



North Hinksey Parish Council

2020 Newsletter



2020 Chairman's Report

The Botley Centre redevelopment continue apace, with the recent opening of the new community building. The Seacourt Hall Open Day on 25th January was a great opportunity to showcase our wonderful new facilities, and was a massive success, with hundreds of local residents attending (see photos below). By the summer most of the site will be open for business, with the Co-op, Tesco and other retailers transferring to their new homes. Phase 2 of the works will begin later this year.



The Oxford to Cambridge Expressway still remains a threat, although rumours about the demise of this project are being widely leaked, and we are hopeful that the Budget will bring good news on this issue.

Our Neighbourhood Plan has undergone Independent Examination and should shortly go to a public referendum, when you will be able to vote to adopt important policies that will strengthen planning legislation and make it more suited to the requirements of our local community.

Councillor David Kay, Parish Council Chairman

Annual Parish Meeting

We would like to encourage all parishioners to attend the **Annual Parish Meeting** at **7.30pm** on **Thursday 19th March** in **Seacourt Hall** (refreshments served from 7pm). Please send any questions in writing (an e-mail will do) to the Parish Clerk by 12 noon on Monday 16th March to receive a reply at the meeting.

This year there will be updates on the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, our Neighbourhood Plan, the replacement Pavilion, and progress on the Botley Centre redevelopment, but with so many things happening in and around the parish no doubt quite a few other topics will arise during the meeting.

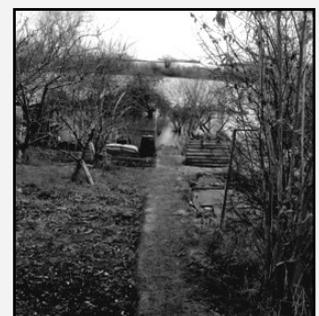
Remember, this is your chance as residents to set the agenda, and to discuss all of the local issues that are of most importance to you personally. Be there on 19th March to find out more.

Allotments

This is the first year in which the rent demands will be sent out at the end of March. Following that, the Annual Tenants' Meeting will be on Saturday 4th April. We like to entice our tenants with a speaker on an interesting topic, so if you have any good ideas, please get in touch. An exciting new initiative is the pond on Plot 97. The benefits for wildlife are many, but the main hope is to attract frogs and toads, our allies in the battle against slugs. Another experiment in chemical-free weed control was the chickens who cleared plot 103B. It was such a success that the committee has agreed to extend the offer to anyone who wants to try it. Two former tenants who have had to give up their plot, are missing the fresh air and satisfaction of gardening. They would be happy to help out, so if you are struggling with your plot, tell a committee member and we'll put you in touch.

As I write this, Hinksey Meadow is a lake, and floods have covered the bottom of our Seacourt Stream plots (see photo). If the Flood Scheme goes ahead, it might solve this problem, but at the cost of the trees that screen the plots from the retail warehouses on the Botley Road.

The Committee is also responsible for North Hinksey Nature Reserve. On 1st March, Oxford Conservation Volunteers came back to reduce the hedge they had laid in 2015 by bending in some of the long branches. We are lucky to have a fund (donated by Kevin Minns) to bring the Memorial Garden back into good shape. Work should start shortly, and we hope it will make the garden more inviting. Do come along and enjoy it.



Councillor Ag MacKeith, Allotments Committee Chairman

Environment & Wellbeing

In 2019 North Hinksey the Parish Council declared a 'climate emergency'. We did this because we recognise the seriousness of the climate crisis we face and the need for everyone and every organisation to act. Other parishes across the County have followed us in doing this. Like other councils including the Vale, the City and the County, we are now looking at how we can tackle the crisis. We have set up an 'Environment and Wellbeing Committee' and we are looking to work with local community groups on how we can make an impact. An example of where we can push for change has been our Neighbourhood Plan, where we have sought to set high environmental standards from new buildings and faced challenges from the inspector assessing that plan.



We know that we need to work with our local community and as a first step we set up 'Leap into Action!' – the 'Big Green Day' that we held on Saturday Feb. 29th. This looked to show local people how they can get involved in local action to protect and improve our environment and that doing this can be enjoyable.



