

**The East Hagbourne Annual Parish Meeting was held at Hagbourne Village Hall at
7.30pm on Thursday 14th April 2016**

Present were Cllr D. Rickeard (Chair), County Cllr P. Green, District Cllr J. Murphy and 14 members of the public.

Apologies for absence were received from Jean and Richard Elliott, Iain and Di Duff and Cordelia Gover.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Rickeard welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced County Cllr P. Green, District Cllr J. Murphy and the Parish Clerk Lucy Dalby.

2. Parish Council activities

a. Chairman's Report

D Rickeard

Welcome to the 2016 Annual Parish Meeting. Although this meeting is convened by East Hagbourne Parish Council it is not a Parish Council meeting, but a meeting of East Hagbourne parish residents. This meeting is to inform you what your council has been doing over the past year, and to highlight plans for the future. You will see from the agenda that we have separate items for a number of key items, so I will keep my comments brief.

We have held ten regular Parish Council meetings this year plus three extraordinary meetings to handle urgent business. At the elections in May 2015, we gained one new councillor, Cordelia Gover, and a further member, Crispin Topping was co-opted during the course of the year. Cllrs Susan Pring and Andy Price, however, resigned during the year, so we are left with six councillors and two vacancies.

Our new Clerk, Lucy Dalby is now well established and bringing us the benefit of her professional expertise. I thank all of these for their support and involvement over the year.

At District level we are now part of the Cholsey Ward which returns two councillors - Cllr Jane Murphy is our main contact and has provided valuable support particularly on Green Gap issues as well as attending meetings. Cllr Patrick Greene continues as our very active representative on OCC. Both these councils have been through very difficult times over the past year and I thank both Jane and Patrick for their efforts on our behalf.

As a consequence of government financial cuts, OCC subsidies for our 94/95 and 131 bus services will be withdrawn in July. Thanks are again due to Mary Harrison for continuing as our bus service representative.

This past year has been very eventful for us in East Hagbourne as well with the proposals to build on the Green Gap and the decision to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. We also took full possession of the new Pavilion at the beginning of the year and the official opening by Ed Vaizey, MP on 9th January was very well attended. We still face some challenges, though, to improve the car park and develop more activities at the facility. There will be separate reports on these items later in the meeting.

The Parish Council has received a number of requests for financial assistance and over the year has provided support to MtGG, the Church repair fund and to Kingsholme Close residents to help protect the character of that area and to the Pavilion.

We are grateful to Chris Alberry who has managed the East Hagbourne web site on our behalf for a number of years. A big effort has been made over the past year to keep it up to date through the efforts of Cordelia Gover. For the future, it appears that our current web host will no longer be available, so we are looking at ways to translate the site to a more permanent home and are grateful to Andy Barmer who has offered his help with this task.

Elsewhere in the parish, the allotments continue to be well used. Hagbourne Environment Group continues to look after the wild area of Butt's Piece as well as the wildflower meadow

and some activities in Millenium Wood. All this effort is through volunteer work supported by sales of firewood.

The Neighbourhood Watch scheme is alive and well and there are plans in hand to reinvigorate activities. If you would like to know more, please contact Diana Duff or Myra Hardiman.

Looking to the immediate future; this year's litter blitz will be held on Saturday 23rd April. Di Duff and Yen Rickeard will welcome helpers of all ages so please come along to the Village Hall at 10am.

Don't forget the Fun Run and walk on Monday 2nd May - participants and volunteers are welcome here too.

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.

b. Financial Statement

D Button

The financial year has just ended on 31st March and there has been too little time since then to complete a full set of detailed Accounts for the Parish. So this year I shall concentrate on a few major items that have shaped the way the finances of the Parish have been managed.

As reported at the Annual Parish Meeting held in April 2015 the Parish had prepared its budget and set the Precept in the knowledge that it was about to lose some 40% of the tax base with the transfer of Millbrook to Didcot in May last year. Whilst in real terms the Precept decreased, its effect on individual householders was a large increase.

