

CUMNOR PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Cumnor Parish
held on Tuesday 1 May 2018 at 7.30pm
in Farmoor Village Hall, Farmoor at 7.30pm**

Present: Gerald Frost, Chairman, Steve Viner, Vice-chairman, Julia Commons, Pam Fraser, Jeffrey Gee, Dudley Hoddinott, Fiona Newton, Judy Roberts, Nick Surman, Paul Taylor, County Councillor Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor, 4 parishioners and Tina Brock, Clerk.

01/18 Apologies for absence: Tom Christophers, Bryan Goudman, John Griffin and Alison Jenner. These apologies were received.

02/18 Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 2 May 2017 were taken as read, agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

03/18 Matters Arising. None.

04/18 Chairman's Report. This evening I am delivering my report as Chairman of the Cumnor Parish Council for the year ending 2017/2018.

My report contains good news and some of a disappointing nature and much of which I report here has already been published in the Cumnor Parish News, which I am pleased to say is still being published after what has been a difficult year for their management. This is an excellent local publication, full of local news and interest and I recommend it to everyone. As well as reading about our deliberations in the CPN we also have an up and running website. Thanks go to the Webmaster for looking after the old site.

I would like to thank my colleagues who have supported me in our endeavours not only to preserve but also improve Cumnor Parish. My thanks also go to Lucy Mangua who resigned for personal reasons. Her resignation leaves a vacancy on the Council and we would be pleased to accept applications for the post. As I have oft times stated this Council exists to serve its parishioners without bias and is completely independent of any political organisation. Special mention goes to Councillors Dudley Hoddinott for his work at Cumnor Village Hall, Alison Jenner for representation on the Botley Traffic Advisory Committee and Tom Christophers who is not only Chairman of our Highways Committee but is also a Governor of Cumnor C of E School and Judy Roberts for her work at Dean Court Community Centre. To those Councillors I haven't mentioned, who from time to time also attend meetings of outside bodies as well as their Council duties, also go my thanks.

Planning occupies a great deal of Council's time and here I will give special mention to the Council's Plan Receivers, Steve Viner, Nick Surman and John Griffin. These people voluntarily go out in their own free time in all weathers to examine, consult and deliver their opinion to Council as to the merit or de-merit of applications. They must at times feel exasperated when some critical and valid objections to an application are not supported by the Vale of the White Horse District Council, who on occasion appear to disregard their own strictures. Again my special tanks for the work they do. I would also like to mention Councillor Fiona Newton. She along with her colleagues on the Cumnor Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have done remarkable work of which they can be rightly proud. I have thanked them before and I do so again. As I reported last year and it is a continuing concern, is the proposed 1,200 space Park & Ride to be built on Green Belt in Cumnor

I will defer to Steve Viner, Chairman of the Planning Committee and also Fiona Newton Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to give their detailed reports but first I will mention Council's ongoing complaint against District Councillor Sandy Lovatt, who is Chairman of the VWHDC Planning Committee. At a meeting of the Planning Committee last

November Sandy Lovatt expressed an opinion regarding properties on Cumnor Hill. He stated that 'there are a lot of large gardens on Cumnor Hill' and in his opinion 'should be built on'. When this was reported back to Council it was considered that the remark was inappropriate and predetermined future applications for development on Cumnor Hill. This area is already being raped by voracious developers and inhibits this Council's attempt to preserve the best and develop the area appropriately. Despite informal attempts to persuade Sandy Lovatt to withdraw the remark and apologise to Cumnor Parish Sandy Lovatt still refused to do so. The Council felt so strongly regarding the matter, it was left with no alternative but to make the complaint official. My latest information is that Democratic Services at VWHDC have heard back from Sandy Lovatt. He wishes to speak to an Independent Person, which is his right, and this process has been put in place and will happen this week. We await the outcome with interest.

Of further concern is the fact that Persimmon the developer of both Kimmeridge Road and Tilbury Fields developments appears to have abandoned these unfinished sites. Council will be interested to know the outcome of investigations by VWHDC Planning and Enforcement Departments.

Five defibrillators were purchased by Cumnor Public Purposes Charity and installed at Closes Road Pavilion, Fogwell Road Pavilion, Dean Court Community Centre, Cumnor Old School and Cumnor Village Hall. Two training sessions on their use were held and well attended last November. Thanks go to Dick Tracey, ex South Central Paramedic for this instruction and in appreciation Council purchased a manikin for his use at future training sessions.

