

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Cumnor Parish  
held on Tuesday 2 May 2017 at 7.30pm  
in the Orange Room, Dean Court Community Centre, Pinnocks Way, Dean Court  
at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Gerald Frost, Chairman, Steve Viner, Vice-chairman, Jeffrey Gee, Bryan Goudman, Trevor Halls, Dudley Hoddinott, Fiona Newton, Judy Roberts, Nick Surman, Paul Taylor, County Councillor Janet Godden, 2 parishioners and Tina Brock, Clerk.

**01/17 Apologies for absence:** Tom Christophers, Pam Fraser, John Griffin and Alison Jenner.

**02/17 Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting** held on 3 May 2016 were taken as read, agreed and signed as a correct record.

**03/17 Matters Arising.** None.

**04/17 Chairman's Report.** As Chairman of Cumnor Parish Council I have pleasure in presenting my report regarding the activities of the Council during the past year.

### **Planning**

Planning matters continue to occupy a great deal of attention and I am indebted to our Plan Receivers for the work they do in researching each planning application submitted to the District Council, which falls within our parish boundary. The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Steve Viner will report to you later in more detail.

As reported last year, the Council set up a Steering Group for the Cumnor Neighbourhood Development Plan, public meetings were held and have been well attended. Community wishes have been included in the plan. Here I would like to record my thanks to the members of the Steering Group for the valuable work they have done thus far. In the Local Plan Part 1 nine sites in the Green Belt were highlighted by the District Council as being earmarked for future housing. Since then the District Council has published the Local Plan Part 2 and these sites have been removed. I believe Fiona Newton, a member of the Steering Group, will elaborate further later in the meeting.

However infilling will still continue in the Parish and Council will have to be vigilant regarding the design and character of submitted applications and to the concerns of residents affected by proposals.

A matter causing concern is the study by Atkins, commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), which backs the District Council's plan for a new 1,200 space Park & Ride to be built in the Green Belt at Cumnor. The village has difficulty coping with the amount of cars at the moment and the planned Park & Ride, even if it were underused as has been predicted, is badly thought out regardless of any changes in infrastructure that might be implemented. It would change the whole character of Cumnor and make it unrecognisable. In my opinion the scheme is half baked, ill-conceived and impractical and should be strongly resisted.

### **Highways**

In response to public request a new bus shelter was installed by the Council on the B4044 outside Oakenholt Care Home.

OCC are responsible for the maintenance of grass verges but due to funding cut backs, verges during 2017 will now only be cut once a year in July and then only at a depth of one metre from the kerb.

Likewise OCC are responsible for road maintenance and any potholes can be reported on line at [www.fixmystreet.gov.uk](http://www.fixmystreet.gov.uk)

Two bus stops either side of the road before the Swinford Bridge were found to be non-compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and were reported to OCC. OCC admitted that the bus stops were not compliant and funding has been made available to make the required improvements. Currently OCC are sourcing quotes and work is expected to be carried out within the financial year.

### **Burial**

Representatives of the Burial Committee met with like representation from Eynsham Parish Council regarding the availability of land for a new cemetery. No land has been identified by

either party at the moment but it was agreed that the two Councils would continue to maintain contact for this purpose.

### **Recreation and Playing Fields**

Last year a new grounds maintenance contract was awarded to Mr Ady Podbury and I along with other interested parties are delighted to congratulate him on the work he has carried out, which has been to a high standard. His advice and cooperation is much appreciated and I thank him for relieving Council of a previously contentious problem.

Arrangements are in the advanced stages for installing new pieces of both exercise and play equipment at Meadow Close and Mayfield Road, Farmoor and Fogwell Road, Dean Court play parks. As previously advised S106 monies have been utilised for this expenditure.

### **Other Matters**

I was sorry during this year to receive the resignation, owing to his work commitments, of Councillor Tim Pottle, who had been a valued colleague and is much missed for his erudite and concise contributions. He does though remain on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and as Chair of the Co-ordination Team of Keep Cumnor Green.

I was pleased to welcome Lucy Mangua to the Council and look forward to working with her. Monies are being released from the Cumnor Public Purposes Charity to install defibrillators at Closes and Fogwell Pavilions, Dean Court Community Centre and the Old School and it is hoped to complete this in the next few months. I am sure all will agree that these will be an added benefit to our community.