Precept 2015/6 – up by 26.2% per Household – Precept £28,805 plus CTSR Grant of £915 making a total of £29,720

Precept 2016/7 – up by 3.7% per Household – Precept £29,870 but no CTSR Grant.

The Precept in 2014/5 was £35,386 but this included Millbrook.

During the greater part of the year the expenditure has matched the budget expectation but the arrival of the Grainger planning application during the summer of 2015 has caused your Parish to have to seek advice on planning matters with a resulting increase in expenditure.

EHPC had cash Reserves of £55,566 at the beginning of the financial year but these had been reduced to £27,707 by the end of the year. The principal reason for this reduction was £27,356 expended on the completion of the New Pavilion and associated set-up costs. The Parish has set up Reserves of £10,000 each in respect of the Pavilion Car Park works and the New Road development fund. A further £3,000 has been set aside to fund the Neighbourhood Plan Fund. This leaves some £5,000 as general funds to support the Parish activities during the coming year.

Looking forward to 2016/7 the Parish has chosen to maintain the level of Precept so there will be little effect on individual households whilst requiring the Parish to concentrate on its core activities.

c. Bus Report

M. Harrison

Bus subsidies are to be withdrawn by the County Council putting the 94/95 Services under threat. The bus is a lifeline for many people and some may have to move house if a service is not retained. A Bus Group has been formed with surrounding villages to lobby for the bus users with the County Council and Thames Travel.

Thames Travel don't want to lose all their routes and are working with OCC to create new routes without subsidies.

The 131 Service makes use of the mini bus used for transporting children with special needs to school during the school day. It runs to Wallingford on Wednesday and Friday – there is no charge for this service and is very much appreciated by its users. The Parish Council are looking into supporting this service in conjunction with other local Parish Councils.

Residents are encouraged to make use of the services available to try to safeguard their future.

It was suggested that the timetables could be better advertised to encourage use. The Chairman advised that the timetables were all listed on the village web site.

County Cllr Green that the County Council and Thames Travel are trying to make the best of a difficult situation and that Parish Councils could perhaps group together to organise a community bus service.

District Cllr Murphy reported that the District Council in adopting their new Corporate Plan have agreed to try to support bus companies in rural areas and she will ensure the 94/95 is considered.

3. Reports from County and District Councillors

County Cllr P. Greene – Appendix 1

District Cllr J. Murphy – Appendix 2

Questions

Mr Wood asked if street lights could be turned off in the middle of the night to save money and reduce light pollution. Cllr Greene suggested he write to OCC.

It was suggested that the District Council could run a lottery to support the bus services. Cllr Murphy agreed to look into this and reported that the Parish Council could also do this.

Cllr Murphy was asked when the new District Council CEO will be announced. She reported there had been good interest in the role and there would be an announcement in May 7 with the candidate hopefully in place by August.

Cllr Murphy was asked if the District Council was trying to use volunteers to carry out their statutory duties. She explained that wasn't the case but the District Council was using the new initiative to support existing voluntary organisations to recruit more volunteers.

Cllrs Greene and Murphy gave an explanation of the Unitary Authority debate.

Nick Wright thanked both Councillors for all their support for the Green Gap Campaign.

4. Mind the Green Gap update

N Wright and A Barmer

The land beside New Road was acquired by Grainger 10 years ago. The developers have taken pre application advice from SODC and have held a Public Exhibition and consultation. There was a consultation on an Environmental Impact Assessment.

In September 2015 an application for 170 dwellings was submitted, there were some revisions in January 2016.

Mind the Green Gap was formed and has engaged with residents from East Hagbourne and Didcot and worked with the Parish Council, County Cllr Green and District Cllr Murphy. The group have liaised with Didcot Town Council and engaged with SODC and OCC. There have been objections to the application from OCC and SODC Officers, Didcot Town Council and East Hagbourne Parish Council.

MTGG have made ongoing representations to SODC and there have been around 600 objection from residents.

The application is currently under consideration whilst the Planning Officer reviews all the documents before making her recommendation on 'planning balance' for the Planning Committee. Her recommendation will be made public a week before the meeting.

