

## **Notes from the Uffington Annual Assembly held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 8.00pm at the Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall**

Present: Cllr Simon Jenkins (Chair), Cllr Graham Banks, Cllr Mike Oldnall, Cllr Karen Pilcher, Cllr Fenella Oberman, District Cllr Robert Sharp, County Cllr Yvonne Constance, Abigail Brown (Community Art officer VWHDC), Andy Foley and Dawn MacDonald (National Trust), Julia Evans (Clerk/RFO), 40 members of the public

### **Chairman's Report**

Cllr Jenkins thanked to all members of the Parish Council and expressed gratitude for their support throughout the year. He highlighted the need for another councillor to fill the remaining vacancy. He also thanked Yvonne Constance, County Councillor and Robert Sharp, District Councillor.

### **Objectives from last year:**

It was a new Council and our objectives in outline included:

1. Finalising the Community-Led Plan,
2. Getting the Neighbourhood Plan under way,
3. Continuing to deal with the Gladman application, and
4. Making improvements to communications within the village.

Cllr Jenkins reported that the Parish Council had achieved all these objectives.

### **Report on 2015/2016**

1. The CLP was completed with a very professional Report being issued in December and the Parish Council is now working through the Actions requested. Thanks were given to the Steering Group (chaired by Rob Hart). A progress report is on the notice board and will soon be on the website.
2. NPSG is working hard – see below for Rob Hart's report.
3. The Gladman application. Having had the planning application refused by the Vale, Gladman appealed and lost the appeal. This was seen as a success by the majority of the village and thanks are owed to a number of people who helped the Parish Council – especially Neil Wells and Mike Thomas.
4. Planning – The Parish Council looks carefully at all applications for planning approval and makes a comment to the Vale. The Vale makes the decision, not the Parish Council. The Parish Council has objected to a small number of applications for new houses in existing gardens, two of which have been approved by the Vale. The reasons for objection included being in the Conservation Area (which is viewed as very important to protect), proximity to Listed Buildings, the design and size of the house, and to protect the emerging NP. Any new buildings approved before the NP is approved count as "windfall" to the Vale, and NOT against any targets or quota agreed in the NP. One of the principal reasons for the Vale approving these applications is that they do not currently have a 5 year land supply, so the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF introduced in 2012 makes it hard for them to refuse an application.
5. Improving Communications
  - Opened up the Parish Council to all residents by encouraging attendance at PC meetings, in the interests of transparency and improved engagement with the village
  - Put a new website in place; lots of information is there; more ideas are needed
  - Built a new e-mail distribution list of 160 people, for Parish Council matters, items of general interest, charitable and fundraising activities.
  - Governance and compliance – we have put a full set of policies and procedures in place, available on the website.
  - Introduction of the Welcome Pack for new arrivals (thanks to Sue Jennings)

- Comments and ideas are welcome on all of these; Is the Parish Council providing the right information?

### **Objectives for 2016/ 2017**

- Sponsor, encourage and assist the NP Steering Group – it is in the interests of all residents and the village in general to have a NP in place asap
- Continue to look very carefully at all applications for planning approval
- Develop plans for the S106 contributions to come from the Station Road development
- Sort out the implications for the village of the Oxfordshire Together budget cuts; we have finally received a map of the urban areas showing where grass has been cut by OCC and are going out to tender for the village to take over.
- Work with the Museum Committee of Management, in particular for the essential repairs required to the Museum
- Prepare an Emergency Plan for the village

### **Report from the National Trust**

Andy Foley and Dawn MacDonald were welcomed. They reported that a new general manager has been appointed to this area and they will take up their post in June.

The annual chalking date is moving to the first week in July in the hope of better weather than in previous years. It takes a whole week and use is made of corporate labour. The Easter egg hunt held on Easter Saturday was a huge success. Over 1000 people passed through despite the poor weather. A paraglider was injured recently on White Horse Hill.

Car crime in the car park has fallen since the arrest of a gang of thieves at the start of the year. Thanks were given to the policing team at Faringdon.

A regular news bulletin will be issued this year.

A member of the public asked about the state of the cattle grid. Andy stated that this was OCC Highways responsibility, but he agreed to take a look at it.

Cllr Constance asked about progress on the Loos for the car park. It was reported that funding is in place, but planning permission is required.

The National Trust will be contributing to the White Horse show in the summer.

A member of the public complained that there will be no beacon for the Queen's birthday. It was reported that the National Trust felt that the notice was too short and they were unable to deal with the impact on the natural environment.

### **Report from the Neighbourhood Plan**

Rob Hart reported that the Characterisation Report had been completed. There are now five sub-groups made up of a good cross section of all three villages. They are looking at specific topics. By the end of the summer it is hoped that the District Council policies will have been adopted and local nuances added. Once the draft plan is ready it will go to the Vale for checking and finally there will be a village referendum. It is hoped that the plan will be completed by the end of 2017. The next public consultation event will be on 30<sup>th</sup> June.

### **County Councillor's Report**

Cllr Constance reported that Uffington is well advanced on Oxfordshire Together.

Stanford Tip – the current thinking is that it will close in 2019. Cllr Constance has raised the possibility of pay to use again.

All bus subsidies have been cancelled. The only hope is for S105 to fund the 67 bus, but it will not go through the villages.

Two separate proposals are being considered for restructuring the local authorities in Oxfordshire. The District Council is better at contracting out services. OCC is working on a Unitary authority. The District councils are looking at four unitary authorities. Cllr Constance felt that the District Council options will be better for Oxfordshire.

Cllr Constance praised the current police and crime commissioner.

A member of public questioned the reduction in children's care. Cllr Constance stated that it was not a big issue in this area.

It was noted that the promised 'pothole' money from government had yet to materialise.

### **District Councillor's Report**

Cllr Sharp reported that the local plan examination was now complete. A report is due at the end of April/early May. The main issues are Oxford's unmet need and non-strategic housing sites.

### **S106 Funds**

#### **Public Art**

Abigail Brown, community art officer from the Vale, was welcomed. Abigail gave a presentation on public art which suggestions and ideas. She wanted to establish a working party to start work on public art in Uffington, including a member of the Parish Council.

It was noted that the art could be anything as long as it is Bespoke, Unique and made by an artist.

#### **Play Area**

Cllr Pilcher presented some options for play area improvements which included updating the existing equipment and/or making provision for older children/adults. She asked for feedback from parishioners.

#### **Other projects/suggestions**

1. Make hard copies of local walks available in the shop
2. Purchase a live permanent Christmas tree. Possibly using public art money for a bespoke fence/railings
3. Reduce the speed limit outside the school to 20mph
4. Move to prevent parking on pavements. Cllr Jenkins asked for photos of offenders so that they could be passed to the Police.
5. Repairs to church wall.
6. New bench at Shotover corner? The current one is in poor state of repair and needs some maintenance work carried out.