

Minutes of the East Hagbourne Annual Parish Meeting duly convened and held on Thursday 31st March 2022 at St. Andrew's Church, East Hagbourne

Present were Cllrs Iain Duff (Chairman), David Rickeard, Cordelia Gover, Paul Dixon and Jean Elliott; Laura Lloyd (Parish Clerk), County and District Councillor Jane Murphy and 10 members of the public.

Apologies were received from District Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson and Cllr Derek Button.

1. Welcome and Introductions – Iain Duff, Chairman

Welcome to the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting. Although this meeting is convened by East Hagbourne Parish Council it is not a Parish Council meeting, but a meeting of and for East Hagbourne Parish residents. Although one purpose of this meeting is to inform you what the Parish, District, and County councils have been doing, the major aspect of the meeting is for your discussion and suggestions of what we should do in the future.

We welcome Jane Murphy who is both our County and one of our District Councillors. Unfortunately our other District Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson is unable to join us because of a prior commitment. Both councillors have been very active in supporting our Parish and we are very grateful for their help and advice.

2. Formal approval of the minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting on 11th April 2019:

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 11th April 2019 were approved and signed. It was noted that the draft version has been available on the website and will now be updated to the final version.

3. SODC and OCC activities:

Cllr Jane Murphy read extracts from her Parish Meeting report on OCC and SODC activities - please see attachment 1 for the full report. On OCC related matters, it was confirmed that the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) which has been under threat is currently still being allocated for the agreed improvements and these should be completed by 2026. There are a number of issues at county level which Jane would like to see given higher priority. She has had success with reporting pothole repairs via FixMyStreet, as county councillor reports seem to be given higher priority than reports made by the general public. She also spoke about the grant scheme available and her enthusiasm for local projects.

A member of the public questioned how much influence the County Councillors have on provision of GP surgeries and preschools etc. as these services are severely lacking for the increased housing in Didcot. It was confirmed that larger housing developments have to allocate space for a GP surgery, but the surgeries themselves are private entities so the council has no influence to insist that new surgeries are actually opened. The Ladygrove East site opposite Tesco has just applied for outline planning for 750 homes without a GP surgery. Although funding should be allocated for this support, it will be allocated to expand an existing GP centre, so residents from this development will have to use existing practices that may be some distance away. Councillors are very aware of the issues and are working to try and push for more facilities but are not currently making progress.

4. Parish Council activities:

Chairman's Report – Iain Duff, Chairman

Thank you for attending this meeting, which is only my second Annual Parish Meeting as chairman since, because of the COVID pandemic, we have not been able to host an Annual Parish Meeting since 2019.

We have held 20 regular in-person Parish Council meetings since the last APM in addition to 15 held using ZOOM from 26 March 2020 to 6 May 2021.

However, much of the actual work is done in both online and in-person working groups, by circulation of planning applications of which we had more than 80 since the last APM, and with regular correspondence by email and phone with officers and councillors from SODC and OCC. The Cemetery Committee also continued with regular meetings and a short report will follow this update.

In addition to recognizing the hard work of our councillors over the last year, I would like to recognize the crucially important role of the Parish Clerk, who is also our Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). We continue to have excellent service from Laura Lloyd who is becoming a well-kent figure in our local community, not just because of her work for the Parish Council but also for her significant voluntary efforts in many village activities. As mentioned at our last APM it is a great bonus to have a clerk living in the village.

In commenting more on what has happened since the last APM we must recognize the difficulties in doing anything during the lockdowns and restrictions imposed by the pandemic. One item I would like to highlight is the Coronavirus Community Support Group coordinated by Charles Sweeney that, particularly in the early days, helped many vulnerable people in the village, mostly with shopping and medicine deliveries, but also even on a social level.

However, even in this period of great constraints, notably in communication difficulties with district and county officers, we have been able to continue to work on projects to improve the life and infrastructure of the village as follows:

- Upgrade of village car park lighting to LEDs for better lighting at lower cost
- Additional defibrillator at the village hall
- Refurbishment of both wood and metal village benches
- New benches on Butts Piece and New Road and picnic tables on Butts Piece.
- An extra waste bin and dog waste bin
- Bench restoration along the Sustrans Trail on the railway embankment
- Village gateways on New Road and Blewbury Road, organized by Councillor Carolyn Shaikh.