The Planning Committee is likely to be held on May 18th and representations will be made by Grainger, the Parish Council, MTGG and District Cllr Murphy.

The Planning Committee will then vote to refuse or approve.

If the application is refused Grainger will appeal and the decision will be reviewed by the Planning Inspectorate. The Inspector's decision will then be recovered by the Secretary of State. Grainger could then go to the High Court if the decision still doesn't go in their favour.

SODC would need to defend their decision if they refuse the application.

If on the other hand the application is approved East Hagbourne could take the decision to Judicial Review.

The fight will go all the way and MTGG would encourage as many residents as possible to attend the Planning Meeting to demonstrate the strength of feeling.

Cllr Rickeard thanked the members of MTGG for all their great work.

5. Neighbourhood Plan update

C Topping

A Neighbourhood Plan is a development plan for policies for the development of a parish and forms part of the formal planning decision making process. It provides an opportunity for residents to take some control and is especially important to East Hagbourne due to the expansion of Didcot and the implications of this for the surrounding villages. The Neighbourhood Plan will provide a vision for and protect the environment of the Parish.

A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been formed with ten members and has successfully applied for the designated area using the Parish Boundary. The members have completed a walking survey of the Parish noting all open spaces and they are working on identifying all the land owners. A public meeting has been held with SODC officers outlining what a Neighbourhood Plan is.

The next stage is to hold a Public Consultation on 6th May to seek opinions on the following policy areas.

- a) Housing Needs – what type of housing is needed? This will be followed up with a detailed survey.
- b) Green Infrastructure and Environment.
- c) Road Safety and Transport
- d) Maintaining Heritage and Structure – Listed Buildings and Conservation Area.
- e) Community Vitality – Village Hall, Pavilion, School, Church etc.

Comments will be needed from all areas and ages. This will be the first of a series of events.

6. Pavilion progress

D Rickeard, D Button, T Davies

The East Hagbourne Sport & Recreation Committee manage and run the Pavilion and Recreation Ground on behalf of the Parish Council who own the facilities.

Our Committee is approved each year by the Parish Council at its Annual Meeting: the current members are

Cllr David Rickeard (Chairman)

Cllr Derek Button (Treasurer)

Mr Trevor Davies

Cllr Iain Duff

Cllr Jean Elliott

We have not co-opted additional members over the past year.

Successes & Challenges

To celebrate the final hand-over from the builders, we held a formal opening ceremony in January which was very well attended. We are grateful to our MP Mr Ed Vaizey for joining us and officially opening the building.

The committee has effective operational procedures in place covering booking procedures, proper conduct of meetings and monthly safety and maintenance inspections. We also have a very conscientious and effective cleaner who keeps the building spick and span.

We have some successful regular activities in place:

- Hagbourne United Football Club field two men's teams who play on Saturday afternoons as well as training during the week.
- The Community Choir has around 35 members and has recently given its first full public concert
- Pilates classes are held on Tuesdays catering for 16-18 people each week
- Table Tennis evenings are held each Wednesday in the Community Room
- In addition, the Pavilion has been enjoyed by a number of children's parties and a few adult events and meetings. The playground is enjoyed by many children, especially during the warmer months, and we do manage a sometimes uneasy relationship with dog owners, most of whom are responsible, but are let down by the few.
- The site will also be the venue for the 2016 Village Fête.

We do, however, have some challenges and work to do to reach our full potential

As Derek will explain shortly, our running costs currently exceed revenue by a significant amount and we are grateful to the Parish Council for a grant to bolster our finances.

We are grateful also for support from Robin and Gillian Harries who provided the table tennis equipment and the Village Fund for support with pitch line marking equipment.

The reason for our financial situation is simple - our usage is well below what we planned and as a consequence our revenue is down.

The ladies football team that we hoped would join us was lured away by free facilities elsewhere. Hagbourne United FC are now working hard to establish a girls team to start playing next season.

We would also like more regular bookings for the Community Room - there are several vacant slots both for evening and daytime activities.

The committee is exploring what avenues it can, but we would really benefit from new members who can help with promotion and marketing and bring in new users - if you or someone you know could help, please come forward.