### **05/17 Committee Reports.**

Steve Viner, Chairman, Planning Committee

The total of planning applications for the parish during 2016/17 was 93, exactly the same as in 2015/16 comprised of:

	2015/2016	2016/2017
Dwellings	26	22
Extensions	44	56
Miscellaneous	23	15
Total	93	93

57 of these applications were seen by Council and 36 by the Planning Committee.

Fiona Newton, Chairperson, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

For newcomers to the wonderful world of planning, a Neighbourhood Plan can be about any aspect of land use and how it is developed – so that includes land for homes, businesses, and open spaces. It gives us a mechanism for deciding *where* development goes, *what* it will be like and *who* it is for. We can include advice on issues such as school and medical provision, and we can say how issues such as lack of sewage capacity or flood risk might impact on developments planned.

Late last year, the Parish Council agreed that it was in the Parish's best interest to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, a steering group was formed and in February this year, after a 6 week consultation period, our area designation of Cumnor Parish was approved.

Since then we have formed a Steering Group who have been working hard to get the ball rolling. Our first big piece of work is nearly finished. We have had 16 volunteers, led by a local resident Dr Kathy Davies, who also happens to be a heritage planning consultant, and have been busy around the whole Parish taking photos, talking to experts and residents, making notes and researching maps and archives. From this we have been able to complete 4 Character Assessments – these are essentially a summary of what the spirit of the area is. This work will go to form part of the evidence base that we will use later on to develop any policies that we would like to see in the Neighbourhood Plan.

It's fair to say that for all of us working on this, it has been a fascinating and eye opening few weeks. We have found out that the museum down at Farmoor Reservoir houses the Farmoor mammoth tusk, we have found out where the staircase that Amy Robsart met her untimely death was squirreled away to, we have found out where the site of Blind Pinnocks Alehouse is - so if anyone wants to set up a microbrewery of the same name we have already got a range of potential beer names for you including Robsart's Ghost and Tumbledown Dick.

A small group is being put together to look at the geology of the area, and to identify whether a hydrogeological survey would be useful in any part of the Parish.

But our next big piece of work is to put together “Cumnor’s Big Survey” a survey to send out to each household to gather views and aspirations on a range of topics. Again we have tapped into the local expertise and we much of this work will be done pro bono. It is the first time to our knowledge that this has been done at such a local level in Cumnor, so will be interesting to see what is important to the local community.

Many of you will know that The Vale recently published its draft Local Plan Part 2, The Vale has acknowledged that the release of Green Belt around Cumnor is not necessary to deliver the housing needed. So at our last Council meeting we discussed whether it was still right that the Parish went ahead with its Neighbourhood Plan.

We agreed that it was still important for Cumnor to carry on with its Neighbourhood Plan. Cumnor has delivered over 400 new houses over the last 4 years, with over a third of those being on brownfield sites. We think this trend will continue, therefore it seems more important than ever to have some say over the design and density of this type of housing. Furthermore, the Housing Bill currently going through Parliament aims to fast-track development on windfall and brownfield sites. We believe we only have one way to influence these sites and that is through a Neighbourhood Plan. Through the Neighbourhood Plan, we can identify and protect local green spaces. But perhaps, just as important is the fact that this is the only way to identify “local need”. As part of this process we can gather comprehensive views and data as to what the local community wants this parish to be like in the future.

If you would like to keep up to date with our Neighbourhood Plan work, please go to [www.cumnorneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.cumnorneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) or follow us on Facebook or Twitter @MyCumnor or read about us in the Cumnor Parish News.

Judy Roberts, Chairperson, Recreation and Playing Fields Committee.

Although the previous contract for the maintenance of the Parish’s green spaces, recreation and playing fields was not due to terminate until September, the company declared it could not afford to continue at the agreed prices so it ceased in June. The Committee then had to tender for a new contractor very quickly. Six companies tendered but there were two strong contenders. After further questioning, Ady Podbury was selected and he has been a resounding success. Although the firm is small, they have had no problem responding to small seasonal adjustments, He came with glowing references and has fulfilled our expectations

In the autumn we began to plan the selection and funding of new equipment at Fogwell Rod, Kimmeridge Road and Mayfield Road play parks. It quickly became apparent that, because the ownership of the land at Kimmeridge Road was still unclear, placing equipment there at this time was impossible. Four companies tended for the equipment in the areas and we ran consultations with the public at Fogwell Pavilion and Farmoor Village Hall, Clear favourites emerged from this but at Farmoor they wanted exercise equipment at the Mayfield site and some improvements at the meadow Close site. Some amendments to the tenders were requested and the decisions were made at the February meeting.