As Chairman, I felt it was wrong that because these defibrillators had been purchased by the Charity they would be liable for VAT, whereas purchases made by public authorities can claim VAT relief. This seemed to me to be grossly unfair and I contacted Local MP Layla Moran regarding this. She has recently written back to say that she has signed a cross-party early day motion calling on the Government to act on VAT on community access defibrillators to remove VAT from community public access defibrillators and their cabinets. Other aspects of our work include Recreation and Playing Fields and Highways which both have Committees. I will be calling on Councillors Judy Roberts for her report on the activities of the Recreation and Playing Fields Committee and Tom Christophers for his report on Highway Committee activities.

I wish to give special thanks to Ady Podbery and Mick Herring. Ady has, and is, continuing to carry out work keeping the parks and grass areas of the parish in excellent condition and Mick Herring carries out repairs and installations of Council assets. Both do work of a high order. Thanks also go to the Fogwell Road Pavilion Management Committee who look after the running of the pavilion on the behalf of Council.

I should also like to thank a group of people who also carry out work on Council's behalf, they are Cumnor Conservation Group who apart from other things look after Cumnor Village Pond and the Cumnor Hurst. It is disappointing then that the Oxford Mail recently saw fit to publish an article based on an Earthwatch study stating that our 'village pond was one of the most polluted bodies in the Thames Valley'. 'Folks I can tell you now this is fake news, fake news'. It is believed that the only information Earthwatch has is from two years ago when the Conservation Group started its project to improve the water quality of the pond and requested from Earthwatch sampling kits to monitor the water quality. These so far have not been used, so where this information comes from is a mystery. I can confirm that the Cumnor Conservation Group have been hard at work over the last two years in not only improving the water quality but also improving the general appearance of the pond. Once again dedicated volunteers preserving the fabric of the parish. Well done to them. It just goes to show that you should not believe everything you read in the papers.

Before moving on I would report that VWHDC received a proposal from Sunningwell Parish Council to transfer Chilswell Farm Cottages off the Foxcombe Road from Cumnor Parish to Sunningwell Parish. Cumnor raised objections to this proposal as it had no merit and at their meeting on the 27 November 2017 VWHDC decided no changes were needed to alter the boundary.

I have in this report thanked the many people and groups for the unstinting work they do. But there is one person to make an extra special mention of, a person who carries out their work and varied duties which they have to deal with, with enthusiasm, great skill and diligence in their work for the Parish Council this person cajoles us, encourages us and support us and is the glue which binds us all together. I am sure that all Councillors will join me in thanking that person for their hard work and dedication, that person is our Clerk Tina Brock. Tina from us all, many thanks.

I now commend my report to the meeting.

05/18 Committee Reports.

Steve Viner, Chairman, Planning Committee.

The total of planning applications for the parish during 2017/18 was 91 and comprised of:

Type of Planning Application	2017/2018
Replacement Dwellings	10
Variations to applications	11
Extensions	45
West Way (Botley Centre0	4
Convert to Flats	5
Miscellaneous	8
Conversion	4
Care Home	2
Applications taken to VWHDC Planning Committee	2

Fiona Newton, Chairperson, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Many of you will remember that it was back in September 2016 that Cumnor Parish Council first discussed whether this parish needed a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) or not. The benefits at that time were seen to be the receipt of an increased Community Infrastructure Levy, so there was that financial incentive but equally important was being able to provide architects and planners with data led evidence that would show exactly what the needs of the local community are. As time has gone on it has become increasingly apparent that the NP is not a ‘nice to have’ but a ‘must have’ for the parish. We have already successfully used our Character Assessments as evidence of a planning application being ‘out of character’. This is encouraging.

It’s fair to say that many NPs have not got as far as we have in the time; many have stalled or stopped. We are making excellent progress and are on track to complete our NP as per the project plan.

In February last year we had the Area Designation approved and we were on our way!

So what have we been doing in the last 12 months?

Our first big piece of evidence gathering was to do Character Assessments - these are descriptions of the areas that we live in, not only describing the buildings but also the green spaces and spirit of the place. These are now complete and the final versions will be uploaded to our website this month. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 27 volunteers

who have given a great deal of time and effort undertaking these assessments and coming along to the workshops.

The next big piece of work was to find out what the people in this parish really felt about issues such as housing and green spaces, traffic and noise etc. We decided to conduct a Big Survey. This 6 page questionnaire went out to 2,760 households and we received 1,003 returns, this was an incredible response rate and contained a huge number of verbatim comments as well as numeric data. The report has been written and we will be publishing this in May. The key themes emerging from this survey is the genuine desire for long term, truly affordable housing, houses that people can buy when they start out and then grow into as they start families. They want a small garden and space for parking. They need school places nearby and doctors surgeries and bus services. There was also a desire to see more houses that people can downsize into and free up their larger family homes. This might surprise you but there was not one comment that asked for luxury care homes or blocks of one bed studio flats. I would like to thank a local resident Claire Tyrell-Williams and her company Future Thinking for all their hard work supporting us in the design and data analysis of this work.