The Car Park

Finally, the car park continues to cause us problems. The reinforced grass approach unfortunately seems inadequate for the conditions and traffic loadings and even after our temporary repairs is rather muddy.

The Parish Council is working with our surveyor and builder on a more permanent solution for which we already have planning permission. However, we have run into some technical problems in sourcing the right materials at a competitive price and once we know the cost will need to engage in fund raising or consider taking a loan to cover the cost.

D Button reported that the Pavilion has made a loss of £2000. There has been turnover of £3500 and expenditure of £5500. The deficit has been carried by the Parish Council with a donation of £2500. The business plan expected this to happen and for business to build up over four years. The Car Park is owned by the Parish Council and so it is they who are responsible for the improvements needed.

Football

Trevor Davies from Hagbourne United football club reported that they hoped to increase football use of the Pavilion. The club aims to be competitive but not to win at all costs. Players of all ages are encouraged and they hope to build a bigger club. The club has applied for funding to build junior teams and they hope to eventually run boys, girls and women's teams. If the application is successful the money will be used to train helpers.

7. Any Other Business

The Cemetery will now be run by a committee under the direct control of East Hagbourne Parish Council. A review of the trees is underway.

Cllr Rickeard thanked everyone for attending and participating in the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 9.40pm.

Appendix 1 OCC REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS APRIL 2016

PROPOSALS FOR UNITARY COUNCIL

As reported last month, without consulting the public or the County Council, on Thursday 25th February a surprise announcement was made by Oxfordshire's District Councils and Oxford City Council. It called for the abolition of the County Council and the establishment of four district quasi-unitary councils, to include parts of Gloucestershire and Northamptonshire. (A unitary council combines the functions of a county council and a district council into one body.) In addition, the announcement called for the creation of an unelected quango to be known as a 'Combined Authority' to take on difficult areas of responsibility currently with the County Council, such as social care and major road projects. So, this would mean four councils spread across three counties, plus an over-arching unelected quango.

The Districts are now in the process of commissioning management consultants to produce a report to evaluate their proposals. Initially their brief to consultants stated: "The District Councils' view is that a single county-wide unitary authority is not the right solution for Oxfordshire". It went on to say that any finding suggesting a single county-wide unitary is best would not be approved.

The Oxfordshire County Council view was that a single county-wide unitary authority was an option that should be considered (along with the Districts' proposal and other options for two or three unitary councils), and had thus been forced to begin the process of commissioning a separate management consultant's report.

As a result of County and public pressure, District Council leaders have now agreed to commission a report covering all the options. It is hoped Council-Tax payers might not now have to fund two separate reports. However, the terms of reference of the Districts' revised brief to management consultants has not yet been agreed between County and Districts.

STREET LIGHTING

OCC's current Street lighting contract with Scottish & Southern Electrical (SSE) was until March 2024, however, the contract contained a single break point at 1st April 2016. In July 2015, SSE served notice on OCC that they intended to activate this break clause as the contract was not affordable to them for its full duration. Negotiations to achieve a compromise were unsuccessful. OCC therefore has to implement interim arrangements while a new maintenance contract is procured. The interim contract is expected to last 18 months. For the first 6 months there will be an emergency/make-safe service only. Beyond that period OCC will look to increase the level of service provided to more than just emergency/make-safety activity as appropriate.

The street lamp LED replacement project is a one-off capital programme of works funded through DfT's challenge funding. A separate procurement arrangement is being made for this project to ensure its continued delivery as planned.

It is appreciated that there will be concerns locally about the impact of this interim arrangement and reduced level of service, but in a time of significant financial pressures, the termination of the current street lighting contract provides an opportunity to procure a new and improved street lighting contract. The county council will also be able to take advantage of recent improvements in technology and general advancements within the sector.