We have also played an active part in opposing plans for the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway which could have had disastrous impacts on Botley. We helped develop joint work by parish councils to the West of Oxford and held a public meeting attended by around 200 people at the Seacourt Hall. At the time of writing it seems increasingly likely that this unwanted development will be abandoned.

In 2020 we will face new environmental challenges including possible impacts of the County Council's new Local Transport Plan and the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan. As a parish council we will do our best to influence these new plans so that they deliver positive change for our parish and our environment. We will also be looking at how we can improve and safeguard our local green spaces. The Environment Committee welcomes new ideas for activities within the parish.

Councillor Chris Church, Environment & Wellbeing Committee Chairman

Remembrance Day Service 2019

North Hinksey Parish Council again enjoyed good weather for its Remembrance Day Service. Through the hard work carried out by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission the cemetery was in excellent condition to mark this significant and sombre occasion. The service focused on two important strands of Remembrance. First, in remembering those from the Parish who gave their lives for their country in both World Wars, and second the involvement of future generations, not only as participants but as a means of learning what past generations sacrificed.

The service was well attended by members of the public of all ages, local dignitaries, local service organisations and serving members of the Armed Forces from Dalton Barracks who provided the honour guard. It was particularly good to see the continued participation of foreign military representatives, reflecting the multi-national origins of those buried in the Parish. All were moved by the Address given by Dr Rook in which he focused on the experiences of two parishioners from North Hinksey who lost their lives in conflict.

Our thanks to the pupils of Matthew Arnold School who actively participated in the Act of Remembrance and the Reading of the Names of local war dead, and to those involved in stewarding and distribution of orders of service. Equally, the presence of the Cubs Scouts and Guides at the service is greatly appreciated. Thanks must also go to the Oxfordshire Youth Brass Ensemble, to Parish Councillors, and especially to the Parish Clerk, Colin Ryde, for ensuring a successful service, and the WI for their post-Service provision of tea and cakes.

Finally, the Parish Council again held a small service to mark the armistice on the 11 Nov on Elms Parade, at which the Last Post was sounded, and the 2 minute silence marked.

Councillor Graham Fairclough, Remembrance Day Committee Chairman

Planning

North Hinksey's Planning Committee continue to receive over 50 planning applications to consider throughout the year. These vary from advertising hoardings and small change of uses right through to the consideration of major developments. This past year we have seen quite a few applications for changing the regular "family stock" housing of North Hinksey into either apartments or houses of multiple occupation (HMO). This has been particularly prevalent around the Lime Road/Laburnum Road junction. The Parish Council are keen to see the existing stock of family style homes maintained in accordance with the Vale of the White Horse's Local Plan.

We understand the need for a mixture of housing types, and apartments are welcome in an appropriate location but these should be sympathetic to the immediate surroundings, have good design character and include a good amount of amenity area and parking arrangements. The Parish Council have often made representations at Vale Planning Meetings to defend the character of North Hinksey as it is a issue we feel strongly about.

The long-awaited development of Seacourt Retail Park now seems close to completion. The decision by Marks & Spencer not to site a food store here initially led to some disappointment, and it seemed that the plans for further development would not take place. Now, with a new B&Q to be housed in the former Homebase building the Park should be well placed to serve the community.

The Planning Committee are invited to comment on all applications with the parish, plus other applications on adjoining land. These applications are all available on the VWHDC's website planning portal. We usually meet about every 3 weeks, on Thursday at 7:45 p.m. in Seacourt Hall. This is publicised on notice boards and on the NHPC website in advance. Parishioners are always welcome to attend and may be asked for their comments and to clarify points by the Committee.

Councillor Adam Rankin, Planning Committee Chairman

Recreation & Amenities

The R&A Committee manages the parish's main leisure space, the Louie Memorial Playing Fields. The previous Council had improvement of this space as one of its key objectives, and the current Council elected in 2019 continues work on this goal.

