

EAST HAGBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DULY CONVENED AND HELD ON THURSDAY 22ND JUNE 2023

1. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:

Present were Chairman I. Duff, Councillors P. Dixon, R. Hewat-Jaboor, N. Milner, D. Rickeard and C. Shaikh and District Councillor B. Manning.

Apologies were received from Cllr C. Gover and District Councillor A-M Simpson

In attendance was L. Lloyd (Clerk) and 6 members of the public.

I. Duff indicated there is 1 vacancy for a parish councillor.

2. PUBLIC FORUM AND QUESTIONS:

MOP1 raised concerns about the traffic on Main Road. Cones in the road have been in place for some time and have been crushed by passing vehicles. They represent areas where there used to be around an extra 18" of verge. Main Road does not have the capacity for 3 car widths so the parked cars effectively turn it into a single lane but vehicles persist in trying to squeeze through.

High sided vehicles are also hitting the thatched barn and it has been repaired 3 times in 3 years. MOP1 suggested that the verge should be reinstated with a stone kerb or wall to make it clear that there is not space for two cars to pass when parked cars are present.

I. Duff confirmed that there had been discussions with the County Council who are responsible for the roads although further discussions could include the points being raised by the MOP. D. Rickeard noted that it is a sensitive location within the conservation area and traffic management such as traffic lights, lines etc would not be appropriate for this location. D. Rickeard noted that the Community Projects Strategy does include some sections related to this issue. This document is available on the village website.

C. Shaikh asked for clarification that the second minor damage to the thatched barn was caused by a Deanfield delivery lorry – this was confirmed as a lorry transporting A frames, and further confirmed that the site manager apologised at the time and no remedial works were requested.

MOP2 also spoke on traffic concerns along Main Road. They have lived in the village for about 2 years and noted an increase in traffic volume and manoeuvres within the section between the Fleur and Upper Cross. There is degradation of the verges on the north side of the road due in part to residents trying to park very close to the verge to give more space on the road for passing vehicles. Permit parking for residents was suggested as a potential solution. C. Shaikh asked whether there are often issues with lack of parking on the road, MOP2 had not had issues personally but N. Milner has had issues with both lack of parking and damage to vehicles. It was suggested that a useful exercise would be to determine the level and reasons for non-resident parking.

MOP3 confirmed that resident parking worked very well when they were living in Oxford and also noted that a weight limit through the centre might be beneficial. I. Duff confirmed that a weight limit has been requested several times in past decades, but this request has not been supported by OCC.

MOP3 also spoke with concerns on the footways through the village due to the encroaching vegetation on the footways, in particular the path alongside Lawson's Orchard and other sections of Main Road, as well as issues with sight lines for vehicles to see oncoming traffic.

MOP4 spoke on the footway issues from the Travellers Welcome walking into the village. Encroaching lavender and overhanging bushes at shoulder height are causing a serious issue.

MOP4 also spoke on item 8.c from the last meeting, noting that the large presence from HUGS at the meeting and lack of representation from other members of the public had possibly swayed the council's decision. The grass should have been cut by 2nd June to keep to the 2-3 week cutting schedule, but the gap between cuts ended up being almost 5 weeks which became a serious concern for recreation ground users and sparked debate about grass cutting and recreation in the parish. Concerns were raised over the decision to leave areas of the recreation ground uncut and questions were raised over the trial period and how any feedback will be measured. D. Rickeard responded to these concerns and confirmed that the decision was made at the meeting in order to allow a reasonable timeframe for a trial this year.

MOP5 spoke with concern for the recreation ground, reflecting back on the period with longer grass which caused issues for walkers as well as users of the football pitch, and also for the future cutting of the recreation ground to ensure it stays fully usable. It was confirmed that the 2-3 week cutting schedule has now resumed.

I. Duff noted that the presence and input of MOPs at the Parish Council meetings is encouraged if they are interested in items on the agenda.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11TH MAY

2023: The minutes of the meeting on 11th May 2023 were approved by Council and signed by I. Duff.

4. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS: B. Manning highlighted points on the district councillors report: The Annual and Q4 reports for Corporate Plan and Q4 Climate Action reports can now be viewed on the district council's website. Monthly online surgeries offering advice on planning issues are now available to members of town and parish councils. There is a Community Hub event on 17th July offering advice on grants available in the district. R. Hewat-Jaboor queried whether there were limits on the grants on offer, and B. Manning confirmed that the variety of grants means a discussion as to which would suit a proposed project would be the best way forward. Oxfordshire Food Strategy held an initial meeting in June and are developing a South and Vale Food Action working group and an action plan to encourage healthy eating, help with cost of living, promote local produce and provide education within schools. The Rural England Prosperity fund is available to help with rural business hubs and energy schemes. There are also two consultations running at present, on Waste Services and Air Quality. I. Duff queried when the District Councillor surgeries would be starting and it was confirmed that these will be held in various locations throughout the ward and will be advertised shortly. Please see attachment 2 for the full report.

5. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

2022-04-01 Slurry Seal Footway Repairs: I. Duff confirmed that this item will be discussed in 7.b).

2022-07-06 EHS&RC HMRC Query: No progress updates this month. This item is being removed from the action list as it is being dealt with by EHS&RC.

2022-09-02 Paving slab repairs at the Pavilion: This item is being removed from the action list as it is being dealt with by EHS&RC.

2022-12-01 Footpath 4 surface improvements: L. Lloyd confirmed that there is no update this month.

2023-01-03 Barrier damage on Bakers Lane Footpath 8: I. Duff confirmed that, following discussion at the last meeting, the barrier at Shoe Lane has been reviewed and it was concluded that the missing section on Shoe Lane is far enough back not to be a hazard. In light of this, it was agreed that OCC's suggestions for removal of the Bakers Lane barrier and the partial removal of the barrier at Shoe Lane would be accepted by the Parish Council. This item will be removed from the action list.

2023-03-01 Deanfield Homes Car Park Land Transfer: L. Lloyd confirmed that there has been no communication on this matter since the last meeting.

2023-03-02 Churchyard Responsibility clarification: L. Lloyd reported that she has confirmed with the Churn Benefice that the responsibility lies with the PCC unless a historical written notice is discovered, or a new notice is served to the Parish Council. This item will be removed from the action list.

2023-04-01 .gov website investigations: I. Duff noted that this action is stalled at present, until SLCC provide us with feedback from the pilot scheme from the Central Digital & Data Office (CDDO).

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- a) **Deanfield development adjacent to the village hall:** I. Duff reported on his recent communications with the site manager, Craig Hodge. Thames Water were unable to complete the mains water connection during the half term holiday, so a temporary tank will be installed to provide water to the first residents of the site before the full connection is made. This should be completed during the school summer holidays. C. Shaikh suggested that Welcome Packs should be given to new residents on arrival. I. Duff confirmed his intention to introduce himself to new residents, and it was agreed that he could hand over Welcome Packs at this time. I. Duff also noted that although the larger vehicles that are occasionally coming through the village are being reported to Deanfield and Deanfield are telling all contractors to come on the approved routes, it is still a cause for concern. R. Hewat-Jaboor queried whether the subcontractor management was effective enough; I. Duff noted that the numbers actually coming through the village were a very small percentage of the actual site traffic. The poorly planted boundary hedges alongside the car park have been queried as they should be acting as a proper barrier to stop the car park being used as overflow parking for the new housing.
- b) **Future management of the Pavilion and Recreation Ground after the expiry of the current lease in November 2025.** D. Rickeard confirmed the situation regarding the current lease, which separates the business of EHS&RC from the community led activities of the Parish Council. He referred to an initial document circulated to councillors for consideration, and asked whether the clerk could begin some initial research into options that might work. It was agreed that the clerk would action this.

