

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 2016

1. Introduction

I would like to welcome you all to the 2016 North Hinksey Annual Parish Meeting as we near the end of my first year as Chairman of the Parish Council. It has certainly been a hectic year for the Council, possibly one of its busiest ever, and the coming year looks likely to remain equally demanding.

Our recent Annual Newsletter, copies of which are available here today, included much detail about Parish Council activities since last May so I will attempt to avoid repeating much of that information.

I would like to highlight the important work which has been going on in the background in various Working Groups, which are dealing with topics such as Leisure Facilities and Communications.

The Leisure Facilities Working Group has been reviewing current provision and undertaking investigations about the possibility of providing various additional facilities. Up to now this work has primarily been carried out internally, however there will soon be opportunities for parishioners and local organisations to find out more about our progress on this front and to provide input as part of our consultation process.

The Communications Working Group has already carried out a number of improvements to several areas of communications including the Parish Council website, as detailed in our Annual Newsletter. We are committed to ongoing further improvements and the development of an effective two-way communications programme encouraging increased levels of engagement between Council and parishioners that will benefit the Parish as a whole. Your feedback on this topic will always be appreciated.

On the Planning front the main topic, as last year, remains the potential redevelopment of the West Way retail site, or 'Botley Centre' as it is alternatively being referred to. As you will all be aware Mace's planning application is currently in the consultation phase, and I would strongly encourage you all to submit your own comments to the Vale before the 14th April deadline.

It is important to understand that due to its nature the Council is not able to 'campaign' either for or against any planning application, but it has had considerable involvement in the process relating to Mace's plans. To clarify the situation it is necessary to separate our involvement into the following separate areas:

- Several Councillors have participated in the consultation processes run by Mace relating to their emerging plans, and by BDP relating to the Botley Supplementary Planning Document. In these meetings and workshops, working alongside representatives from

other community organisations, Councillors have provided input aimed at achieving the most beneficial overall outcome for parishioners.

- In addition, a number of Councillors, together with representatives of the Seacourt Hall Management Committee have met with representatives of Mace, and their architects Make, to discuss the provision of improved community hall facilities within the development to replace Seacourt Hall. These meetings are ongoing, they are completely unconnected to other parts of the process, and are the only direct negotiations held between the Council and Mace. If the planning application does gain approval then another set of meetings also involving other parishioners and community organisations will take place to identify uses for the additional 'shared community space' on the 1st floor of the new community centre.
- Our Parish Council Planning Committee met last night to deliberate on these plans and will shortly be submitting comments. At that meeting Councillors responded on plans for the complete site and attempted to reflect the views of the community as a whole.
- Individual Councillors are also subsequently able to submit their own personal views to the Vale as parishioners in their own right.

If approved, the Mace plans will have a significant impact on the continued population growth within the Parish. By the time of the next Census in 2021 the expected population would be well in excess of 5,000, which equates to considerably over 10% growth above the 2011 Census figure. It is to be hoped that the Vale's Local Plan 2031 Part 2, which is due to emerge over 2016, will not include any surprise additions to housing. As a Council we will be taking a strong part in any consultation process relating to the Local Plan, as well as continuing to liaise with the North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, to ensure that all planning legislation impacting on our Parish is fit for purpose.

One final topic that has taken up considerable Council time, and looks set to continue to do so, is the impact of the Oxfordshire County Council cuts as finalised in their recently agreed budget. The Parish Council joined with many residents and organisations in our Parish, and across Oxfordshire as a whole, to condemn their proposed cuts to essential support services, but unfortunately this only achieved relatively minor concessions at the end of the day. Elms Road Children's Centre was a major concern of ours, and this has been reprieved temporarily, with a closure date now planned for April 2017. We will continue to be heavily involved in discussions over the coming year to attempt to find a longer term solution that will not involve the closure of this important community asset.