In July, following extended public consultation, planning permission was unanimously approved by Vale District Council for a new Louie Memorial Pavilion. The new shared-use building will replace the loved but dilapidated buildings currently on site. It has been designed as a flexible space to support a range of activities at the playing fields: sports training and matches, youth club sessions, scouts/guiding activities, community cafés, daytime sessions for older residents, children's birthday parties, etc. You can view the approved plans on the NHPC website or at the Annual Parish Meeting.



The parish council has been saving for a new pavilion since 2002, but we still have a lot of work to do on fundraising. This year we will apply for grants, seek donations, and plan fundraising activities to reach our goal. At the same time we will consider detailed design elements on eco-friendly features, so that the building is as sustainable as possible. If anyone has skills in these areas and would like to help us out, please get in touch.

Recommendations from two recent ecological surveys are informing our management plan for the playing fields, which we are reviewing and updating. A huge thank you for the significant contributions of local people in the autumn: North Hinksey Conservation Volunteers cut back the extensive summer growth in the rare fen habitat, and other residents worked with Oxford Conservation Volunteers to clear dense growth from the pond. We are grateful to everyone who works to keep our public green spaces enjoyable for all.

The next R&A committee meeting will be on 2nd April at 7pm – everyone is welcome!

Councillor Caroline Potter, R & A Committee Chairman

Parish Councillors to May 2020

Cllr Pauline Allen
79, Hurst Rise Road Tel. Oxford 862353

Cllr Alistair Bastin
21, Conifer Close Tel. 07943 433090
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Cllr Adam Rankin
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Parish Clerk

Mr. Colin Ryde
NHPC Parish office, Seacourt Hall, 1st Floor,
3, Church Way
9:30am to 3pm Monday to Thursday
Tel. & Fax Oxford 861992
E-mail: clerk@norththinksey-pc.gov.uk

District Councillors

Cllr Debby Hallett Tel. Oxford 435794
Cllr Emily Smith Tel. 07986 877933

County Councillor

Cllr Judy Roberts Tel. Oxford 319279

Seacourt Hall Bookings

Hall Manager Tel. 07452 960100

E-mail seacourt.hall@gmail.com

www.seacourthall.org.uk

www.facebook.com/seacourthall

Parish Council Responsibilities:

- Allotments, community orchard, and nature reserve
- Consideration/comments to the District Council on Planning matters
- Playing Fields, including the football pitch, MUGA, Trim Trail and children's play area
- Copse & concrete path from Cedar & Hurst Rise Roads
- Maintenance/upkeep of parish owned land / buildings including Louie Memorial Pavilion
- Parish owned bus shelters, notice boards and seats

Parish Council Committees:

- Planning
- Finance and General Purposes
- Environment & Wellbeing
- Allotments includes the North Hinksey Nature Reserve and the Community Orchard
- Recreation and Amenities
- Remembrance Day
- Communications

You can find news, contact details, information, policies, meetings diary, agendas and minutes on our website:

www.norththinksey-pc.gov.uk

For the latest news and updates follow:

www.facebook.com/norththinkseypc

Attendance at Council Meetings:

The following are the number and percentage of full Parish Council meetings attended by Parish Councillors over the year to February 2020:

Cllr P. Allen	8 out of 10	80%
Cllr A. Bastin	9 out of 10	90%
Cllr L. Berrett	8 out of 10	80%
Cllr D. Blase	9 out of 10	90%
Cllr J. Bolder	9 out of 10	90%
Cllr C. Church	5 out of 10	50%
Cllr M. Dowie	10 out of 10	100%
Cllr A. Dykes	10 out of 10	100%
Cllr G. Fairclough	9 out of 10	90%
Cllr L. Jones	9 out of 10	90%
Cllr D. Kay	10 out of 10	100%
Cllr A. MacKeith	8 out of 10	80%
Cllr A. Potter	9 out of 10	90%
Cllr A. Rankin	9 out of 10	90%

Other useful Telephone Numbers:

Vale District Council Milton Park 01235 422422
Oxford City Council Town Hall 01865 249811
Oxon County Council County Hall 01865 792422
Oxon County Council Highways (potholes & local highways problems—not A34) 0345 3101111
Thames Water Emergency Line 0800 714 614
Thames Valley Police Non-Emergency Calls 101