

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES FOR 2019 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 21<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2019**

- **Allotments Committee**
- **Planning Committee**
- **Recreation & Amenities Committee**
- **Remembrance Day Committee**
- **Communications Committee**
- **Seacourt Hall Management Committee**
- **Louie Memorial Pavilion Trustees**

### **Allotments Committee Report**

The long hot summer dried out our clay soil and made gardening difficult last year, although the plots by Seacourt Stream were a shady refuge. Enjoy them while you can, as the Flood Alleviation Scheme threatens to replace the tranquil views with heavy machinery for several years to come. On the plus side, our riverside plots may become less prone to flooding.

We have been advised that allotment tenancies should coincide with the growing season, so this year's rents have been adjusted to cover an extra three months. All will then be in order for next year's invoices to be sent out by the new Parish Council. We still have a few vacant plots, so now is the time to step forward if you want to grow your own vegetables.

The annual meeting for tenants took place on 16th February, and was addressed by Carol Kramer, gardener and nutritionist, on the subject of Good Food from Good Soil. The pump handle on the well is now fixed and we have acquired a small electric pump to keep the neighbouring tank filled. Thanks are due to Chris Sugden for his help. The plot markers are currently being brought up to scratch, and a skip has been hired for tenants to clear their plots.

Inspections will take place at the end of April, the end of July and in October.

The Allotments Committee has historic responsibility for the Community Orchard and the Nature Reserve in North Hinksey Lane. Much work has been done here over the winter. The nature reserve has been tidied and cleared, and the willows round the pond thinned and pollarded, thanks to Oxford Conservation Volunteers. As a result it was possible to see the boggy ditch at the back of the field. This has now been dug out and we will be planting some appropriate wildflowers along its length. The new regime, by which the Nature Reserve hedge is hand-cut at the end of July, and the whole length of the hedge is machine-cut in February means that it is a better source of food for birds.

The memorial garden was a sorry state, but has now been cleaned out and cut back. Hopefully this will make it less of an inviting haven for bad behaviour. We look forward to seeing how the plants and bushes revive, without nettles and brambles to choke them. The benches still need to be sanded down and stained, but once this has been done the garden will become a pleasant place to sit again as summer approaches.



*Councillor Ag MacKeith, Allotments Committee Chairman*

## Planning Committee Report

The Planning Committee continues to comment on a wide range of applications, though not those submitted under the (amended) 1995 General Permitted Development Order, where only neighbours can comment. Our objections to an application have to be supported by the Vale of White Horse Ward District Councillor (Cllr. Debby Hallett) if the Vale's Planning Committee is to discuss it. Some earlier applications for conversions or replacement by blocks of flats, to which we objected on the grounds of poor general amenity space, but which the Vale approved, are now well under way, notably at 47 West Way and 8 Elms Road, and confirm our concerns. On the Seacourt Retail Park the drive-through coffee shop and the new access from the A34 slip road are now open; Homebase has closed, but has not been replaced by a Marks & Spencer Food Store, as once suggested, and it appears that the rest of the planned development is now on hold. In Botley Centre the interim replacement accommodations for the Seacourt Hall, Baptist Church, Co-op, pharmacy and Tesco are now operating smoothly. Alongside them the new West Way Centre construction is proceeding by leaps and bounds. At long last Persimmon has agreed to complete the Tilbury Fields estate to the original plans, requiring significant work to upgrade roads and re-work drainage to a satisfactory standard, with corresponding inconvenience to those living there. The planned play area, urgently needed for young families on the estate and others in this part of the parish, is still being used as a builders' yard. Details of developments near you, and their progress, can be found on the Vale of White Horse's Planning website by inputting the reference number or the address. If you believe that what is being built is not in agreement with the approved plans, you should ring the Vale's Enforcement Team on 01235-422600. I would like to thank the other five members of the committee and the Parish Clerk for their help with planning applications over the past year.

*Councillor Andrew Pritchard, Planning Committee Chairman*

## Recreation & Amenities Committee report for Annual Parish Meeting 2019

Over the past four years the R&A Committee has focused on the **NHPC key objective** of providing an improved range of leisure and recreational facilities within the parish. We've made visible progress, but the work is only partially done. So even as this council's term comes to an end we keep moving towards longer-term goals for the community.

In January we opened the **new adventure play area** in the upper Louie Memorial Playing Field. This followed more than three years of reviewing available facilities, consulting local young people, undertaking longer-term planning for the playing fields, and selecting the equipment (zip wire, trampoline, and big swings). It was fantastic to finally deliver this for the community to enjoy!