DRAGON IGNITES BATTLE AGAINST POTHOLE

A new weapon is being deployed in the battle against potholes on Oxfordshire's roads. The 'Dragon' – so called because of the fire breathing nozzle it uses to dry out potholes – is a mobile patching machine that has already fixed many hundreds of potholes and a multitude of other defects on the county's roads. Skanska, OCC's highways maintenance contractor, has added the Dragon to its arsenal against potholes and is using it to good effect across Oxfordshire, Cambridge and Peterborough. The machine repairs an average of 20 defects a day and has filled up to 44 potholes in one shift. So far it has fixed just short of 2,000 in Oxfordshire. The traditional method of pothole repair consists of a two-person gang and a lorry manually filling the potholes with hot tarmac. In the right circumstances, potholes filled using the Dragon can cost as little as £10 compared to £70 for traditional methods. It is also safer and provides a more environmentally sustainable solution. The potential savings that Dragon brings allows additional focus on repairing many of the defects that have yet to form into potholes. These repairs can be done at the same time due the multi-function repair capabilities of the Dragon. It can fill pot-holes, seal cracks and provide a thin overlay to minor surface damage. This preventative maintenance saves money in the long-term as the repairs are all undertaken at the same time.

RECYCLING CENTRES TO OPEN LATE ON THURSDAYS

Opening hours on Thursdays at OCC's Household Waste Recycling Centres will be extended from 7 April to 29 September. The sites will be open until 8pm on Thursdays in addition to the normal hours of 8am-5pm every day (including Sundays). The Household Waste Recycling Centres can accept a wide range of materials for recycling including garden waste, textiles and electrical items. Food waste should always be placed in the food caddies provided by the district council and collected as part of the kerbside collection scheme. More information about the sites, including layout and a full guide to what can be recycled can be found at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

KEEPING HGVS MOVING WHILE REDUCING THE IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

A free online mapping tool has been launched to help freight and logistics companies plan their routes through the county. Oxfordshire Freight Gateway is linked to the National Freight Journey Planner and is designed to help logistics managers and drivers of large goods vehicles to select the most appropriate routes for their journeys in Oxfordshire. A suitable route is provided based on the vehicle's weight and dimensions and journey details. Details here: <http://freightgateway.co.uk/oxfordshire/>

OXFORD CITY CENTRE'S NEW TEMPORARY LIBRARY NOW OPEN

The central library closed February 27 as part of ongoing redevelopment work.

A new, smaller, temporary library has now opened in Oxford's Castle Quarter with facilities including books, audio books and DVD's for adults and children. Due to the size and facilities available at the site of the temporary library, Internet access, reference information, newspapers, journals and music services will not be available. However these services will still be provided at other libraries in the area. The library service's Reference Online service and eBooks and eAudio lending services will also be available. Redevelopment of the whole Westgate building is the reason for the relocation – with the central library set to reopen back in its original building in October 2017. The existing front of the current Central Library building will be replaced to become part of the new curving wall forming the south side of Bonn Square marking the entrance to the new Westgate Oxford.

Cllr Patrick Greene – Didcot East & Hagbourne Division – Oxfordshire County Council

Appendix 2

It's official - South is best for rural dwellers!

South Oxfordshire has topped a list of the best places to live in the UK.

According to a survey produced by the Halifax, South Oxfordshire has the highest living standards, with happy residents, high levels of satisfaction and low levels of anxiety. We also scored highly for health and employment, with 97 per cent of adults saying they were in good health and 81 per cent in jobs.

What's more, we were pleased to find that the vast majority of South Oxfordshire residents are satisfied with how the district council runs things. Just over 80 per cent said that the council offered good quality services, and two thirds of residents agreed that they provided good value for money – the best result since surveys began in 2005.

Council Tax

Firstly, when Council met on the 18th February it approved the budget for 2016/2017, which means that, whilst OCC have increased their bill by 3.99% and with a 1.99% rise for the Police and Crime Commissioner, SODC has kept it's element of the Council Tax frozen. This has been achieved without cuts to any of our services, which will be maintained at or above their present standards.

Corporate Services Project

The District Council's Corporate Services Contract has now been agreed by all of the participating Councils, which means that by joining together in providing back office services significant savings can be made without cuts, whilst maintaining standards. This represents a saving for SODC of around £1M per annum, which has helped us freeze our part of the Council Tax this year.