- c) **Interim arrangements to cover the role of EHS&RC Treasurer:** I. Duff noted the recent departure of D. Button as treasurer of EHS&RC. D. Rickeard reported that D. Button has confirmed that he will complete the 2022-23 accounts as a departing volunteer, and D. Rickeard along with the other councillors reflected on D. Button's valuable contribution to the running of the Pavilion and Recreation ground over the years. It was confirmed that I. Duff has agreed to be a signatory on the account, and another is also required. D. Rickeard confirmed that he will act as interim treasurer and will write an article for the next Parish Magazine and provide some text to recruit new volunteers for posting on Facebook and circulating via Mailchimp.
- d) **Parking and traffic management on Main Road:** N. Milner noted that as a Main Road resident she does have an interest in the matter, but the views of neighbours she has spoken to align with the views of the MOPs who spoke in the public forum, including the interest in possible resident permit parking. R. Hewat-Jaboor noted that defining the problem is very important, and asked why non-residents are parking on Main Road. N. Milner noted that residents from other roads with parking issues are also using Main Road to park their vehicles. I. Duff confirmed that a number of potential solutions had been discussed with J. Beale of OCC and confirmed that he would recirculate the document to councillors for the benefit of new councillors and to aid further discussion. It was agreed that N. Milner would lead the investigation into what may work in the current circumstances.
- e) **South Oxfordshire District Council's Deep Cleanse of the Parish, scheduled for 20th – 24th July 2023:** I. Duff noted that this is an opportunity to send suggestions for priority path clearance. C. Shaikh asked for Blewbury Road to be on the list. R. Hewat-Jaboor reported that there has been a slight increase in litter around Fieldside but it was noted that litter is an easier thing for MOPs to resolve so ideally the focus should be on path clearance. L. Lloyd asked for input from councillors over the next few days to allow her to send a priority list to SODC. MOP3 asked whether this means that all the pathways will be cleared, and it was noted that SODC will only clear what they are able to within their allotted time in the Parish, with attention given to areas highlighted ahead of time.

7. ITEMS FOR DECISION:

- a) **Proposal to provide councillor email addresses on hagbourne.net with an ongoing cost of £10.00 per month:** Councillors agreed to the proposal, using easthagbourne.net. It was agreed that C. Gover would liaise with Dark White Digital to complete the setup process.
- b) **Replacement of the verge outside the Fleur De Lys on Main Road at a cost of £8632.31, subject to confirmation of a Councillor Priority Fund grant to cover the full cost of the works:** I. Duff confirmed that this proposal offers a solution to the crumbling verge, with funding from the councillor fund. Councillors agreed unanimously to the proposal. The outcome of the grant application is still pending at this stage.
- c) **Grass Cutting in the Parish to include:**
 - i) **To receive an update on recent grass cutting issues, including the trial areas within the recreation ground:** Please also see comments noted in the public forum. L. Lloyd confirmed that the designated trial areas at the recreation ground were reviewed on site in early June. In attendance were D. Rickeard, P. Dixon, J. Symonds, Ben Gristwood and Matt from BGG Garden and Tree Care and L. Lloyd. The on-site inspection was informative and it was concluded that areas B1 and B2 along the N and E boundaries did not have enough flexibility to extend the existing unmown boundaries for long term alternative use. Areas A and C were marked up on site with the agreement that a clear mown boundary would define the areas and notices have been installed on site to allow feedback from the general public. The trial areas are to be left to grow until the end of Summer (September, or possibly late August) and any feedback from the public will be monitored (and actioned if considered necessary) in the meantime. It was agreed that the cut and clearance of the trial areas along with a price need to be agreed at the July meeting.
 - ii) **To agree to distribute a leaflet to all households in the Parish containing a detailed map indicating responsibilities for grass cutting regimes, to inform residents prior to a possible meeting to discuss the issue, at a cost of up to £150.00:** N. Milner and D. Rickeard discussed how to approach informing the public, and how to capture feedback in a structured way to make sure that residents feel heard ahead of any decision. It was agreed that N. Milner, with assistance from C. Shaikh would draft and circulate a proposal to councillors for input. I. Duff noted that it was important that individual verges and responsibilities for them could be seen clearly in the detailed map.
 - iii) **To confirm a meeting date when this issue can be discussed further ahead of any decision by the Parish Council:** September 8th to allow time to finalise and distribute leaflet with enough time to allow responses.
- d) **Allotment remediation:**
 - i) **To discuss and approve the expenditure of £425.00 for remediating a derelict plot:** P. Dixon confirmed that there is a full-size plot that is in need of clearing as it has become overgrown and has been used as a dumping ground. This is in part due to Covid and it was noted that the committee's plot inspections need to be tighter to stop a recurrence of this in the future.
 - ii) **To discuss and agree in principle the expenditure of £1075.00 to remediate the communal area adjacent to the Wilcher Close gate, with a view to future long-term improvements:** Councillors agreed that this needed more detail before a decision could be made, and P. Dixon agreed to work more on this.