We were also able to progress our bid for a 20mph limit in the central village, that is now stalled until a Cabinet meeting at the end of April since there were two objections in the recently closed consultation.

One thing to note is a recent radical change in funding that allocates money from the Community Infrastructure Levy directly to the Parish Council. This enables us to pursue and to some extent control what can be done for the village infrastructure. As you will see in the financial statement, we currently have £6,700 in our CIL kitty which will soon be enhanced by more significant sums from the Deanfield Green development. I have high hopes that a combination of having these funds and an increasingly good relationship with OCC, largely through the offices of our County Councillor, will soon result in very long overdue improvements to our village footways. We have an agenda item on village projects that will be introduced by Councillor David Rickeard later tonight and we hope that might stimulate a discussion on how we can prioritize these projects.

A combination of a new Local Plan and a robust Neighbourhood Plan has protected us from the scourge of unsolicited speculative building applications and, later in this meeting, you will hear from the chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Crispin Topping, of plans to maintain and even enhance the robustness of our Plan.

The one speculative application that we were unable to defend was an application by the developer Greenlight for 74 houses on the field next to the Village Hall and across Main Road from the school. This was sold by Greenlight to the Scottish builder Mactaggart and Mickel who in turn sold the site to Deanfield Homes, a local small builder from Gerrards Cross, on 2 August 2021.

Over the last three years we have been involved in discussions with both of these builders and with SODC planning to get as good a development as possible within the constraints of the outline plan, granted on 18 October 2017. There will be a meeting here in the church next Thursday, April 7, on this development so we do not have an agenda item on this tonight.

Communications between the Parish Council and the village continues to be a concern of mine and I write a regular column in the Parish Magazine with comments on items of current importance that supplement the official Parish Page produced by our Clerk. We both thank the editor, Joy Napper, for her forbearance in allowing us extensions to the copy date to enable us to make our contributions as up-to-date as possible.

Although I had to suspend my surgeries because of COVID, I am starting again next month on 22 April in the Meeting Room of Hagbourne Village Hall.

When talking of communication, I should of course mention the excellent web site, managed by Councillor Cordelia Gover, and the use of the Village Facebook Group by our clerk and some councillors. On suggestions from the last APM, our clerk has now set up a secure mailing list for council information, including messages which are sent to the Facebook page. This has now over seventy recipients and I encourage any of you who use email and are not on this list to sign up.

I hope we can all agree that our community is very special with very many diverse activities from sport to culture to environmental concern.

It would be remiss of me to try to list them all but I would like to mention the focal points of the village: the pavilion and the recreation ground, the village hall, the community shop, the school, the pub and of course this building, the church, which is pleased to host totally secular events such as tonight and next week. On the environmental side, we now have the Hagbournes and Upton Group for Sustainability (HUGS) on which Caroline Hunt will make a short presentation later in this meeting.

Finally, I remind you that all Parish Council meetings are open to the public, and you are always welcome to attend and contribute - you can find the agendas on notice boards or the web site where you will also find minutes of previous meetings. We still have one vacancy on the Parish Council and this may be particularly of interest to someone wanting experience of the post prior to the quadrennial parish council elections in May next year.

Cemetery Report – Read by Cllr Jean Elliott, prepared by D. Button, Vice Chairman

The Cemetery is jointly owned and managed by both East Hagbourne Parish Council and West Hagbourne Parish Council and is thus called Hagbourne Cemetery. It is managed by the Clerk of EHPC on a daily basis under the auspices and guidance of the EHPC Cemetery Committee, which comprises two members from EHPC and one from WHPC. The remit of the Committee is to manage all the affairs of the Cemetery in a self-financing manner.

The Cemetery is planned to have a section for full interments and a smaller area for ashes only. Currently the present active part of the Cemetery is nearly 65% full and in due course the area preserved as a wild flower meadow in the north of the site will become available for future burials.