Oxfordshire Vision

The seven Councils involved continue to work on our Devolution Bid for a better way for Local Government, and recently the Oxfordshire Growth Board urged our friends in the County Council to join our independent consultation on how this may look. The Consultation should be completed by June./July. More information is available on the website.

<http://www.oxfordshire.vision/>

New Draft Corporate Plan

This has now gone through Council and will be adopted shortly. It has some interesting and innovative ideas in it. The first line says – Invest in the District's Future and that is what we intend to do. Some particularly exciting points

Aim to have superfast Broadband for all businesses and residents by the end of the 2020.

More leisure facilities in the District

More funding for Didcot through the garden town initiative

Introducing individual councillor budgets through which councillors can support small community projects.

Look at the business case for introducing a local lottery scheme to fund local community projects.

Promoting and supporting volunteering in the local community and in sport

Investigating the opportunities for increasing the role of parish councils – if they want this

Encouraging small and medium sized businesses to grow in the District – these are the backbone of our rural community

Support rural communities with maintaining their transport links by working with bus operators to look at options to continue some of the bus services previously supported directly by Oxfordshire County Council

Community Safety Partnership

Our Officers work very closely with their opposite numbers in the other local councils, and their work with the Community Safeguarding Partnership is no exception. We have just

launched Hotel Watch in Abingdon and Thame, which is a scheme designed to help keep vulnerable people safe.

We'll be working with the police to provide hotel, B&B and guesthouse owners with information on how to spot and report signs of child sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and what to do if they believe something suspicious is happening at their premises.

Hotel Watch is another initiative set up in response to the findings and recommendations that came out of Operation Bullfinch.

Planning and Development

We have received two decisions on planning appeals, that for the Chinnor Gladman Appeal and the Wallingford Wates Appeal. It is disappointing to note that these two appeals have been up-held, and our Planning Team are reviewing the Inspectors' reports to determine what we will do about these decisions.

CIL money

We started collecting Community Infrastructure Levy money on 1 April. We'll pass 15 per cent of the funds we collect to the town and parish councils where development is taking place, so they can spend it on local infrastructure. If they have an adopted neighbourhood plan in place, we'll pass on 25 per cent.

We're writing to parish councils to let them know,

Neighbourhood Planning

Residents in Henley and Harpsden have voted in favour of adopting their Neighbourhood Plan. In the referendum on Thursday this week, 2,105 people voted in favour of adopting the plan, 471 voted against it. The turnout was just over 28 per cent.

Here's a quick update on a few of the other neighbourhood plans that have recently progressed:

Berinsfield - there's a public hearing on Tuesday 12 April to examine whether Berinsfield's plan meets the basic conditions set out in the Localism Act. It takes place at 10am at the Berinsfield Community Association, OX10 7NR.

Sonning Common - an inspector has now been appointed to examine whether the Sonning Common plan meets the basic conditions in the Localism Act.

Other updates - we've confirmed the areas that the plans for The Baldons, Warborough and Shillingford, and Wheatley will cover.

Licencing

Our Licencing Panel recently agreed a licence for an all-electric taxi in Didcot. This environmentally friendly taxi is good for the environment, and we believe a first for Oxfordshire! Not only do we look after taxis' suitability and taxi drivers' conduct, but also the licencing of films for public screening. Normally, although having overall responsibility for these licences, Councils adopt the recommendations of the British Board of Film Censors. This month though, a request was received for a licence for a privately produced amateur production and so a Licencing Panel was convened comprising Cllrs Harrod, Nimmo-Smith and White. The three councillors all agreed, that whilst the film may not have been something they would have gone to see at the cinema, it was produced to a higher standard than a lot of the stuff screened on TV!

Rubbish And Waste - Five tonnes of litter for Royalty

Earlier this month, we invited residents to take part in a mass clean-up to celebrate the Queen's birthday. 32 groups across both the South and Vale districts took part and collected nearly four tonnes of rubbish and just under a tonne of recycling, which is about 300 bags of litter off the streets and roads. There's still time to get a group together and have a clear up as part of Clean For the Queen. For more details, email waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk.