8. ITEMS FOR REPORT:

- a) **Planning Applications:** I. Duff confirmed that the only active planning application is P23/S0821/HH for 38 New Road (for which the Parish Council has been granted an extension for its response). A proposed response will be circulated and agreed in the next week.
- b) **East Hagbourne Sport and Recreation Committee:** Nothing further to report – see items 6.b), 6.c) and 7.c)i)
- c) **Cemetery Committee:** P. Dixon confirmed the next cemetery committee meeting is on 4th July.
- d) **Employment Committee:** C. Shaikh confirmed that she and C. Gover have met with D. Button for a handover and are in possession of the necessary paperwork.
- e) **Butts Piece Allotments:** Nothing to report.
- f) **Community Speedwatch:** Nothing has progressed in the last month. I. Duff confirmed that it will be necessary to establish genuine interest and identify a potential new coordinator.
- g) **Didcot Garden Town:** Nothing to report.
- h) **Flood Group:** D. Rickeard reported localised flooding during the recent heavy storm, this was a widespread issue in the district due to the sheer volume of water. The road drains on Blewbury Road by the stream were flushed by OCC/OPC on 19th June.
- i) **Future Oxfordshire Partnership:** P. Dixon confirmed that the recent meeting did not have any specific points of note. There is another meeting next month.
- j) **Neighbourhood Plan:** D. Rickeard thanked P. Dixon for his assistance in cross referencing the plan to check it is not contravening anything, ahead of sending to SODC.
- k) **Climate Change and Biodiversity:** Nothing to report – see 8.l)
- l) **Matters raised at the Chairman's Surgery and OALC Chairman's meeting:** There had not been any surgery since the last parish council meeting; the next being the day after this meeting. I. Duff confirmed that only 3 or 4 of the Parish Councils out of 26 at the last Chairman's meeting have declared a Climate Emergency. The other councils did not show any enthusiasm for this although several did have biodiversity activities.

9. Correspondence:

I. Duff confirmed the following:

Gigaclear held a public event at the Pavilion on 12th June which was quite well attended. It was confirmed that their fibre network is completely separate from that of OpenReach. The County Council is supporting them as it is in line with their improvement of fibre service for the county. The installation will use a mix of underground and overhead cabling, depending on the capacity of the existing pole infrastructure. They are permitted to use OpenReach ducting where appropriate.

D. Rickeard confirmed that the village hall committee have commissioned Arbocare to remove a dead tree next to Footpath 30 adjacent to the village hall.

L. Lloyd noted the following items of correspondence:

Three items of correspondence relating to grass cutting/verges and footpaths in the village, all in favour of a public consultation on the matter.

36 New Road reported an overgrown boundary hedge and related subsidence concerns and have been directed to OCC as it is part of the adopted Highway and thus the responsibility of the county council.

