

NHPC APM 2017 Chairman's Report.

The past year has continued to be dominated by a number of major issues that I reported on in last year's Annual Parish Meeting. Not least of these is the Mace redevelopment of the Botley Centre site.

Matters have progressed, but as everyone will have noticed, works have not yet begun despite it being well past the original January start date. Discussions are taking place to agree revised phasing for the works which would result in an earlier completion date, combined with improved access and parking during the works, however details of these revised plans haven't been made public yet. We do know that the main works won't commence until 1st July at the earliest and when we are in a position to provide more information it will be placed on the Parish Council website, with regular updates as the redevelopment progresses.

Working with all relevant stakeholders during the works to minimise disruption for residents and businesses is one of the five key objectives agreed by the Parish Council last year, and these objectives will form the focus of our efforts throughout the remainder of this Council's term.

Two other objectives related to the provision of improved leisure and recreational facilities in the parish, and securing the long-term viability of the Louie Memorial Pavilion, which might require the provision of a completely new building.

Considerable work has already been undertaken reviewing current leisure facilities and consulting with parishioners (particularly the elderly and teenagers, where a shortfall in facilities has been identified) to establish which types of new facility would benefit the community most. The coming months will see recommendations put forward to full Council, followed by a period of detailed planning and fundraising. A similar process will need to be followed relating to the pavilion where the project is still in its early days. We look forward to working in partnership with the part-time leisure officer that the Vale are recruiting in order to implement these projects in the most effective manner.

Our fourth objective is to support the production of an effective Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, and a number of Councillors remain heavily involved in this process. As the draft policies are gradually refined a cohesive plan is emerging, however there is still much work to be done before a complete draft Neighbourhood Plan can be submitted.

Two external factors that could seriously impact on the Neighbourhood Plan are the following:

- The adoption of the Vale's Local Plan part 2, the draft of which has now been published and is undergoing a period of consultation up to 4th May.
- The unitary proposals for Oxfordshire, which have been in a state of flux, but currently consist of a joint 'Better Oxfordshire' proposal from the Vale and South Oxfordshire District Councils and the County Council.

The Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan volunteers will both be reviewing these documents to identify any major implications for parishioners, and for our emerging Neighbourhood Plan. At first glance the Local Plan part 2 seems to contain few direct threats to the parish, with no additional

housing allocated to our area. The unitary proposals could result in serious negative consequences, however much depends on how they intend to implement the proposals in practice. As always we would appreciate feedback from parishioners, particularly any concerns that you have on either of these proposals, and we would also encourage you to participate in all consultations relating to these very important topics.

The final key objective, arising from last year's County Council cuts, is to support the setting up of a new charity to take over responsibility for services previously offered by the Elms Road Children's Centre. Although the original Children's Centre has now closed I am glad to confirm that the newly established 'Botley Bridges' is already operational and offering services to local families. Both North Hinksey and Cumnor Parish Councils have been involved in the process of helping Botley Bridges to get up and running, and we hope to offer further support during the coming year.

In addition to our five key objectives Councillors have dealt with a number of other issues over the past year including the following:

- The Flood Alleviation Scheme continues to progress. An update drop-in session will run from 2pm to 8pm on 11th May in West Oxford Community Centre, and there will be a public consultation on the revised plans from 5th May to 6th June.
- Alternative proposals for expanding the Seacourt Park and Ride site, or developing a new Park and Ride site in Cumnor continue to be discussed. Although both sites are outside of the parish the impact on local traffic from either scheme could be significant. It is likely that the outcome of the unitary proposals will have a major impact on which scheme is finally chosen.
- The instalment of a new bus shelter in Lime Road was agreed, and it is due to be installed next week.
- The provision of public defibrillators is an issue that had previously been overlooked, however three are shortly due to be installed within the parish. Two Parish Council owned defibrillators will be located at the Louie Memorial Pavilion and in West Way shopping precinct, and the Parish Council recently provided Oxford Rugby Club with a grant for the purchase of a secure cabinet that will allow them to install their defibrillator outside the clubhouse in North Hinksey Village.

Overall the past year has been an incredibly busy one, with some positive results, but with many issues remaining as works in progress. Hopefully when the Parish Council Chairman reports back to next year's Annual Parish Meeting many more of these issues will have reached a satisfactory conclusion, or at least progressed to the implementation phase. In the meantime we appreciate your ongoing patience and support.