The funding had progressed in tandem as we successfully applied for a grant of £20,000 from VWHDC and we successfully applied for S106 money of £20,000 for Tilbury Fields and £5,600 for sports equipment for the Kimmeridge Road site. Council had decided to commit a budget of up to £25,000 which gave us more than enough money. We intend to spend the Kimmeridge money on that site when the ownership is established but as it is parish funds we will now have the flexibility to be able to provide what the consultation requests.

The new equipment should be installed this summer.

Tom Christophers, Chairman, Highways Committee.

In the period we have seen the confirmed reinstatement of the 4C bus service, revised the Parish emergency plan, attended to overgrown vegetation across footpaths and roadside verges, conducted speed surveys, moved on with installation of a puffin crossing on the Cumnor Hill, replaced and installed bus shelters and associated lighting, highlighted traffic concerns around Cumnor Hill, Oxford Road, Delamare Way, Cumnor Primary school, Norreys Road, Bertie

Road, Leys Road and the Farmoor roundabout, continued with the rolling programme of infrastructure maintenance, offered the donation of a tree to Cumnor Primary School to replace one removed elsewhere in the parish, attended the Botley Traffic Advisory Committee and Parish Transport Representatives Meeting.

Work for next year will be focussed on bus stop provision with regards to shelters, seating, lighting and service information; the potential for a pedestrian crossing on the Oxford Road, Parish roadside nameplates, footpath monitoring and the continued suitability amid safety concerns of paths crossing over the A420, parking around the Farmoor roundabout access points, and primary school car parking on neighbouring road junctions. The Highways Committee has a strong mandate to find appropriate ways to allocate funds in order to improve the community for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

**06/17 Parish Council Accounts for 2015/2016** had been approved and audited. The Accounts were accepted.

**07/17 Draft Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2017.** The draft accounts were noted.

**08/17 Report from County Councillor(s).**

CC Janet Godden.

Due to the meeting falling during the County Council election period the report is brief and with minimal comment.

#### Education & children's services

Matthew Arnold School, Cumnor School and Botley School are all thriving as their individual regular newsletters (available online) show.

Matthew Arnold's expansion to provide for additional pupil (7-form entry) was approved during the year. Work due to start during the summer.

Botley Bridges, with funding from the County Council and the two local parish councils, now provides services and activities for families with children aged up to 11 to replace some of the services lost with the closure of the former Elms Road Children's Centre.

#### Adult social care

The County Council is taking the additional council tax increase for adult social care. This is not sufficient to prevent still more cuts to services and neither of us think it appropriate that funding for such major services should come from the Council tax. We hope that a better national solution will be found soon.

#### Traffic and highways

£27m of government has been allocated to studies across 3 counties in connection with the proposed Oxford-Cambridge expressway (i.e. a Southampton to Felixstowe route). This includes consideration of a new road from the A34 (near Marcham) across to the M40.

The proposal for a new Park & Ride at the A420 west of Cumnor, linking to the City via a rapid transit bus, will not reach the development stage for another 2-3 years. It is unsatisfactory for local communities to have major projects 'on the table' for several years before being worked up; this is because options on all sides of the City were looked at together in 2016 and the most urgent are being developed first. Any formal proposal will go through the full local planning process with full opportunities for local comment.

The annual grass cutting of verges will once again take place in July (May had been hoped for).

#### Library service

The mobile library serviced has stopped. There are no plans to close Botley Library, which on Mace's current rephrasing remains where in its current premises until the last stage.

#### Bus subsidies

These have all stopped. A pre-bookable shopping-type service is run by several villages that now have no service at all. The causes for this are two-fold. There is a wide gap between the funding received from central government for concessionary bus passes and the cost to the council of reimbursing the bus companies; at the same time the bus companies no longer use the most profitable services to help fund the unprofitable ones but require every bus service to be commercially viable.

#### Planning

The County Council is a consultee of the Vale local plan but is not otherwise involved with it.

#### Local government reorganisation

A proposal for a single unitary council for Oxfordshire has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government jointly by the County Council, South Oxfordshire district Council and the Vale district Council.

The Chairman bid Janet a fond farewell as she would not be standing at the local OCC elections and thanked her for representing Cumnor over the past 20 plus years.