In tandem we have had a group of 15 volunteers assessing our local green spaces. One of the things we can do in the NP is designate Local green Spaces. This work was only started in February and is nearly complete, so again, a massive thank you to all those volunteers who have given up their time for this work.

We have one more piece of evidence to identify before we start developing policies over the summer. As many of you know, although there are no strategic housing allocations in the Local Plan, we do have two very significant developments proposed which if they go ahead will have huge impacts on our communities. One is the Cumnor Park & Ride, with land being safeguarded in Local Plan Part 2 and the second is an option route for the Oxford - Cambridge Expressway.

Our concern at the moment, is that neither proposal has any evidence published that shows the impact of these developments on our communities and landscape. However, with respect to the P&R, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Growth Board and VWHDC are apparently seeing this as a done deal. They have chosen a site for a P&R without being able to 1) prove its commercial viability or 2) having done a thorough assessment of all the possible sites. For these reasons, we are going to help them out and this month we propose to begin a 4 week piece of work called a Landscape Character Assessment. Given that our parish is 75% rural, wholly contained within the Green Belt with 3 SSSI's and 7 Local Wildlife Sites this becomes a vital piece of guidance for us.

Looking forward, we will be developing policies over the summer, so watch out for the 'Big Survey Big Tour' at a local venue near you and then we will hopefully be on track to go out to referendum this time next year!

Tom Christophers, Chairman of the Highways Committee was read out by the Chairman.

The Highways Committee has met three times and seen a busy year with the focus being on:

- street furniture and amenities; and,
- road use

With the former the Committee has delivered a new bus shelter on the Oxford Road, Farmoor and perch seating at the Glebe Road/Oxford Road bus shelter at residents' request. The Highways Committee and Parish Council also approved a Parish Bus Shelter policy to set out how the parish will consider the need for further bus shelters and associated seating, etc. on our existing bus routes.

As part of our rolling maintenance and replacement plan, noticeboards were replaced at Norreys Road/Bertie Road, Cumnor, and Mayfield Road, Farmoor, as well as the map-case, with reprinted map, at the High Street, Cumnor.

A central pedestrian crossing at the top of Cumnor Hill is due to be installed in May/June 2018 using s106 funding, which will also (in part) act as a speed dampener for traffic approaching the top of the hill.

The Highways Committee also donated a Horse Chestnut tree to Cumnor C of E Primary School, which replaced the Horse Chestnut tree felled at footpath #19 on Nobles Road / Eynsham Road to make way for a street light.

It is worth noting that grass verges are now only being cut by Oxfordshire County Council once a year. The Highways Committee and Parish Council will consider resident requests for additional and ad hoc cuts if deemed necessary.

The Highways Committee is also investigating investment in Parish Nameplates to delineate, formally, the boundaries of the parish on the roads that cross it, with the exception of the A420.

On the subject of road use, speed surveys were carried out on the B4044, Oakenholt Care Home, in April 2017, over a period of seven days. The results of which showed that the 85th percentile of West and East-bound traffic was captured at 50 and 53mph respectively. The daily average number of vehicles was counted as 4,630 West-bound, and 4,488 East-bound. The results would suggest that the road is driveable at the current speed limit, but requests from residents will continue to be considered.

There are also four pedestrian crossing points on the Cumnor section of the A420, a road recently identified as the 23rd most dangerous road in the UK, for which discussions have started with the local MP, Layla Moran, and Oxfordshire County Council to understand possible mitigating solutions to this obvious hazard to health.

We also chaired two meetings in Farmoor in an attempt to broker common ground and solutions to parking issues raised by residents and the village hall with the neighbouring business community. Representatives from the County Highways Committee and local constabulary contributed in person. Unfortunately the council were unable to find a solution to the issue but resolved to look at and consider proposals made, over the course of 2018.

Judy Roberts, Chairperson, Recreation and Playing Fields Committee.

The new equipment that we consulted upon last year has now been installed. The exercise and play equipment went into Meadow Close and Mayfield Road Play Parks in the summer and the Council organised a free exercise session to demonstrate its use. It was well attended by residents, including the soon to be elected MP, Layla Moran. It was a good work out and showed the quality of the equipment and fun was had at the same time.