Over the last three years the Management Committee have undertaken various works to enhance the usage of the Cemetery. A hardstanding has been built for the mobile waste bin and the surrounds of the water tap have been similarly treated. The Lych gate has been repositioned after being accidentally “moved” by a vehicle in the layby and the entrance way has been levelled to remove the trip hazard. The vehicular entrance gates have also been rehung. Most recently the overbearing branches of the trees on the western boundary, but inside the PCC Churchyard, have been undercrowded to allow more light and space for visitors to the first row of graves. A large mature Ash tree at the front has had to be felled as it was riddled with Ash Dieback disease. It is proposed to replace the tree in due course with others to fill the gap in the front vista of the Cemetery.

And finally as a result of a serious query concerning the Cemetery it has been confirmed that it was officially consecrated by a Bishop of the Oxford Diocese shortly after the site was purchased and made ready to receive burials.

Financial Statement - L. Lloyd, Parish Clerk

The activities of the Parish Council are largely financed by the Precept, which is requested annually from the District Council to enable the management of Parish affairs.

The Parish Council produces a budget each year with detailed projected income and expenditure which informs the Precept decision. The Precept is paid for out of your council tax. The Precept for East Hagbourne Parish has remained the same for several years at just under £31,000. Income is also received for Hop Field rent and allotment rentals.

The most significant items of regular expenditure are as follows, with percentage of precept noted:

- The employment of the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer - 24.5%
- Village grass and hedge cutting (as part of a wider contract which includes the cemetery and recreation ground, paid for from separate funds). 4%
Tree management costs vary but can be significant – 6.8% in 2021-22.
- Dog Bin Emptying - 10.2%
- Insurances - 4.5%

- Butts Piece Lease – 2.2%
- Loan repayments for the Pavilion (this will be fully repaid in June 2023) and the Car Park on the Recreation Ground (this will be fully repaid in December 2026) – 38%

Other expenses include subscriptions and donations to local organisations, training for the clerk and councillors, running the village website, defibrillator consumable costs, meeting room hire, village car park lighting and audit costs.

All expenditure is approved by the council and noted in financial reports which are included in the monthly minutes. The Approved Budget for 2022-23 can be found in the Financial Information folder on the easthagbourne.net website.

The Council also holds Reserve Funds allocated for specific expenditure as follows:

Planned Development Support Fund – £5,300

Cemetery Management Fund – £11,000

Community Projects Fund – £5,000

CIL Fund – £6,700 Monies received from the Community Infrastructure Levy which enables local authorities to raise funds from new developments to help deliver infrastructure. As East Hagbourne benefits from a made Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council is able to claim 25% of the total levy raised. CIL money must be carefully accounted for and spent within 5 years of receipt on improvements within the parish.

A General Reserve Fund is also held – this is earmarked to enable EHPC to cover unexpected but necessary items of expenditure without having to resort to borrowing. Typically the recommendation is that these should equate to three to twelve months of gross expenditure. The Parish Council's general reserve remains within these guidelines. In 2021, the Pavilion drainage required rerouting at a cost of £10,000 – a cost that was borne by the general reserves, avoiding the need for additional borrowing.

The Parish Council has recently changed banking providers from Barclays to Unity Trust Bank, a long-awaited change which has resulted in a more efficient banking process.

5. Pavilion Report – Cllr D. Rickeard, EHS&RC Chairman

EHS&RC manages the Pavilion and Recreation Ground on behalf of EHPC.

Pavilion activities were of course severely curtailed during the various lockdown phases, and even the recreation ground was shut down initially.

The field and playground did see a lot of use during the lockdown which was gratifying to see.

We did unfortunately have some quite serious anti-social behaviour in the warmer weather with

large groups of young people congregating. The Police were supportive and after their attendance the problem died down somewhat. We hope this will not be repeated this year - if you do see bad behaviour, please report it to the police - with photographic evidence if possible.