2). Number of Scheduled Meetings of the Council and other Committees between May 2015 and February 2016

Parish Council – 10 meetings

Allotments Committee (including N.H. Nature Reserve and the Community Orchard) - 3 meetings and the Allotment Holders AGM

Planning Committee – 11 meetings (During the period the committee considered 59 planning applications, opposing 16 of them.)

Remembrance Day Committee – 3 meetings

Finance & General Purposes – 4 meetings

Recreation & Amenities Committee – 3 meetings

During the period 3 Councillor Surgeries have been held.

In addition there have been a number of Working Group meetings on Leisure Facilities, Communications and the NHPC Website.

3). Attendance at Council meetings:

The following are the number and percentage of full Parish Council meetings attended by Parish Councillors over the past twelve months:

Cllr. P. Allen 11 out of 11	100%	Cllr. L. Berrett 9 out of 9	100%
Cllr. J. Bolder 8 out of 9	89%	Cllr. V. Carr 9 out of 10	90%
Cllr. C. Church 8 out of 11	73%	Cllr. A. Dykes 11 out of 11	100%
Cllr. J. Hammett 11 out of 11	100%	Cllr. A. Hardiman* 4 out of 11	36%
Cllr. D. Kay 10 out of 11	91%	Cllr. L. Kunzemann 6 out of 9	67%
Cllr. A. MacKeith 10 out of 11	91%	Cllr. R. Mayne 8 out of 9	89%
Cllr. C. Potter 7 out of 9	78%	Cllr. A. Pritchard 10 out of 11	91%

* Councillor Hardiman was unable to attend for several months due to poor health.

4). Grants and Subscriptions

The budget for 2015/16 is £1,940 and currently grants to the value of £800.00 have been awarded, with 1 grant claim under consideration.

<u>Analysis</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled/Sick</u>	<u>Youth</u>	<u>Other</u>
	£	£	£	£
South and Vale Carers Centre		200		
Oxford Assn for the Blind		200		
Abingdon & District CAB				200
North Hinksey Conservation Volunteers				200
Totals	0	400	0	400

All requests for grant application forms should be made as soon as possible after 1st April 2016, and if possible returned to the Parish Clerk by 9th June 2016. Providing funds are available the Parish Council will consider supporting any local community or club organising an event benefitting the local community.

5). **Parish Council Tax for 2016/2017**

The Parish Council's Precept (2016/2017) is £78,040 and is by far the smallest part of your overall annual Council Tax payment. The VWHDC has provisionally calculated that the parishes 2016/2017 Council Tax at Band D will be £43.30 a year, (£44.65 in the current year). This equates to a monthly charge of £3.61, or 83.3 pence a week.

6). **Thank You's**

Finally, my sincere thanks to the following people: -

Parish Clerk:	Alan Stone	for his help and hard-work.
Pavilion Caretaker:	Martin Dowie	(Maintains the football pitch, cleans the MUGA,
	Murray Rankin	undertakes the weekly play area safety checks,
	(Relief Caretaker)	cleans outside the Pavilion, the Lime Road bus shelter and litter picks).
Grass Cutting:	Trevor Neale	(Churchyard and Village Green + Allotments etc.)
	BGG Garden &	(Playing Fields)
	Tree Care	
Litter Cleaning	Peter Edgington	(Litter Clearance in the Copse area)
Maintenance & General Works:	Graham Sillman	(General maintenance work, safety checks etc.)

I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for all of their efforts over the past year, together with the many individuals, both Councillors and non-Councillors, not already specifically mentioned by name, who have been involved in helping to run organisations and activities associated with North Hinksey Parish Council.

These include members of the Seacourt Hall Management Committee, the Louie Memorial Pavilion Management Trust, the Botley Traffic Advisory Committee, the Thames Valley Neighbourhood Action Group, the North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Working Groups, and the North Hinksey Conservation Volunteers, plus the organisers of the Best of Botley event, and organisers of the Remembrance Day Service.

David Kay

Chairman, North Hinksey Parish Council

17/3/2016