



Annual Report 2015-2016



Richard Williams
Chairman
Finance & Personnel Chair
Planning Chair



Richard Wade
Vice Chairman



Patricia Athawes
Leisure & General
Purposes Chair



Graham Webb
Rights of Way &
Conservation Chair



Mathew Lowy



Christine West



Colin Arnold



Colin West



Laura Billington



Tamsin Meredith



Pervin Shahin



Richard Webber
Oxfordshire County Council



Stuart Davenport
Vale of the White Horse District Council



David Perrow
Clerk



Christopher Price
Deputy Clerk

Highlights from the Last Year

- Full Complement of Councillors following May 2015 election
- Drayton2020 Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Committee created
- D2020 Implementation Director appointed.
- 40 Planning Applications considered, including major developments at Barrow Road and South of High Street
- Objections lodged to planning applications at Halls Close (28 houses) and Eat Way (8 houses)
- Lockway Playground Phase 2 upgrade planned and ordered
- Grants totalling £8.960 given to 5 Drayton & 4 other local organisations.
- New Sutton Wick Lane Memorial unveiled on 5th March 2016.
- Blue Plaque to be unveiled on 22nd May 2016.
- New Salt/grit bin Whitehorns Way.
- Grass cut throughout summer months. New 3 year grass contract awarded
- Village Trees assessed for safety and pruned.
- Litter removed from the village throughout the year.
- Footpaths maintained by cutting back hedges.
- New village noticeboard along Steventon Road.
- New Drayton PC/Drayton2020 Website.
- Allotments supervised by wardens and rents collected.
- Burial ground administered and maintained.
- Best Kept Front Garden Competition planned for summer 2016.

Chairman's Report

Richard Williams (Chairman, Drayton Parish Council)

This Parish Council began its four-year term of office in May last year. For the first time in anyone's memory, we actually had more nominations than places on the Council, so it was necessary to hold elections. I am pleased to say that, not only did the elections result in a full Council of 11 persons; we have managed to hold on to all of them for the whole year since. In these times when most people have to juggle work, family, and many other commitments, that is perhaps an achievement in itself.

Of those 11 councillors, 3 are survivors from the previous – I'd like to say 'administration', but that's probably pushing it. One might be described as a returnee – welcome back to Richard Wade, who was a previous Chairman. The other seven are all, as far as I know, new to the task, but they have a wealth of other experience between them and have brought great enthusiasm and fresh ideas to the work of the Parish Council.

The year has, once again, been dominated by the Drayton Neighbourhood Plan and its implementation. The Drayton Plan was officially 'made' by the Vale Council in July 2015. This means that it is now fully adopted as part of the development plan for the area. However, the national planning rules state, confusingly, that even though the

Drayton NP was only made a few months ago, its policies are automatically considered 'out-of-date' because the Vale does not have a 5 year land supply. This is a problem which bedevils many local planning authorities and it is the main reason why the South Abingdon development went ahead despite planning permission being initially refused by the Vale.

Four years on, a small number of High Court test cases have now been published, and what they are telling us is that the 5 year land supply (or lack of it) is not necessarily, by itself, the determining factor. There still needs to be a balancing act between the 'benefits gained' and the 'harm caused' by a development, and as one judge said, this is a matter not of law, but of planning judgment. The cases also show that undermining a neighbourhood plan purely or mainly for the sake of increasing the 5 year land supply is regarded as a significant 'harm' factor. So far, we have not been able to find a case where a fully 'made' neighbourhood plan was not upheld by the Secretary of State or the High Court.

We were not therefore best pleased when the Vale Planning Policy department, after mulling over a legal report from its QC, decided to reverse its earlier judgment, and recommend approval of a development of 28 houses, to be built at the back of Halls Close. It is our view that the Vale could and should have backed our opposition to this site, and that there are legal precedents out there which provide a good case for doing so.

To cut a long story short, we managed to convince the councillors on the Vale Planning Committee to overturn their planners' recommendation. The application was duly thrown out, 9 votes to 2. This is not the end of the story: Blue Cedar, the developers, will appeal against this decision, and to muddy the waters, they have now submitted a second, only very slightly modified, application. It would be idle to pretend that we will not face further challenges with Halls Close, and any other applications which may come our way, but the fact is, without the Neighbourhood Plan, we would have been knocked out in Round 1. **With** the Plan, we get to fight on.