The Pavilion is well used with football teams from both Hagbourne United and Didcot Casuals, regular Pilates, yoga, table tennis, community choir and monthly meetings of Parish Council and Gardening Club as well as other occasional events. We also host a private art class and are starting to see some bookings for children's parties now that the football season is coming to an end.

Financially, we have come out quite well thanks to the generous support grants funded by government and relayed with minimum fuss by SODC.

Regular bills have of course been impacted by the rise in energy prices.

We have some maintenance expenses including work to tidy up trees and vegetation and installation of new ventilation units, which has just been completed.

Our costs are fairly modest because a lot of the work is done by just a few volunteers.

More and active help on the committee would be very welcome and there is an open meeting on Tuesday 12th April in the Pavilion.

Following the report, a member of the public noted that the antisocial behaviour was from outsiders rather than the teenagers living in the village. Jane Murphy noted that she is able to speak to Matt Barber if there are any further issues with this.

6. Biodiversity in the Parish - Caroline Hunt, Hagbournes and Upton Group for Sustainability

Caroline Hunt spoke on parish biodiversity, specifically wildflowers as sowing and growing wildflowers is currently a priority.

Research shows that hedgehogs are thriving better in urban areas and wildflowers in urban parks are on the increase, it is rural areas that need to make changes. The wildflower meadow in the cemetery has been in situ for 24 years and HUGS are working with the school children to plant wildflowers and learn about nature in the meadow from late April. Butts Piece triangle is also an established wildflower area. Along the old railway and Earth Trust meadow are also biodiverse areas. Private lawns and parish verges are significant, and HUGS would like to encourage people to cut them less frequently and higher – ankle height grass has much more diversity. An improved connection with nature is of great benefit to mental health.

C. Napper noted that the Millennium Wood has potential for ground plants but the trees are currently too dense to allow these to flourish. Jane Murphy offered to speak to Cllr Mocky Khan to discuss how this could be considered. A member of the public asked whether the Parish Council would be able to offer financial support to Didcot Town Council for this potential project. It was noted that this is a large-scale project which would need to be planned carefully by DTC. Wild Didcot, an offshoot of Sustainable Didcot which focuses on nature and wildlife, may be able to help with planning.

It was queried whether new housing developments had to consider trees and planting and I. Duff confirmed that this was part of the planning process. The new development will need to be managed and this is something that needs clarifying with the developer.

7. Community Projects – Cllr David Rickeard

There are three project planning documents which are available on the village web site under Parish Council Projects:

- a 2018 paper on the condition of our Roads, Footways and general Village Tidiness
- a 2020 paper on wildlife and landscape in East Hagbourne
- and the main one: the EH Community project strategy, which originated more than 10 years ago as an output of the Parish Plan.

Not all the wishes raised by the community can be easily tackled, but there are many areas where progress has been made - I will highlight some of these:

Walking and Recreation:

You may have noticed the two picnic tables installed on the grassy area at Butts Piece. To support this, a new litter bin has been provided.

A larger dog waste bin has been installed at Butts Piece and a new one at Wilcher Close. East Hagbourne is very popular for dog walkers and although there remain some irresponsible dog owners, most now pick up after their animals. Fouling of pavements and footpaths is less than it was a few years ago, but we still need improvements.

Road Safety:

A wide range of safety options have been proposed and evaluated, but not all of them are easy to implement.

White 'entry gates' have been installed at the New Road and Blewbury Road entrances to the village, and it is intended to install a third one at the Main Road entry near the cemetery in conjunction with the new housing development. And, as Iain has mentioned, we have finally achieved agreement for a 20mph speed limit through the main village.

Environment & Wildlife:

A lot of progress has been made in this area with the formation of HUGS to continue the work of Hagbourne Environment Group as reported by Caroline. You may have seen some of the hedge planting and other work already done around the parish. The Parish Council has also carried out some much-needed maintenance of the trees along the track south of Millennium Wood to keep them healthy into the future.

Benches:

As part of the effort to make our village 'sparkle' virtually all the benches around the village have been cleaned and refinished, and in collaboration with West Hagbourne and Upton PCs the art benches along the Sustrans route have also been renovated.