We had problems getting the University's permission at the Fogwell Road site but it was available for use in early 2018. It has been used a lot by the football spectators and at half term and Easter. At the moment the weather hasn't been very kind for outdoor activities.

All the grants have now been spent but we are still saving £5,564 for Kimmeridge Road when the green space gets handed over from the developer, Persimmon.

A new gate has been installed at The Glebe Play Park to improve access for wheelchairs, double buggies and bikes. Closes Field Timber Trail is to be maintained but there have been problems with preserving the wood and the weather for installation.

I would like to congratulate Ady Podbery for keeping our parks and green spaces in such magnificent condition and Mick Herring for all the ongoing maintenance and repair work he carries out on our play equipment.

There have been many problems with dog walkers at Fogwell Road Play Park not obeying the signs, not clearing up after their dogs on the pitches and being very rude to people when this has been pointed out. There are now 2 new large signs saying 'No Dogs' allowed on the field. We have also had to move the siting of the rubbish bins there as commercial and household waste was being dumped in them because the bins were too close to the road. The spate of broken equipment at the start of the year seems to have stopped so we are looking forward to a low cost and active next year.

06/18 Parish Council Accounts for 2016/2017 had been approved and audited. The Accounts were accepted.

07/18 Draft Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2018. The draft accounts were noted.

08/18 Report from County Councillor(s).

CC Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor.

It has been a busy year since being elected early last May as the CC for the Kingston Bagpuize and Cumnor Division (into which this parish falls). I endeavour to attend as many parish meetings as I can, some months there are multiple meetings on one evening. Apart from attending the full County Council meetings, I also sit on various County Committees such as Planning & Regulations, Education, Corporate Parenting, Schools' Organisation and various panels and local Committees.

The state of the highway conditions is at the top of every CC's list and particularly in the rural areas. This winter has had a major impact on the roads. In total OCC sent the gritters out on 76 occasions from November onwards. Snowploughs also had to be put onto the gritters four times, something that had not been needed in this County since 2012/13. A total of 16,000 tonnes of rock salt were used.

The County has purchased an additional Dragon Patcher which means that more potholes can be fixed during the coming year. However, if all the roads in Oxfordshire were repaired, it would cost in excess of £150 million, well above the annual budget.

The OCC has a responsibility for the most vulnerable residents across the county in both Adult and Children's social care. This means over 50% (approx. £240 million) of the budget is spent on providing services for those vulnerable residents which is around 2% of the population; this contrasts with highways which are used by virtually 100% of the population every day.

A new Councillor Priority Fund scheme has been launched. Each CC will have a budget of £15,000 per annum for two years (2018/19 and 2019/20) to allocate to benefit the community and to voluntary groups for local community projects. All applications have to be submitted by 31 January 2020. Detailed information about the grant scheme, together with the application form and guidance notes are available on the OCC's website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund

CC Judy Roberts.

Education & children's services

The Universal children's services have been successfully delivered by Botley Bridges over the last year. They have received grants from the County, District and Parish to enable their work to grow and though they are solvent for 2018, 2019-2020 looks challenging. They held a successful Auction fundraiser and are looking at many ways in which to provide and grow this much needed service.

Matthew Arnold School has had its expansion work started but has run into problems with the collapse of Carillion. The County has found an alternative building company but the work is unlikely to re-start until August.

Adult social care

There is a new volunteer leader, Elaine Spencer, at the West Way Day Care Centre provision based at Field House, Botley. The numbers were dwindling but she now attracts people from Farmoor and Abingdon. The recent reorganisation at County and Age Concern having dropped their support for centres across Oxfordshire has led to fewer central hubs being provided. The feedback from these is that some attendees have moved to smaller, more personal, providers, which this Day Care centre certainly is.

Traffic and highways

There have been problems such as getting the pedestrian crossing at Kimmeridge Road. It seems that after such a time lapse, there were insufficient funds from the 106 money. A compromise has been achieved and after much delay an extra pedestrian refuge uphill of the development should be going in in June /July.

The Park & Ride proposed for Cumnor is still on the table but there are challenges at Local Plan Part 2 about the land to be safeguarded and the long term viability is being monitored by the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Oxford to Cambridge Expressway has been fully in the media, certainly the lack of any consultation other than stakeholders which has felt very much like the “Intergalactic Highway” in the Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy. It is felt very much by the County that since very little evidence for the proposed corridors has been published, they can make no comment on a “preferred corridor”. It appears that Highways England are still going to announce their chosen corridor by July 2018. They will then consult in depth over the actual route to be chosen by autumn 2019.