**NHPC is now seeking planning permission for a multi-use building** to replace the Louie Memorial Pavilion. After a special meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March when NHPC approved the planning materials, the application was submitted on 18<sup>th</sup> March. R&A Committee members have supported the development of these plans since early 2018 by working with community stakeholders including Pavilion Trustees, Scouts representatives, and Youth Club leaders. Hundreds of parishioners took part in public consultation events as the plans emerged. There is still much work to be done to make the new building a reality, but we couldn't have made it this far without so much community effort.

A **formal public consultation** will soon be run by Vale District Council planning officers as they consider the plans. Once the application is registered (usually within two weeks) it will be given an online page linked to the application number (P19/V0696/FUL). On that webpage you will be able to

view all application documents, follow a link to comment on the application, and view all other comments. We strongly encourage everyone to take part in the consultation. NHPC will post information on its noticeboards and website about how to view and comment on the plans once the application appears on the Vale's website. Hard copies of the plans will be available for viewing at the parish office (by arrangement with the Parish Clerk) and at Botley Library. See below for Vale's general guidance on commenting on a planning application.

Preparation for the planning application included an **ecological survey** of the playing fields in November. The R&A Committee is taking forward recommendations for further surveys on bat activity and the health of the fen in the spring, for which we welcome support from organisations such as BBOWT. The North Hinksey Conservation Volunteers have worked tirelessly to keep the woodlands bordering the playing fields enjoyable for all, and we thank them for their dedicated efforts.

In the course of its work the R&A Committee has built **strong relationships within the community**. The trial agreement with Matthew Arnold School for use of the Louie Memorial football pitch and MUGA for PE lessons has been a great success, and we are recommending that the agreement be extended. We are also very grateful to the Pavilion Trustees and Caretakers, who have looked after the building and playing fields with great care.

So lots behind us, but more exciting things on the horizon. All are welcome to attend the next R&A meeting on 4th April.

*Councillor Caroline Potter, R & A Committee Chairman*

### **Comment on a planning application**

You can comment on a planning application using our online form, once the consultation period on an application has opened. You'll find the link to the comments form in the application's information page. We can only take [material planning considerations](#) into account when determining a planning application.

### **Material planning considerations**

When commenting on planning applications, please ensure that what you say is relevant to planning, as the council can only take into account material planning considerations.

Relevant planning issues include:

- Overshadowing and loss of light
- Overdominance
- Noise disturbance, smells, obtrusive lighting or other impacts on amenity
- The planning history of a site
- National planning policies and guidance
- Regional planning policies and guidance
- Local planning policies and guidance
- Highway safety issues
- Traffic generation

- Car parking provision
- Design, including appearance, layout, scale, density and materials
- Local drainage issues
- Local flooding issues
- Loss of important open spaces
- Loss of important community facilities
- Impact on important trees
- Proposed landscaping
- Impact on the character or setting of a listed building
- Impact on the character or appearance of a conservation area

This list is not exhaustive but it gives a clear idea of the sort of comments that are relevant to the consideration of a planning application.

Examples of what are not material planning considerations include:

- Reduction in property values
- Loss of a private view over land
- Boundary and access disputes, covenants and other private property matters
- Questioning the applicant's motives or morals
- That a planning application has been submitted retrospectively
- Commercial competition

### **Report from the Chairman of the Remembrance Day Committee**

The 2018 Remembrance Day service at Botley Cemetery took place on a beautiful autumn morning and provided a peaceful setting in which to reflect on the exact moment that the First World War ended, 100 years to the day. We were delighted to welcome many local residents, a large contingent of HM Forces, local Clergy, representatives of local, national and international government, local Police, uniformed groups of children with their leaders and pupils from Matthew Arnold School. We welcomed new Parish Clerk Colin Ryde, who has assisted on many previous occasions by amplifying and broadcasting the service. Retiring Parish Clerk Alan Stone had, as usual, worked tirelessly to enable this, his last service, to run smoothly. The W.I. hall was packed at the end of the service with people enjoying the hot drinks and wonderful home-made biscuits. There was also a chance to look at the work of local school children, who responded movingly to our search for poems and pictures relating to our theme of peace and reconciliation. Matthew Arnold pupil Olivia Metson read her poem, Peace, during the service which ends: Let there be love For those we've lost For those who live As we remember them Let there be peace A bond of unity and love Let them bring us together As we remember them. Our guest speaker was Alan Pope, ex Lord Mayor of Oxford and chair of the Oxford-Bonn Twinning Link, now in its 72nd year. Alan's speech and samples of the children's work are on the NHPC website (Remembrance Day Section). Alan Pope finished his talk with following very fitting words: Here in this cemetery are graves of British and Commonwealth servicemen as well as their enemies-Germans and Italians. But it is right that we now remember all those who died in the war, regardless of their nationality. All fought for their country. And with this sacrifice in mind, let us be positive and active in continuing to work for a more peaceful world, based on reconciliation and hope for the future.