As always, we welcome your comments, here or by contacting the clerk. A request was made for the link to view the documents online, which can be found here: <https://easthagbourne.net/parish-council/projects/>

I. Duff noted that the CIL money pending from the development is going to be in the region of £200,000 which will need to be spent on appropriate infrastructure projects in the parish. With the help of Jane Murphy, a new contact in OCC is investigating pavement repairs and this will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

A member of the public noted that they and others have struggled with the poor pavements in particular Blewbury Road from the Cross to the corner is particularly bad. The path from Wilcher Close to the east of the allotments was noted as another problem area, and it was confirmed that although this is not a pavement as such and there is a tarmac footpath on the other side of Butts Piece, improvements would be beneficial.

8. Neighbourhood Plan...what's next - Crispin Topping, Chairman of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Firstly some background: I attended an Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plan Alliance meeting in early December and we discussed when and in what form to review our Plans.

As most will know our Plan was adopted following the referendum on 14/3/19. We carried out a very brief review in 2020 mainly to correct any mistakes - luckily there weren't many.

The first major review is usually carried out after 5yrs e.g. 2024. We were advised however by other Neighbourhood Plan areas that it would be a good idea to contact SODC now to establish the following:

- i) Where SODC are with their latest Local Plan and any implications for us
- ii) If any changes in the Central Government NPPG might impact our Neighbourhood Plan
- iii) Thirdly to confirm with SODC whether they are able to demonstrate a 5yr supply of housing land-ONPA reckoned 5.33 years (at best)

In January I had a detailed call with Ricardo Rios (RR) at SODC, the key points of which were:

- a) South and The Vale are starting the process for a new joint Local Plan. A draft should emerge this year but the whole process will take until 2025/26 and could be longer.
- b) By having an up to date adopted NP, EH benefited from protection from speculative development on unallocated sites at a 3yr land supply threshold from 2019 to 2021. This lower level is much harder for speculative developers to demonstrate. We are currently in a gap and will not have the new District LP to protect us until 2025/26 at the earliest.
- c) RR advised that in 2021 SODC lost 3 appeals on unallocated sites as a result of developers demonstrating that the District did not have a full 5yr supply.
- d) RR further advised that East Hagbourne could restart the 3yr land supply protection by carrying out a "surgical review" of the NP involving a quick review/update of policies and the addition of a Design Guide/Code.

What's Happening Now

In February, the Parish Council resolved to review the Plan and following that an application was put in to Locality (a Govt Quango) for technical support. This was approved earlier this month with AECOM appointed to assist the Steering Group with their fees covered by Locality. In early March, David Rickeard and I met online with SODC. In mid-March we met with AECOM and on Tuesday we walked the village with AECOM.

Moving Forward

We are privileged to have an ongoing Steering Group comprising many of those who built the plan in 2016-2019. We are however looking for new volunteers, particularly those with architectural /design skills to work with us and AECOM on the design guide/code. Please put yourself forward or suggest suitable people I could contact.

Other members of the steering group will review the Plan policies and certain documents that will need updating.

We will also be looking for suggestions from residents for additional changes to the Neighbourhood Plan. Two potential changes that the Steering Group have come up with so far are

a) In relation to our "Local Green Spaces". The horse paddock behind 35-41 The Croft was included in one of our three Green Gaps but the Policies Map Plan (Figure 3) accidentally excluded it from the Local Green Space which gives additional protection to the rest of the paddocks in the Millennium Wood/Bakers Lane area.

b) A possible additional Local Green Space could be the attractive Green space on New Road by Rymans Crescent. The open green space at Windsor Crescent could also be included and hopefully be improved too.

Further public meetings will be held to review the draft Design Guide/Code produced by AECOM and NPSG and the list of proposed amendments to the Plan.

It is likely that we will have a first draft of the Code in late May/early June.

Jane thanked the NPSG for their continued efforts to ensure that the plan stays up to date. C. Topping confirmed that East Hagbourne's position means it could be susceptible to end up connected to south Didcot which makes the ongoing efforts to ensure that the village remains separate are vitally important to retain the community.