Grants

Whilst the Capital Grants Scheme window for applications is now closed, there will be opportunities later this year for further applications. To stand the best chance of getting what is needed, planning an application well in advance makes life easier for the applicants and with this in mind the future windows are

- Round two open: 2 May to 1 July 2016 for decisions by 15 October 2016
- Round three open: 1 August to 30 September 2016 for decisions by 10 January 2017
- Round four open: 31 October to 23 December 2016 for decisions by 1 April 2017

More on Grants – Celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's 90th Birthday

We have informed Town and Parish Councils that SODC has made grants available to them to help towards the costs of celebrating the Queen's 90th Birthday.

More on Grants - Sportivate funding

We've just secured more funding from Sport England for Sportivate, which is a national project to encourage inactive 11-25 year olds to get involved in regular sport and activity. In the last year we reached more than 450 people through this scheme.

We'll use the £11,133 funding for sports such as Nordic walking, roller hockey, triathlon, swimming and boxfit.

New Site for Permanent Offices

There has been lots of speculation about where we will site for the SODC/VALE offices. Nothing has been decided at present, mainly due to the Devolution Deal uncertainty. We will be at 135 for another 3 years at least.

by Cllr Jane Murphy

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Here's a quick update on a few of the other neighbourhood plans that have recently progressed:

Berinsfield - there's a public hearing on Tuesday 12 April to examine whether Berinsfield's plan meets the basic conditions set out in the Localism Act. It takes place at 10am at the Berinsfield Community Association, OX10 7NR.

Sonning Common - an inspector has now been appointed to examine whether the Sonning Common plan meets the basic conditions in the Localism Act.

Other updates - we've confirmed the areas that the plans for The Baldons, Warborough and Shillingford, and Wheatley will cover.

Licencing

Our Licencing Panel recently agreed a licence for an all-electric taxi in Didcot. This environmentally friendly taxi is good for the environment, and we believe a first for Oxfordshire! Not only do we look after taxis' suitability and taxi drivers' conduct, but also the licencing of films for public screening. Normally, although having overall responsibility for these licences, Councils adopt the recommendations of the British Board of Film Censors. This month though, a request was received for a licence for a privately produced amateur production and so a Licencing Panel was convened comprising Cllrs Harrod, Nimmo-Smith and White. The three councillors all agreed, that whilst the film may not have been something they would have gone to see at the cinema, it was produced to a higher standard than a lot of the stuff screened on TV!

Rubbish And Waste - Five tonnes of litter for Royalty

Earlier this month, we invited residents to take part in a mass clean-up to celebrate the Queen's birthday. 32 groups across both the South and Vale districts took part and collected nearly four tonnes of rubbish and just under a tonne of recycling, which is about 300 bags of litter off the streets and roads. There's still time to get a group together and have a clear up as part of Clean For the Queen. For more details, email waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk.

Grants

Whilst the Capital Grants Scheme window for applications is now closed, there will be opportunities later this year for further applications. To stand the best chance of getting what is needed, planning an application well in advance makes life easier for the applicants and with this in mind the future windows are

- Round two open: 2 May to 1 July 2016 for decisions by 15 October 2016
- Round three open: 1 August to 30 September 2016 for decisions by 10 January 2017
- Round four open: 31 October to 23 December 2016 for decisions by 1 April 2017

More on Grants – Celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's 90th Birthday

We have informed Town and Parish Councils that SODC has made grants available to them to help towards the costs of celebrating the Queen's 90th Birthday.

More on Grants - Sportivate funding

We've just secured more funding from Sport England for Sportivate, which is a national project to encourage inactive 11-25 year olds to get involved in regular sport and activity. In the last year we reached more than 450 people through this scheme.

We'll use the £11,133 funding for sports such as Nordic walking, roller hockey, triathlon, swimming and boxfit.

New Site for Permanent Offices

There has been lots of speculation about where we will site for the SODC/VALE offices. Nothing has been decided at present, mainly due to the Devolution Deal uncertainty. We will be at 135 for another 3 years at least.