on leads e.g. on the Gardiner Field.

It is not clear if the consultant was briefed by the council on the relevant legal constraints such as the covenants on the Rectory Garden (which the council has previously used to refuse the gifting of 6 memorial seats), or the Gardiner field in relation to the sale of alcohol. In its proposal for Ferry Lane the author seems to be unaware of relevant Riparian rights.

Although environmental, horticultural and sustainability responsibilities are a constant and important theme in the report, it is notable that there was no consultation by Thirlwell with local voluntary groups involved in protecting the environment and increasing biodiversity and sustainability in the community. As accessibility is an important consideration, was MIGGS, the well-regarded local accessibility and disability issues group, consulted by the author? When drawing up a strategy for the way forward these omissions are significant.

[Continued From Above]

The report recognises that a variety of organised sports take place on the council-managed Open Spaces but it is a fact that these areas are also very well used for informal noncompetitive recreation and games such as fishing, camping, walking, jogging, physical training sessions, casual ball sports, rounders, kite flying, Tai 'chi, yoga, dog-walking, meeting friends and enjoying picnics on the grass etc. Therefore, it was reassuring to note that the report does not include any adult exercise equipment on the Gardiner field, as promoted by the Council in its Feb 2022 consultation. It does advocate shelters from the sun or rain and picnic tables which are also obstacles and attract antisocial behaviour (previous shelters have been removed for this reason). This 'clutter' will reduce accessibility to the space available during cricket matches and football games. The numerous large trees provide shade from the sun. If it is raining people don't hang around. With regard to storage facilities for the sports clubs the report does not comment on the reduction of valuable changing and storage space for the sports clubs by the occupation of the Gardiner Pavilion by the council in 2021. This is an important omission when considering a strategy for the immediate future.

[Continued from above]

The Objectives:

Were these objectives in the brief for the Landscape Architect? They are not referenced and appear to relate mainly to the entire village including all village groups and organisations.

In particular:

Ob 1&2, High Quality Open Spaces and Climate action: these are useful reminders to the council of its responsibilities. Are they laid down in its own Standing Orders? They could be published in the GGN and on the notice boards as an Environmental Mission Statement.

Ob 3

A Welcoming Place. Goring generally prides itself on being a welcoming place and it attracts many visitors. The council itself has expressed the view that visitors are not always welcome. Hopefully this objective will change some minds. Maintaining Standards. The council itself must ensure that it first meets and maintains the standards it sets for others.

Ob 4 Signage

Signs are costly and need regular maintenance. They are not always necessary. A small rural community where every resident receives a monthly village magazine and twice monthly GENIE and has access many local websites is very different from an urban community. Village people know what goes on and where. The residents and shopkeepers are friendly and verbal information is always available for visitors. There is already history and information on the village maps at the carpark, station and lock approach. Why was this not referenced?

[Continued From Above]

Ob 5 Recreation Trust:

I find this proposal concerning. Why should GPC fundraise for the sports clubs and other organisations when these groups have always managed their funding themselves and will want to carry on doing so? Why does the council need to provide guidance to them? If they need advice they can seek it from their governing bodies who are set up for this purpose. This objective assumes that Goring's sports clubs and other organisations are not knowledgeable, experienced or competent enough to run, fund, insure and safeguard their own groups. Where is the rationale for the council getting involved in this way? Where will GPC find the resources to manage an extra layer of work? The promotion of organisations is already in place using the broad selection of communication methods within the village.

[Continued From Above]

OB 6 Lead on all planning decisions.

Is this correct? GPC cannot decide its own applications. The parish council (or its agent) will submit planning applications for property that it owns e.g the sports pavilion, and would presumably take it's own pre-planning advice from the SODC planning office. It should not interfere with applications made by other entities as this would be a conflict of interests in determining its own view of such applications. This also implies that the parish council has the expertise to give pre-planning advice.

OB 7 Build partnerships.

Again – an ambitious objective mostly irrelevant to this report because it seems to apply to the whole village.

OB 8 Consultation and dialogue.

Community events:

I strongly disagree with the recommendation that the council should continue to hold community events. The time taken to organise them displaces the time available for the council's more pressing responsibilities and has proved to delay other business. To do it well takes experience and an enthusiastic team. The two Summers of Play events organised by the council, at a disproportionate cost per head to the public purse, only appealed to a limited demographic. Compared to other much larger and inclusive events organised by the general community, they were attended by relatively few people.

There are many informal events such as football, tennis and cricket matches; concerts, celebrations, society meetings and charitable work that councillors could attend to identify changes in attitude and better understand local need and a few councillors already do this.

Regular meetings with clubs and societies can be effective and should already be factored into the Council's calendar.

Consultations are expensive and can be biased. The one produced by the council and referred to in the report was flawed, misleading and incomplete.

S2.1 I agree with Thirlwell that the present traffic versus pedestrian situation is very dangerous. This must be resolved quickly before a child is injured. I suggest that for a start the planting is moved and a proper footpath is installed on the verge on the south side of the entrance road.

The impact on the neighbours of Sheepcot of these many proposals will be addressed by those who are in a position to understand it best. It is to be hoped that the council will now take action as soon as possible to get the best value out of this Strategy review and get the work done.