9. Open Discussion:

R. Bartlett spoke about Community Speedwatch and the increasing concerns regarding speeds along Blewbury Road and New Road. Unfortunately the speedwatch volunteer team has dwindled and the PCSO's from Didcot who used to assist are no longer available, so he appealed for new volunteers to contact the clerk. A new speed gun is due to be purchased to assist with monitoring.

A suggestion was made for CIL money spending, for a sign at the war memorial (or elsewhere) with an illustration of the village. A village map would be an alternative.

It was suggested that at the next APM all village organisations should be invited to provide an update on their activities, with a food and drink offering. There was concern about whether this would make the meeting duration very long but alternative approaches will be considered for future APMs.

A question was raised as to whether electric charging points could be added in the village. D. Rickeard confirmed that it has been discussed as a possibility at the village hall but has not yet been progressed. It was noted that there are companies who are looking to build charging networks who might welcome the opportunity to install chargers, but it was not clear that the time was right to install them in the village car park. It was also questioned whether the new development will have any provision for electric vehicle charging – it was agreed that this should be raised at the Deanfield Homes meeting which is being held on 7th April at St Andrew's Church.

A query was made regarding responsibility for the surface water road drains along Main Road. J. Murphy confirmed that she could pursue this but it was also noted that any issues could be reported directly on FixMyStreet.

Jane thanked the Parish Councillors for volunteering and for their extensive knowledge of the parish. D. Rickeard and I. Duff thanked Jill Garlick for her help to prepare the church for the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.26pm

Signed.....Date.....

ATTACHMENT 1:

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS APR 2022

FROM CLLR JANE MURPHY

GENERAL OCC REPORT

FARMERS PROTEST AT CABINET MEETING – WITH JEREMY CLARKSON!



In December, the LibDem/Green/Labour administration at OCC forced through a motion at Full Council to “ensure that food provided at **all** council-catered events and meetings is entirely plant-based.” The motion also sought to “ensure that Council school meals services have plant-based menus available as part of their regular offer on at least **two** days per week.” In the face of a wall of negative publicity, including a demonstration by local farmers at County Hall that over-shadowed the council’s budget-setting meeting on 8th February, the officer report published on 7th March massively scaled back the proposals. It recommended that the vegan diet was only to be imposed on councillors at Full Council meetings six or seven times a year and on the general public at civic events, with officers entirely exempt. A ‘graduated approach’, starting with one day per week, was to be applied to schools. The report was approved by Cabinet on 15th March, despite strong Conservative opposition. Once again, there was a large protest outside by farmers – including Jeremy Clarkson – as the meeting took place.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Efforts to unpick the agreement between OCC and Cherwell District Council continue.

INTERNATIONAL TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY

On Thursday 31 March OCC celebrated the annual international Trans Day of Visibility (TDoV), which is dedicated to recognising the resilience and accomplishments of trans and non-binary people and raising awareness of discrimination and struggles faced by the trans community.

FIRE AND RESCUE COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

A four-year community risk management plan (CRMP) has been launched by OCC's Fire and Rescue Service as part of its commitment to reduce dangers from fires and other emergencies. The CRMP details priorities until 2026, divided into four categories: response, prevention, protection, and people and wellbeing. The plan's objectives include:

- Becoming a more diverse workforce.
- Targeting residents most at risk from fires and accidents.
- Reducing risks in commercial buildings and acting when dangerous situations are found.
- Maximising resources to provide the quickest responses to emergency calls.

FOCUS ON OXFORD CITY

A large number of initiatives focusing on the city of Oxford have been announced or continue. These include: electric buses; e-cargo bikes; zero emission city grant; Folly Bridge repairs; Kennington improvement programme; Oxford City Football Club land issues.

WOMEN'S TOUR CYCLING RACE SET FOR OXFORDSHIRE FINALE

The 2022 Women's Tour, an international women's cycling stage race, will end with an Oxfordshire finale in June. Stage six will start in Chipping Norton before culminating in Oxford city centre. OCC is one of race organiser SweetSpot's sponsors.