As for our allocated sites, Barrow Rd, or should I say 'Walnut Meadow', is now under way. South of the High St has also been granted planning permission, and work will probably start later this year. The Parish Council's Implementation Committee, successor to the Drayton 2020 Steering Group, met for the first time in July 2015, and it is already apparent that implementation of the various projects in the Plan will involve even more work than putting the Plan together in the first place! Looking around for someone with appropriate experience to project manage and drive the whole thing forward, we were very lucky to secure the services of Nigel Porter as our Implementation Director. Nigel is a civil engineer with extensive experience of

construction projects both in the UK and the Middle East. He has worked on the redevelopment of Milton Park for the last 25 years and knows Drayton well. He has particular expertise in drainage infrastructure, which has already been helpful on both allocated sites. I have no doubt that Nigel will be a great asset to Drayton in the months and years ahead.

Many people have contributed towards improving the appearance of the village. I'd like to thank Jane McWhirter and the other members of the revitalised Millennium Green Trust, plus their team of volunteers, who have done a fantastic job on the Millennium Green, which looks better now than it has done in years. I think that Jane has more working parties planned for the spring and summer, as well as some interesting ideas for summer events. The Green has been rather underused up until now, but hopefully, before too long, we can change that. Steve Sadler, our Village Caretaker, despite health problems, continues to keep the village looking tidy and trim. Unfortunately, it would be beyond the capacity of any one person to deal with all the litter dumped in Drayton, and despite occasional litter picks organised often in conjunction with the youngsters in DAMASCUS, the problem remains, the more depressing because it is largely self-inflicted.

On the subject of footpaths, the recent dramatic collapse of part of the wall to the old vicarage left Footpath No 15 alongside completely blocked. We are lucky that no one was injured, but the footpath may be closed for some time until the rest of the wall is repaired or stabilised.

A new noticeboard has been installed in Steventon Road, south of the A34 bridge, and it is hoped to install another on the Millennium Green, near to the pathway past the horses' field. Sutton Wick Green, opposite the duck pond, is now home to a handsome wood-carved memorial to the RAF officers (and their dogs) killed on 5th March 1957, when their Blackburn Beverley heavy transport aircraft crashed in Sutton Wick. 2 Drayton residents on the ground were also killed. The memorial was the brainchild and creation of Brian Eastoe, a skilled craftsman, and himself an ex-RAF man. Chris Price, our Deputy Clerk, Mr Keith Pepler and his assistants, and Steve Sadler all helped with its installation.

We have been working with 4 separate companies for several months to obtain the best design at best value for the ongoing refurbishment of the Lockway playground. David Perrow has secured grants amounting to £25,000 from the Vale and WREN, which will cover more than half the cost of the chosen project. Particular thanks to David, and to Pat, Laura and Tamsin, who have worked closely with the school, and toddler and play groups to find out which kinds of play equipment are their favourites.

Traffic issues continue to be problematic in Drayton, and they will become more acute as new housing comes on stream over the next few years. Safety, and the sheer volume of traffic, are the two major concerns. Numerous accidents have occurred on the B4016 between Drayton and Sutton Courtenay, and the PC has reviewed at length possible ways of getting motorists to reduce their speed, since excessive speed is the reason for most of the problems. OCC, responsible for the local road network, has seen its budgets slashed in recent months. Reportedly it now has only £2000 per month to spend on road markings and signage across the whole of the Vale! Within Drayton, we don't expect to reduce the amount of traffic, but hope to control it better as it passes through the village. The traffic calming workshop we held on 20th Feb was experimental in form. Though worthwhile, and attended by about 60 people, I'm not sure it entirely worked, as I think the nature of the tasks set was insufficiently clear. I would however recommend all to read Derek Pooley's article on the 'shared space concept' in this month's (April) Chronicle.