#### **09/16 Report from the District Councillor(s).**

DC Dudley Hoddinott.

#### **5 Councils Partnership**

Some significant changes have taken place in the Vale District Council during the last year. David Hill took over from David Buckle as the Chief Executive of both the Vale and South Oxfordshire District Councils. His management team was very different to the previous management team as a result of the 5 Councils Partnership contract which started on 1 July 2016. 5 councils in the south of England, including the Vale and South, have contracts with Capita and Vinci to supply many back office services, following competitive tendering. The objective is for annual savings of at least £1 million in response to the Governments gradual reduction to zero of the annual support grant to councils. HR and Payroll have been very challenging for Capita. Vinci's contract for the Vale car parks has caused a problem, as one of my constituents was fined for parking beyond a car parking space for one vehicle! Maybe this was the result of initial enthusiasm to work to the letter of the new contract! We have been assured that the Vale car park machines will take the new £1 coins before the October deadline.

#### **Unitary Council for Oxfordshire**

The Vale has been at the forefront of proposals for a Unitary Council for Oxfordshire. The Vale's new Chief Executive has been involved in significantly modifying the proposal from Oxfordshire County Council for a Unitary Council, aiming to save £20 million per year. Many initial objections have been addressed in the latest proposals, and some of Oxford City Council's objections could be addressed in future negotiations, since the Vale CE has worked for the City Council and understands many of their problems. This proposal has been submitted to the Government Department even though other Oxon Councils have not supported it. The result should be known before the end of the year.

#### **Redevelopment of West Way Shopping Area**

More locally, the Mace proposals to redevelop the West Way shopping area have been accepted and the most recent estimate is that work will start in July with preparations to move the Co-op food store to below the Grant Thornton building. It has been found that the phased redevelopment work would take 5 years, so this new scheme was devised that reduces the work to two years, but fewer shops can be accommodated during construction.

#### **Vale Local Plan**

The Vale Local Plan has been accepted by the Planning Inspector which includes building 20,560 dwellings in the Vale by 2031. Fortunately there are no plans to build on the Green Belt around Cumnor. The draft Local Plan Part 2 has just been published for consultation. This includes building an additional 2,200 houses as Oxford City's unmet housing needs. This report considers non-strategic sites for housing (ie smaller sites) and the development of Didcot as a Garden Town.

#### **Planning**

There has been a lot of activity concerning planning applications. At last the Vale Planning Enforcement Team has started to carry out some enforcement. After many planning applications to extend 9 Turnpike Road, when the building being built never agreed with the drawings submitted, the developer has been given notice to demolish the 'extension'. He has three months to comply or appeal.

Forster Lane is owned by the Vale and is in a terrible state of repair a meeting will be held with contractors to discuss how to repair it.

DC Judy Roberts.

I have been involved with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and my area has been infrastructure and so I am collating the existing plans for the expansion of the schools, health services and transport provision within the designated area. A survey of existing brownfield and windfall sites will have to be undertaken so that we can identify what might be available.

A commuted sum of £2m for affordable housing was agreed as part of the S106 agreement for the West Way shopping area development. This money would normally be allowed to be spent anywhere within the Vale but the full Council agreed that the spending of the £2m should go to projects identified within North Hinksey and Cumnor Parishes as a priority.

The two Persimmon developments are coming to an end but there are still many serious snagging problems with both Cumnor Heights and Tilbury Fields. The developer has ceased attending meetings with Cumnor Parish so we are trying to set up a meeting with VWHDC Planning and Enforcement to see if these problems can be solved before the developer leaves the area. The University of Oxford has recently asked the Planning Department for a decision on permitted development rights on the building of a road from Tilbury Farm to the exit road of Simpson's Cottages. If this is approved and built then the main road access to Tilbury Farm would no longer be through the Tilbury Fields development. This would solve most of the safety concerns of the junction of Tilbury Lane and Hanson Way crossing and the high usage of the emergency access gate.

**10/17 Questions from the Electors.**

A resident voiced her concerns over the way her planning applications had been received and dealt with by Council. The resident was informed that each planning application put before Council or the Planning Committee received a balanced discussion and comments submitted were within the planning law. Council follows a strict code of conduct which it adheres to.

**11/17 Date of Next Meeting.** The next Annual Meeting of the Parish would take place on Tuesday 1 May 2018 in Farmoor Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed ..... (Chairman) Date .....2018