Invitations to attend:

Highway Maintenance Open Day for councillors on 15th July – I. Duff plans to attend

Community Action for Recovery Nature Workshop on 1st July

Wantage and Didcot Climate Summit 4th July – D. Rickeard plans to attend

10. Finance:

a) **Expenditure and receipts since the last meeting and account balances:**

a) Payments since last meeting:

NB: Payments pending are shown in yellow and are not included in the account balance shown in c)

Payee	Item	Online Payment/ Cheque No	Amount	VAT	Total	Date
Grundon Waste Management	INV PSI-0841885 Cemetery bin April 2023	DD	£51.13	£10.23	£61.36	22/05/2023
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV 6527 General waste bin emptying - April	C Gover / C Shaikh	£13.00	£2.60	£15.60	26/05/2023
Dark White Digital	INV001234 Web hosting May 2023	C Gover / C Shaikh	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	26/05/2023
EHS&RC	INV230404 Meeting room hire 20th April	C Gover / C Shaikh	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	26/05/2023
OALC	W2592- Councillor Fundamentals Training	C Gover / C Shaikh	£50.00	£10.00	£60.00	26/05/2023
OALC	W2593 - Roles and Responsibilities Training	C Gover / C Shaikh	£80.00	£16.00	£96.00	26/05/2023
Wel Medical Ltd	INV#1267393 Defibrillator Pad Sets x2 for the Community Shop	C Gover / C Shaikh	£125.85	£25.17	£151.02	26/05/2023
Laura Lloyd	May Salary	C Gover / C Shaikh	£734.83	£0.00	£734.83	30/05/2023
PWLB	Loan Repayment PW502636	DD	£3,424.82	£0.00	£3,424.82	01/06/2023
PWLB	Loan Repayment PW505533	DD	£2,461.17	£0.00	£2,461.17	07/06/2023
Grundon Waste Management	INV PSI-0853997 Cemetery bin emptying May 2023	DD	£53.49	£10.70	£64.19	20/06/2023
SODC	INV 10325177 Uncontested Election fee May 2023	C Shaikh / D Rickeard	£200.00	£0.00	£200.00	21/06/2022
April Skies Accounting Ltd	INV-0076 Internal Audit Fee 2022-23		£250.00	£0.00	£250.00	
BGG	INV 214/23 Parish and Cemetery Grass Cutting April 2023		£275.00	£55.00	£330.00	
Dark White Digital	INV001258 June web hosting		£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	
EHS&RC	INV230504 Meeting room hire 11th May		£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV 6612 General waste bin emptying May 2023		£13.00	£2.60	£15.60	
L. Lloyd	June Salary		£734.83	£0.00	£734.83	
Hagbourne Charities	Butts Piece Lease July Payment		£428.97	£0.00	£428.97	

b) Receipts since last meeting

From	Item	Amount	Date
Allotment Tenant	Allotment Rent Plot 5 2023-24	£29.55	17/05/2023
Reeves Memorials	Bishop Memorial 2nd inscription	£26.00	23/05/2023
Allotment Tenant	Allotment Rent Plot 2B 2023-24 (CHQ paid in as part of Credit 4 on May statement)	£15.45	30/05/2023
SSE	Wayleave Payment (CHQ paid in as part of Credit 4 on May statement)	£53.94	30/05/2023
	Total	£124.94	

c) Accumulated Account Balances (reconciled as of last bank statement through 21/06/2023)

Unity Trust Bank - T1 current account	£36,455.38
Unity Trust Bank - Instant access account	£85,610.35
Redwood Bank - 35 Day Notice Savings Account	£0.00
Total	<u>£122,065.73</u>

d) The Special Project Balances (as of 21/06/2023) are:

Community Infrastructure Levy Fund	Received 24/04/19 so requires spending by 23/04/24	£1,788.07
	Received 30/04/21 so requires spending by 29/04/26	£1,517.73
	Received 27/10/21 so requires spending by 26/10/26	£3,307.90
	Received 27/04/22 so requires spending by 26/04/27	£3,035.45
	Received 28/10/22 so requires spending by 27/10/27	£2,127.82
	Received 28/04/23 so requires spending by 27/04/28	<u>£55,413.82</u>
	Total CIL money	£67,190.79
Community Projects Reserve Fund		£4,712.91
Planned Development Support Fund		£5,303.15
Cemetery		<u>£14,805.46</u>
	Total	<u><u>£92,012.31</u></u>
e) General Reserve (as of 21/06/2023)		<u><u>£30,053.42</u></u>