To end on an upbeat note, the Parish Council nominated two people for awards in the past year. Last autumn Jenny Pooley received a Vale Chairman's Community Award. Jenny was a parish councillor for 10 years, has been our Footpath Monitor since she retired, and has contributed to the community of Drayton in many other ways over the years. Earlier this year, Gary Hibbins was nominated for a High Sheriff's Award for his work with DAMASCUS. The citation for this award, which was presented to Gary at Christ Church College, Oxford on Feb 29th, included the following quotation from Superintendent Andy Boyd of Thames Valley Police: "*The Damascus Project changes people's lives; the help and support young people receive from the project enables them to make the right choices in life and equips them with the right knowledge and skills to start their adult life with a positive attitude and future – they do a brilliant job*" Needless to say, both awards were richly deserved.

Finally, I'd like to thank all the councillors for their hard work and effort over the past year and of course David Perrow, our indispensable Parish Clerk, and his very able deputy, Chris Price, for keeping things running smoothly throughout. The Chinese have a saying 'May you live in interesting times'. Well, Drayton faces many changes in the next few years, and the future may be unsettling, but it certainly won't be boring. The ride ahead may be bumpy, and you can't always trust your sat nav., but I'm confident this Council will take us in the right direction.

Planning Committee

Richard Williams (Chairman, Planning Committee)

Planning statistics for 2015-2016: Drayton Parish Council received 40 planning applications, 4 less than last year. Of these the Parish Council fully approved of 5 and

objected to 10, with a response to the remainder where the Parish Council set out concerns it had about them and/or suggested conditions or amendments that should be made. Of these 40 applications, 1 was withdrawn, 12 are still pending a decision by the VWHDC. The VWHDC permitted 26 and refused 2 applications.

Rights of Way & Conservation Working Group

Graham Webb (Chairman, ROW&C Working Group)

Last year's problem with fallen tree branches seems largely to have been resolved. The Council engaged an arborist to conduct a village tree survey, and on that advice they carried out the recommended maintenance work. We continue to follow a policy of taking expert advice on this, and will always be glad to receive early advice of problem trees.

The verge on the lane from Sutton Wick to the NW corner of the Millennium Green was planted with wildflower seeds, then low timber posts placed to protect the planting. It appears that the planting will take a while to establish itself.

A condition survey of the rights of way was carried out by Christine West and Graham Webb. It was found that some of the more heavily used paths would benefit from resurfacing (or an additional dressing), and the Council needs to agree an effective but affordable way to achieve this, especially where the problem is affected by encroachment of the verge across the path. It was also found that in some places hedges have grown out and across, making the path almost impassable (eg. FP 7). Unfortunately this appears to be OCC's responsibility, and budget cuts continue to be an excuse for inactivity on their part. There are some issues with blocked paths: a closure of an unsafe bridge, and a collapsed wall on FP15. A working party levelled part of FP11 in order to discourage walking across the allotments.

Graham Webb and the Chairman attended a seminar in Didcot to look at OCC's proposals for pedestrian and cycle routes through what is proposed as the "Oxford Science Vale". There is a good grasp of the issues raised by attempting to link Harwell, Didcot Station, Milton Park, Culham, Abingdon, and the Oxford Science Parks, but the modest budget does not look enough to make a significant impact.

The Millennium Green Trust has continued its excellent renovation of the paths by working parties, and there is a proposal to extend the path around the NE corner of the Green. Sponsorship for this would be welcomed.

We are grateful for the continuing involvement of Steve Sadler and of Jennifer Pooley for the benefit of the rights of way through the village.

Lastly, we would repeat our seasonal request that, if your property adjoins a footpath, please trim back any overhanging branches or shrubs that might be obstructing it. An early clipping is far easier than the prospect of major tree surgery later in the year!!

Leisure & General Purposes Working Group

Patricia Athawes (Chairman, L&GP Working Group)

During the year, most of the action has been connected with the Lockway Play Area although thought has been given to looking at play areas following the NDP plan and additional houses. Following a survey with various groups (Brownies/Youth Club/School/Toddlers) in the village we were fortunate to collect a lot of information relating to the requirements /changes / additions to Lockway.