Library service

The plans to put the Library in the new Community building at West Way are still progressing and Mace are currently saying they hope this will be by the end of 2019.

Bus subsidies

There are still no bus subsidies but in comparison to many other areas of the County, we still receive good bus provision in this area.

Local government reorganisation

The Unitary proposal is still on the desk of the Secretary of State, however we now have a new Minister in James Brokenshire, Matthew Barber sent a letter recommending it before he stood down as Leader of the Vale and Dorset and Northamptonshire have recently gone Unitary.

The other major changes are the Growth Deal announced in the Autumn Budget, and the several Housing Infrastructure Fund bids that may all attract millions of pounds to this area. The Growth Deal is dependent on delivering housing at the SHMA figure levels but these are already agreed for the Vale in Local Plan part 1. It is also dependent on agreeing and adopting a Joint Spatial Strategy Plan amongst the five Districts and County councils which may be problematic as some Districts do not have a Local Plan in place at the moment. They may struggle to meet the time limit of adoption by 2021. It may be felt that if the JSSP does not progress according to the time limits that the Unitary Deal may be considered again.

09/18 Report from the District Councillor(s).

DC Dudley Hoddinott and Judy Roberts.

Vale Local Plans

Following the acceptance of the Vale Local Plan Part 1 by the Planning Inspector the Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) has now been submitted to the Planning Inspector. This document takes into account Oxford City’s unmet need for housing. Unfortunately the LPP2 was not modified to take into account the reduced number of houses that the government now sees as the minimum number of houses which are required in the Vale. The new number is about two thirds the original number of 20,560 houses required by 2031. However, there are problems with Sunningwell Parish and Dalton Barracks with the County Council not being in

agreement with the proposals. In LPP2 land at the end of Cumnor Hill road, adjacent to the A420 interchange, has been safeguarded for a possible Park & Ride. Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking provides no detail on how this will be implemented.

Redevelopment of West Way Shopping Area

It was originally proposed to start the redevelopment of the West Way shopping area in January 2017. We were told that 97 contracts had to be signed before construction could begin. There have been a number of planning applications for relatively small design changes during the last year but work has now started to modify the Grant Thornton building to accommodate the Co-op and Tesco food stores by the end of June. The main redevelopment on the West Way site will then begin. The new pedestrian crossing towards Botley School has been approved and it is planned to install it in June. The free parking on the site will be reduced to 1½ hours to encourage more shoppers use the remaining shops.

Planning

Our discussions with Persimmon seem to be getting somewhere. At Kimmeridge Road, Tom Freeman is at last trying to get all the outstanding work done so that OCC can adopt the roads. At Tilbury Fields there are many outstanding items and the Vale and OCC have done an audit of these. They include drainage, road surfaces, lighting, the play area and the pedestrian exit to Hazel Road. The gate across Tilbury Lane has been damaged again and the Vale planning team is investigating using lockable bollards once the agricultural road, exiting on Eynsham Road beyond the A420, has been finished. There is some doubt as to whether an agreement with OCC to adopt the roads was made so there are still ongoing discussions to address this problem.

The house at 9 Turnpike Road has been extended but the drawings in the planning applications never agreed with the building work being carried out simultaneously. The Vale Enforcement Team recommended that the extension should be demolished but this was lost on appeal. This was very disappointing to all the local residents who had fought so hard to prevent this sort of extension.

Pedestrian Crossing on Cumnor Hill

Some s106 money from the Kimmeridge Road development has not been spent and it was proposed to install a Puffin crossing across Cumnor Hill near the end of Hurst Lane. Altogether there was insufficient money to build this crossing so a crossing with a pedestrian refuge in the middle of the road near the garages on Cumnor Hill was proposed. The latest information is that this should be installed in June.

Forster Lane

The Vale has at last admitted that it owns Forster Lane. Some potholes were repaired last July and some money is in the Vale's 2018/19 budget to further improve the road surface. Planning restrictions were placed on the developers building houses at 74 and 76 Abingdon Road to stop them from using Forster Lane. This has not been entirely successful.

5 Councils Partnership

The Vale entered into a partnership with 5 other councils in July 2016 for Capita and Vinci to provide back office work and car parking. However, the promised £20 million of savings has not delivered and the work contracted to Vinci is coming back in house.

10/18 Questions from the Electors.

A resident asked whether the car park at Fogwell Road Pavilion could be opened up to the public to ease commuter parking in the area. The lease between Oxford University and Council would not permit this.

11/18 Date of Next Meeting. The next Annual Meeting of the Parish would take place on Tuesday 7 May 2019 in Farmoor Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed Date2019