RESIDENTS URGED TO FOLLOW THE CODE AND 'SCRAP' FLY TIPPING

The Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership, made up of all the councils in Oxfordshire, has launched a campaign to SCRAP fly tipping by making sure people know their responsibilities when it comes to disposing of their waste.

Residents are being urged to follow the SCRAP code, developed by the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, to avoid fines and prosecution:

- **Suspect** all waste carriers.
- **Check** with the Environment Agency through its [website](#) or on 03708 506 506 that the provider taking waste away is licensed.
- **Refuse** unexpected offers to have waste taken away.
- **Ask** what will happen to your waste.
- **Paperwork** should be obtained – such as a detailed invoice, waste transfer note or full receipt.

PRIORITIES OF LIBDEM/GREEN/LABOUR ADMINISTRATION

The administration has re-announced its plan for the period of 2022 to 2025. The plan details nine key priorities the council aims to address, including tackling inequalities in the county, the climate emergency and creating more opportunities for children and young people. Unfortunately, Highways issues such as road repairs and drainage are not mentioned, despite these matters featuring in the majority of emails received by most councillors. Details can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/our-vision-0>

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR EAST HAGBOURNE PARISH

2021 was a difficult year for all with Covid playing a big part. With vaccines being implemented and the world beginning to open up. These times have been trying for all our residents. I, for one, was proud to be able to help with the vaccines and saw many of the people who I am lucky enough to represent come to the Civic Hall for their jabs – I'm honoured to have been given a volunteering award along with all the others who help at the Civic Hall with over 46k Vaccinations being given by the GPs and nurses and staff.

There will also be the rebate of £150 from the Council Tax given by Government to help households in Council Tax A – D bands. This will be paid in to your account if you pay by direct debit, people who pay by other methods will be slightly delayed but will be paid out. There is also a fund of around £100,000 which will be made available soon for other households in other bands to also apply where they have an urgent need. The council offices at Milton Park are now getting back to normal and are open to the public. However this won't last for long as SODC leave Milton Park in June and I am still waiting to hear where we will be going although I suspect it will be Abbey House in Abingdon. I will update as and when we know more.

Now we see our communities coming together again to make and collection donations for the poor people of the Ukraine. The Council have been overwhelmed with the applications as they are involved in checking properties and DBS for both. Happy to help if anyone wants to contact me.

During the year I have used my Councillor Grant to help all of the communities and I have been pleased to be able to spend some if it here in East Hagbourne.

I have dealt with over 350 requests for help from residents from helping with just putting information on fix my street to explaining planning applications and speaking at planning committees, helping people with benefits issues or needing help with adult social care to getting dangerous trees removed. The work is diverse and interesting.

There is a tree planting grant available at SODC which would be great if all my villages applied for. There has already been some planted in Wallingford.

Sadly car parking charges in going up this year from April will new charging for the period 8am to 6pm on Monday to Saturday.

There is a joint local plan happening with South and Vale which should save money in preparation. Today the Cabinet at OCC have agreed to continue with the Housing Infrastructure Fund which brings road infrastructure to Didcot which is badly needed. I'm pleased to see that sense prevailed.

The new headquarters has been agreed by the administration in South Oxfordshire and will be built on the site opposite the station. Personally, I am very disappointed that this building will mean that for the first time in over 50 years we will be borrowing money that the generations will have to repay, but as I say it is a personal opinion. The full amount of Council Tax increase has been taken by the administration. Something I had hoped, as they had a large underspend they would decide not to take with the cost of heating and electricity rising.

Life at the County has been interesting and a major learning curve for me which I have enjoyed finding out about. Sadly here the council tax has also risen along with the borrowing.

This just gives a small flavour of what has been happening and as always I am happy to be contacted to help with any issues. My number is 07970 932054 or my emails are jane.murphy@southoxon.gov.uk or jane.murphy@oxfordshire.gov.uk or Contact me on my facebook page @cllrjanemurphy

All the best
Jane Murphy
South Oxfordshire District Councillor and Oxfordshire County Councillor