- b) **Review and approval of pending payments:** The Council reviewed the pending payments list and noted that all have prior regular payment approval on this occasion.
- c) **Transfer approvals:**
- i) **£45,000 from the council's Unity Trust T1 account into the newly opened Redwood Bank 35-day notice account:** Councillors approved the transfer
 - ii) **£35,000 internal transfer from the council's Unity Trust T1 account into the Unity Trust Instant Access account:** Councillors approved the transfer
- d) **Progress with Unity Trust Bank change of signatory:** L. Lloyd confirmed that ID documentation is pending for N. Milner, hopefully this will be resolved by the next meeting.
- e) **Internal Audit – response to recommendations:** L. Lloyd confirmed that the internal auditor's report had been circulated ahead of the meeting and was both detailed and wholly positive. There were no recommendations or actions required as a result of the audit. The internal auditor did suggest that the council may wish to consider whether an accounting package might be beneficial and also noted that the cemetery database package may have an invoicing function that could be of use moving forward.
- f) **Formal Acceptance of Internal Audit:** The council formally accepted the Internal Audit for 2022/23.
- g) **Formal Acceptance of Annual Accounts**
- i) **Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23:** The Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 was formally accepted by the council and signed by I. Duff and L. Lloyd.
 - ii) **Accounting Statements for 2022/23:** The Accounting Statements for 2022/23 were formally accepted by the council and signed by I. Duff. The document was signed by L. Lloyd ahead of the meeting.
 - iii) **Confirmation of the period for exercise of public rights:** L. Lloyd advised that the Notice of Public Rights would be posted on the noticeboard and in the Financial Information folder on easthagbourne.net on 27th June, with the period of 30 working days being 28th June – 8th August inclusive. The Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements will also be posted for viewing on the noticeboard and the website. The documents will also be sent to the External Auditor for review along with the additional information requested as part of the intermediate review.

11. Items for report and inclusion on the July agenda:

Cut and Clearance of Recreation Ground trial areas including costs

The meeting closed at 10.18pm. The next meeting will be held on 20th July 2023 at the Pavilion, Great Mead, East Hagbourne.

Signed.....Dated.....

ATTACHMENT 1: ACTION LIST

Action No	What	Who	Status
2022-04-01	Slurry Seal Footway repairs	ID/OCC/LL	Under discussion
2022-12-01	Footpath 4 surface improvements	LL/OCC	Query with OCC
2023-03-01	Deanfield Homes Car Park Land Transfer	LL/OCC	In progress
2023-06-01	Grass Cutting resident consultation	NM/CS	In progress
2023-06-02	Parking and Traffic Management on Main Road	NM	In progress

ATTACHMENT 2:

TITLE	DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT
COUNCILLORS	CLLR ANNE-MARIE SIMPSON & CLLR BEN MANNING
PARISH	EAST HAGBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
DATE	22 JUNE 2023

Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report – [Annual Report 2022-2023](#)

Corporate Plan Performance Report – [Fourth Quarter](#)

Climate Action Plan Performance Report – [Fourth Quarter](#)

Planning surgeries for town and parish councils

The planning team holds monthly surgeries for members of town and parish councils to discuss general planning queries. To book their 15-minute online meeting they should use [this planning surgery link](#). If there are any questions, please contact Emily Hamerton emily.hamerton@southandvale.gov.uk

Find out about grants and meet our Community Hub

SODC officers will be at the Crowmarsh Pavilion in Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, OX10 8EB on **Monday 17 July 1-5pm** to meet with voluntary sector groups, town and parish councils and residents to provide advice and guidance on grants and to talk through the support our SODC Community Hub can give – here's a bit more information:

Grants funding advice session

This will be an opportunity for people to discuss a project they might want grant funding for, and to ask officers questions about eligibility or the application process for all our varied grant schemes.