*Councillor Voirrey Carr Remembrance Day Committee Chairman*

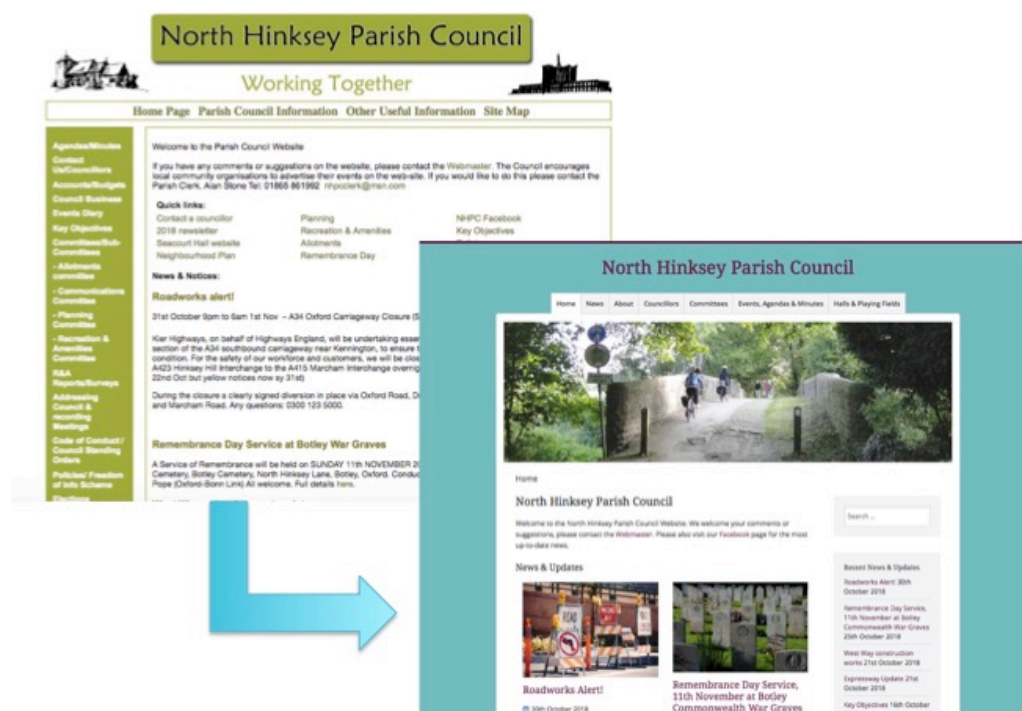
## Communications Committee Report for APM, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019

### New Website:

Much of the Committee's work in the past year has focused on the creation of a new Parish Council website which launched in November at: [www.northhinksey-pc.gov.uk](http://www.northhinksey-pc.gov.uk)

After a tender process we selected Oxford-based Kitson Consulting early in 2018 to build the website. The new site is built in Wordpress, probably the most well-used website platform, so it will be easier to keep up to date than the old site. We took time to audit the old site, remove out of date information and structure the website in a more logical way. The website is simpler and faster to update and is designed to be cheaper to maintain. It is also mobile-optimized; the website pages adjusts to the screen size of your phone or tablet, with menus, images and text displayed in more useful ways.

The transfer from the old website was smooth with no problems reported. But be aware, if you bookmarked pages in the old site then these will no longer work as the structure is different. You can reset your bookmarks by visiting the new website. We have made some changes to labelling and layout following feedback, and we continue to make adjustments to improve the usability. Please send any feedback to the webmaster at: [website@northhinksey-pc.gov.uk](mailto:website@northhinksey-pc.gov.uk)



### Facebook update:

The NHPC Facebook page is used for more rapid communications, events and news items. Posts have included information about roadworks, meetings, West Way construction updates, and information from other bodies (e.g. County and District Councils) that NHPC receives to distribute.

The posts with most engagement in 2018 are listed in the Appendix below. Last year we experimented by using free credit for a Facebook advert to promote Seacourt Hall, which reached over 1000 people defined by geography and interest in 2 days. The regular posts reached a maximum of 529 people. Where we posted something as an Event we achieved a greater reach: the Pavilion consultation and the Remembrance Day posts both reached more than 2000 people.

### Events & Noticeboards

This year we have held drop-in events for the Louie Memorial Pavilion consultation and took part in the summer opening event for the relocated Seacourt Hall. We have also co-ordinated update articles for most issues of *The Sprout* to keep parishioners up-to-date on NHPC happenings, and we have co-ordinated the compiling and distribution of the NHPC Annual Newsletter in paper and electronic forms.

The Council installed a new noticeboard in North Hinksey Village this year, and a budget has been assigned for a Noticeboard in the Tilbury Fields development in the next financial year.