So, following discussions with four Playground companies, we have managed to reduce the number to 2 and once we have agreed on the plan we and villagers are most happy with, we will be able to place an order with the chosen provider. This will be dedicated to the Lockway play area but as explained, with the new developments other areas will and are being reviewed and the appropriate action will be taken to include all in discussions and approval before any decisions are made.

Drayton2020 Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Committee

Sir Tom Shebbeare (Chairman, Drayton2020 Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Committee).

- The election of a full complement of Parish Councillors (for the first time in 35 years) and the adoption of our Neighbourhood Plan creates a great opportunity for our Village. The challenge is to demonstrate to those who already live here and to 750 or so new residents that Drayton can be a even better place in which to live than it is right now. We all know the downsides - principally the problems associated with traffic. My view is that these will eventually be solved by technology - probably in the shape of autonomous electric cars and lorries. In the meantime we'll have to do our best to manage and calm what is coming our way. I'm confident that we can surprise ourselves with what can be done - but lets remain aware of the passions which the traffic issue poses and try our best to allow professional and expert people to guide us. These are quite complex problems which only cool heads will solve.
- To help us to plan effectively the Parish Council has established an Implementation Committee which they have asked me to chair; we have a great group of can-do members on our committee and so far it has been well attended and lively. Our task is to help the Parish to raise, borrow, manage and spend approximately £6m of expenditure, mostly capital expenditure, over the next five years. Much of it over the next three years. This is a scale of activity which this Parish has never attempted before - and we are expecting to achieve this with little or no additional paid management. Compare us with Abingdon Town Council whose professional staff will spend less over the same period.

- If we do our job well then you will have new, state-of-the-art Sports facilities, a Sports Pavilion, improved pedestrian and cycle paths, traffic calming, new 'gateways' to Drayton, a great many new trees, a refurbished Village Hall, a new Pre-School, new play areas for children and much else. Just to underline - this is practical, expensive and difficult. It could also be marvellous.
- We should not underestimate the difficulty of doing all this - much of it for the first time. At present we have only a minimal budget - there is a strange assumption that things will still work fine even when funds (£106 etc. etc.) are made available after rather than before the planning phase - its expensive to employ the architects, surveyors and engineers we'll need. Its not the way that Developers or the Vale would ever expect to operate. At present we've been lucky - we've appointed an Implementation Director, Nigel Porter, who is both worth his weight in gold and who is free. We have secured an Sports architect - a new resident - for free. And Paul Caudwell has generously made £90,000 of unrestricted funds available to the Drayton Community Trust - this will eventually all be invested in the new Sports Pavilion but in the meantime can help us oil the wheels elsewhere.
- And one last detail to mention; we have a relatively complicated organisational set up in Drayton with one statutory body - The Parish Council and then a charity -Drayton Community Trust acting as an umbrella for some activities(The Chronicle for example) while others - Drayton Hall and the Millennium Green are quite independent while receiving funding from the Parish or Trust. Its probable that with new activities in the making - the new Sports Amenities and Pavilion for example - that we should take this opportunity to rationalise things in a way which will improve our collective efforts to fundraise for and manage what we create together.