People can book a face-to-face meeting with our grants team by emailing grants@southandvale.gov.uk or calling 01235 422405. Or if unable to attend then call or arrange a Teams meeting another time. If you have any questions, please call Madeline Swain on 07849 574863 or Lynsey Green on 07510 921690.

Meet our Community Hub team

The Community Hub team will also be there to meet residents to provide advice and guidance and to talk through the support available through our Community Hub. This includes Cost of Living, food support, becoming a host for Homes for Ukraine scheme or offering support to guests on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

- **Call:** 01235 422600
- **Email:** communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Our office hours are 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am-4.30pm on Fridays (and closed on bank holidays).

Oxfordshire Food Strategy & South and Vale Food Action working group

At a meeting of Full Council on 14 July 2022 members passed a motion to support farming and the food system in our district which included commitments to support sustainable food production and to reduce food waste.

Work on implementation is ongoing through the [Oxfordshire Food Strategy](#) and the development of a South and Vale Food Action Working Group to shape district action plans.

Creating an action plan

An initial meeting, which Cllr Ben Manning attended, was held on 9 June for a range of representatives including farmers, local food producers, food banks, nutrition specialist and local shops.

Lots of ideas were shared and connections made to tackle cost of living, promote healthy eating and make the most of local partnerships to make healthy food more available and support local producers and sellers. To find out more about the Oxfordshire Food Strategy and the South and Vale Food Action Working Group and how to get involved please email communityconnectors@southandvale.gov.uk

Online forum on how to save energy (and costs) for community buildings

The Climate and Biodiversity team is inviting local community organisations to an online forum on making cost savings through improving energy efficiency in community buildings such as local sports clubs, village halls and parish buildings.

The event will include speakers detailing their experience of making changes to their community buildings. There will also be information on the practical and financial support the councils can offer.

The event will take place **ONLINE from 6pm - 7pm on Tuesday 11 July** – please forward to groups who may wish to attend. They should email climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk to register and they will be sent the meeting link.

Rural England Prosperity Fund

More than £1.2m is being made available to help improve the rural economy across our districts. We've secured funding from the government's Rural England Prosperity Fund, which can be used to provide a boost to projects such as creating rural business hubs, setting up community energy schemes and diversifying farm businesses beyond agriculture.

Any organisation with legal status will be able to apply for the funding when it opens in the Autumn this year. This will include

- public sector organisations
- higher and further education institutions
- private sector companies
- voluntary organisations
- registered charities

Before the application process begins our Economic Development team wants to understand which organisations might apply and for what type of project, and so is asking anyone interested to send an Expression of Interest in the run up to the funding scheme opening later this year.

There are more details on the scheme on the [South REPF](#) page and [Vale REPF](#) page.

Anyone with questions about the scheme please email business.support@southandvale.gov.uk.

Waste Survey

We've launched a new survey to find out what residents think about our waste and street cleaning services. We will use the feedback to identify what aspects of our waste service people are happy with as well as the areas where we could do better.

Residents can complete the [waste survey](#) online now. Comments are open until Monday 10 July 2023.

If anyone has questions or requires the survey in an alternative format (for example large print, Braille, audio, email, Easy Read and alternative languages) they should email waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk or call 01235 422146.

Have your say on our Air Quality Action Plan

We launched the survey on the council's new joint Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to coincide with Clean Air Day (15 June). The AQAP sets out proposals for the next four years to improve air quality in the districts. This includes the good news that most places have seen a consistent reduction in one of the main measured pollutants: nitrogen dioxide

Wallingford, Watlington and Abingdon have seen the levels of the pollutant nitrogen dioxide fall below the national objective level over the past three to five years so it is "proposed they will no longer be designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the future. Air quality monitoring will continue at those places.

Click here to complete the [AQAP survey](#).

For Council news webpage with links to news pages, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and register for email alerts click [here](#)

To sign up for Planning news alerts click [here](#)