*Lorna Berrett, Chair of Communications Committee*

### APPENDIX: NHPC FACEBOOK UPDATE

#### Top NHP Facebook Posts by Reach - July- 2018 – Jan 2019

1. Paid post – reach 1.1k  
Advert for Seacourt Hall:

Using Free Credit worth £15



#### The next top 10: organic (not paid)

1. 27 November: Police report of local arrest (reach: 529)
2. 8<sup>th</sup> August: Mace construction update (reach: 490)
3. 19<sup>th</sup> July: Parking update (reach: 481)
4. 2<sup>nd</sup> January: B4044 Path consultation (reach: 386)
5. 17<sup>th</sup> December: Parish Council meeting (reach: 363)
6. 11<sup>th</sup> December: Tilbury Fields Residents Meeting (reach: 323)
7. 24<sup>th</sup> October: A34 Road Closure (reach: 303)
8. 16<sup>th</sup> July: Dean Court affordable homes (reach: 298)



**Remembrance Day at Commonwealth War Graves**  
Commonwealth War Graves, Botley Cemetery, North Hinksey Lane  
Nov 11, 2018, 10:45 AM



**Seacourt Hall Open Day**  
2nd Floor, 1 Westminster Way (previously Grant Thornton building)  
Jul 15, 2018, 11:00 AM



**Rejuvenation of Louie Memorial Fields: Consultation Event**  
Louie Memorial Pavilion  
Apr 28, 2018, 10:30 AM



**Annual Parish Meeting**  
Seacourt Hall  
Mar 22, 2018, 7:30 PM

9. 3<sup>rd</sup> September: Job advert for Parish Clerk (reach: 278)
10. 16<sup>th</sup> September: Oxford to Cambridge Expressway (reach: 245)

#### Events posts:

1. Remembrance Day (reach: 2.2k)
2. LM Fields Consultation event (reach: 2.1k)
3. Annual Parish Meeting 2018 (reach: 561)
4. Seacourt Hall Open Day (reach: 540)

### **Seacourt Hall Management Committee Report**

This past year was one of long awaited and dramatic change with the demolition of the original Seacourt Hall and the move into temporary, larger accommodation on the second floor of the Grant Thornton building. This was a major step towards our new home in the Community Hub being built as part of the redevelopment of the West Way Shopping Centre. I would like to thank all the committee members, the hall keeper and the secretary/treasurer for their time, patience, scrutiny and valuable input, which has been vital to securing the hall we have now and ensuring the future for Seacourt Hall.

We worked with Mace/Botley Development Company to secure a number of important commitments to ensure the temporary space works for all users. These included suitable flooring for all types of use including dance and exercise, a fully fitted kitchen, craft room with sink, and access help for wheelchair users.

The temporary space now provides us with a lot more floorspace as well as the large hall (200 sqm) with 100sqm dancefloor, we have a larger fitted kitchen and separate meeting room (50 sqm), there are toilet facilities, an office for use by the Parish Council, storage room and a separate room we have designated as an art and craft room.

With this extra space we were able to work closely with Branches Youth group to agree primary use of the extra room by the youth group for art and craft classes for a low nominal rental but the craft room can also be booked by other groups. We are pleased to be working with local voluntary groups such as Branches and the Lunch Club and hope to continue and expand these relationships.

We held an Open Day in July to provide residents and groups with the chance to look around and to learn more about the space and facilities available, both in the temporary location and the plans for the permanent Community Hall.

After a year or more of uncertainty for users, I'm pleased to report that bookings have started to pick up again in 2019 for both one off events and new regular groups.

We have been working for some months with Mace, SDC, Ridge and Savills on the plans for the new permanent location for Seacourt Hall in the new community hub building currently under construction. The hall will be on the ground floor of the new community hub that will also contain the Library, Baptist Church, a roof garden and other facilities. With a modern kitchen, flexible space,

lounge area, a sprung floor and more, we hope the new hall will be equipped to serve the community for many decades to come.

We have recently agreed on flooring and wall colours and are currently discussing the kitchen layout and researching furniture options. We understand the building will be watertight in the next couple of months and will complete towards the end of the year. Look out for news later this year of the official opening date.

For the rest of 2019 we focus on promoting the use of the temporary hall and prepare for transition to the new space and the new possibilities that will provide.

*Lorna Berrett, Chair of Seacourt Hall Management Committee*

### **Report from Louie Memorial Pavilion Trustees**

The building continues to decline, albeit slowly, and we have not actively promoted it over the winter period for this reason. We have healthy usage of the facility by local football teams, thanks to the efforts of Nigel Allen, who handles our pitch bookings, and the North Hinksey Youth Club continues to use the space weekly.

I would like to take this opportunity to, once again, say that we wholeheartedly support the work being done by the Parish Council and fully support the planning application for the new building. We are keen to work with all users, including the Scout group, in the use of the new facility and are sure this is the most viable route forward for our community.

*Chairman Emmett Casley*