See also the monthly Drayton2020 Reports in the Drayton Chronicle this last year

Finance Report

Comparison: 2014-15 Outturn with 2015-16 & 2016-17 budgets

Income (VAT excluded)	2014-15 Outturn	2015-16 revised budget	2016-17 budget
Precept	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00
VWHDC & Other Grants and Donations	£1,950.00	£1,410.00	£1,000.00
Neighbourhood Plan Grants	£1,700.00	0	nil
Allotments	£569.01	£570.00	£600.00
Burial Ground/Memorials	£2,740.00	£1,750.00	£1,500.00
Public Amenities/Open Spaces	£10.00		nil
Interest	£232.88	£70.00	£70.00
Other Income	£500.00	0	nil
VAT Refund	£1,416.15		nil
TOTAL INCOME	£49,118.04	£43,800.00	£43,170.00
Earmark from Reserves		£23,150.00	£18,000.00
Total	£	£66,950.00	£61,170.00
Expenditure (VAT reclaims excluded)			
Administration	£16,442.90	£16,000.00	£16,500.00
Pensions		£800.00	£1,140.00
Chairman's Expenses	nil	£50.00	£50.00
Grants and Donations S19	£3,629.03	£8,500.00	£15,000.00
S137	£1,125.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
S142	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Burial Ground/Allotments	£1,593.34	£2,250.00	£2,500.00
Play/Recreation	£1,625.13	£2,350.00	£2,500.00
Public Amenities/Open Spaces	£4,949.41	£5,900.00	£6,500.00
Press & Public Relations	£130.99	£250.00	£300.00
ROW	£672.28	£600.00	£1,000.00
Miscellaneous	£3,218.00	£650.00	£680.00
Drayton2020 Administration	£3,854.47	£2,600.00	£3,000.00
Drayton2020 Feasibility/Projects	nil	£5,000.00	£10,000.00
Lockway Playground Project	nil	£20,000.00	nil
VAT Paid	£1,426.41	nil	nil
TOTAL	£39,666.96	£66,950.00	£61,170.00

Grants 2015-2016	
DAMASCUS Youth Project (s19)	£3,000
Drayton Village Hall (s19)	£3,500
Drayton Baby & Toddler Group (s19)	£100
Drayton Pre-School (s19)	£100
Drayton Football Club (s19)	£760
CAB Southern Oxfordshire(s142)	£1,000
Enrych (s137)	£100
St John Ambulance (s137)	£200
South & Vale Carers (s137)	£200
Total Grants	£8,960

DRAYTON (ABINGDON) PARISH COUNCIL

Drayton (Abingdon) Parish Council

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/3/2015

2013/2014

2014/2015

RECEIPTS

£40,000.00		Precept		£40,000.00
£502.85		Allotment Rents		£569.01
£1,190.00		Burial Ground/Memorials Income		£2,740.00
£193.93		Bank Interest		£232.88
£0.00		Borrowings		£0.00
		Grants & Donations		£1,950.00
£3,164.23		Drayton2020 NDP Grants		£1,700.00
£16,300.00		Public Amenities/Open Spaces		£10.00
£0.00		Other income		£500.00
£68.90		VAT refund		£1,416.15
£2,636.22				
£64,056.13				£49,118.04

PAYMENTS

£10,896.00		Staff Costs		£13,468.00
	£6,841.35	Council Work	£8,943.00	
	£4,054.65	Drayton2020	£4,524.00	
£0.00		Loan Interest		£0.00
£2,940.33		Other admin. costs		£2,169.44
£793.89		Insurance		£805.46
£8,364.00		Grants		£5,754.03
	£6,414.00	Grants Section 19	£3,629.03	
		Grants Section 137	£1,125.00	
	£950.00	Grants Section 142	£1,000.00	
£1,684.31		Burial Grounds/Allotments		£1,593.34
		Play/Recreation		
£1,759.60		Gds		£1,625.13
£4,668.52		Public Amenities/Open Spaces		£4,949.41
£748.67		Rights of Way/Conservation		£672.28
£273.80		Press & Public Relations		£130.99
		Miscellaneous costs		£3,218.00
£1,019.00		Drayton2020		£3,854.47
£11,654.31		VAT paid		£1,426.41
£1,064.82				
£45,867.25				£39,666.96

£29,407.75		Bal b/f		£48,540.28
£64,056.13		Add total receipts		£49,118.04
£93,463.88				£97,658.32
		Less total payments		£39,666.96
£45,867.25		Balance c/f 31st March 2015		£57,991.36
£47,596.63				

BALANCES REPRESENTED BY:

£29,567.14		Current Account		£38,317.51
£19,527.39		NS&I Account		£19,673.85
£49,094.53				£57,991.36

£554.25	Less unrepresented cheques	£0.00
£0.00	Plus unrepresented credit	£0.00
£48,540.28		£57,991.36

Reserve Balances are represented by:

£19,132.53	Current Year Fund	£9,451.08
£29,407.75	General Reserves	£8,540.28
£0.00	Recreation Reserve	£20,000.00
£0.00	Drayton2020 NDP Projects Reserve	£20,000.00
£48,540.28	Totals	£57,991.36