



# Annual Report 2017-2018



# Drayton Parish Council

www.DraytonPC.org



**Richard Williams**  
Chairman



**Richard Wade**  
Vice Chairman  
Planning Chair



**Patricia Athawes**  
Finance &  
Personnel Chair



**Graham Webb**  
Rights of Way &  
Conservation Chair



**Mathew Lowy**



**Tamsin Meredith**



**Colin Arnold**



**Pervin Shahin**



**Andrew Cooke**



**Vacant**



**Vacant**



**David Perrow**  
Clerk



**Christopher Price**  
Deputy Clerk

If you would like to find out more about being a Parish Councillor and learn how you might get involved in parish activities, contact the clerk:  
email: [draytonclerk@gmail.com](mailto:draytonclerk@gmail.com)  
or tel: 07909176061

### **Committees**

**Finance & Personnel:** Patricia Athawes (Chairperson), Richard Wade (Vice Chairman), Richard Williams, Graham Webb, Tamsin Meredith.

**Planning:** Richard Wade (Chairman), Richard Williams (Vice Chairman) Patricia Athawes, Colin Arnold, Matthew Lowy.



**Richard Webber**  
Oxfordshire County Council



**Stuart Davenport**  
Vale of the White Horse District Council

## Highlights from the Last Year

- Sports Pavilion and MUGA at Walnut Meadow - planning permission obtained
- Drayton Conservation Area assessed and reviewed
- 48 Planning Applications considered.
- Grants totalling £12,710.00 given to 5 Drayton & 5 other local organisations.
- Millennium Green circular footpath created and public footpaths leading to it widened and re-surfaced
- Other village footpaths maintained by cutting back hedges.
- Drayton2020 Implementation Committee supervised new housing site development in village and planned D2020 NDP Projects and fundraising.
- Village Trees assessed for safety and pruned. Pyracantha hedge at Halls Close removed
- Litter removed from the Village throughout the year.
- Allotments supervised by wardens and rents collected.
- Burial Ground graves plan extended. Burial Ground administered and maintained.
- Illegal For Sale Signs removed.
- Community Speed Watch instituted
- New Village Caretaker appointed

## Chairman's Report

Richard Williams (Chairman, Drayton Parish Council)

As all residents will have noticed, especially motorists (!), housebuilding is now proceeding apace in Drayton. The PC is well aware of the disruption caused by roadworks along the Abingdon Road, and also in the High Street. However, the traffic hold-ups, however frustrating and annoying, are only temporary. Where the road layout has been re-designed – for example at the Hilliat Fields junction, hopefully the result will be seen, eventually if not immediately, as an improvement. We cannot say the delays are over by any means – for example, work at the entrance to the Walnut Meadow site has not yet begun, but progress is being made, albeit more slowly than we would like.

Looking at each of the four housing sites currently under way, I think it would be fair to say that, so far, Walnut Meadow has been the most problematic. This is largely, if not entirely, down to poor communication between the developers, the Vale of the White Horse, and OCC, with no one party being wholly responsible. It's worth pointing out that both our local authorities have been hit so hard by cuts in funding that I think one has to question their ability to carry out what ought to be absolutely key functions. In the case of the Vale, the Planning Enforcement department is clearly overloaded with work, but this means that important inspections are being devolved, by default, onto the parish, which has neither the resources nor the staff to cope. Similarly, the Highways Department of OCC is decidedly strapped for cash, a situation which has hardly been helped by the recent Arctic weather. There was already a backlog of road repairs to deal with. But, again, as motorists (and cyclists) will be especially aware, the winter conditions have led to a serious deterioration in the state of the roads. The current Highways Dept. view is that, for the moment, potholes are their overriding priority; everything else will have to wait.

Following a recent meeting between the parish and all the other interested parties at County Hall on 13 th March, we can confirm that the lighting scheme for the Walnut Meadow/Abingdon Road junction has finally been approved, and other problem areas such as the drainage arrangements for the public areas of the site, seem at last about to be addressed. There are legal aspects to all this which take time to get sorted out, but bureaucracy aside, it's envisaged that the site should be ready for handover by the late summer of this year. Fingers tightly crossed at this point.

The CALA site at Manor Farm has brought different challenges. With luck, the worst of the road works in Abingdon Road have been completed, but there are certainly issues around the borders of the site, and in particular the way the hedges and trees along the Henleys Lane/Gravel Lane pathway were stripped out in toto. We have brought this to the attention of CALA and their sub-contractors, and will work to ensure that this path is replanted and the hedges re-instated. The path surface itself is unfinished and needs additional work.

The site South of the High Street caused some problems with early deliveries blocking the main road during peak periods, and roadworks near the Wheatsheaf junction. So far though, nothing on the actual site has been referred to the parish as a cause for concern. Our Drayton 2020 Implementation Director, Nigel Porter, is our liaison man for all the sites. Nigel has a civil engineering background, and long experience of working with developers. He keeps us informed of any issues which might cause difficulties further down the line.

Responses from near neighbours of the East Way site suggest that they are unhappy that work does not seem always to be proceeding in accordance with the planning application – at least one house features an extra storey - and greenery has been removed without authorisation. The most controversial aspect of the site has been the second application to build an extra three houses, i.e. in addition to the eight in the original application. This was interpreted by the parish, and by the Vale, as a deliberate attempt to avoid paying Section 106 contributions. 10 or more houses constitutes a ‘major’ development, and by splitting the application, it seemed the developer was trying to sneak in, as it were, under the radar. The Vale planning committee was angered by the apparent cynicism of this ploy, and consequently refused the second application. The developer has now appealed their decision. In truth, the chances of winning this case at appeal are very slim, and the Vale councillors knew this, but wanted to send a message all the same.

There is a fifth site, to the rear of Halls Close, but the developers have been strangely quiet of late, apart from submitting a few further minor changes to the application. It is hoped that they will provide a pavement on the east side of Halls Close, to cater for the increase in pedestrian traffic which is bound to occur if and when the new houses are built. The pyracantha bushes have been cut back by the PC to facilitate this.

Returning to the subject of road traffic, the 40 mph speed limit between Drayton and South Abingdon is now in force (reduced from 50mph). The PC tried hard to get the 30mph limit on the Abingdon Road extended from Walnut Meadow a couple of hundred yards further north, beyond the bend, but the police would not support this. In fact, they didn’t support the change to 40mph either, so to have secured this at least is an achievement. In time, we hope to employ traffic calming measures at the northern approach to Drayton, which, if implemented, would also make the Walnut Meadow junction a little bit safer. OCC have had a team working on this for many months now, so we look forward to hearing their proposals before too long.

A working party met to discuss proposals to restrict traffic from using Henleys Lane/Church Lane as a rat run. It is true that the inconvenience and danger caused to residents of these roads has been greatly exacerbated by road works on the B4017, but the problems are of long standing, and the PC will shortly consult with the village on options to improve the situation. OCC have indicated they are not opposed in principle to changes, but it is the parish that will have to foot the bill as the Highways Dept. has no budget for the work.

Elsewhere in the village, there have been dramatic improvements to the Millennium Green. In part this is due to the PC using some of its Section 106 money to pay for widening, extending, and resurfacing of the paths across the green. Now, for the first time, there is a gravel-surfaced path that completely circles the green. Tremendous thanks are also due to Jane McWhirter and her team of volunteers from the Millennium Green Trust. They have organised regular maintenance weekends to cut back and clear away old growth, plant new stuff, and generally keep the whole area in trim. Grass cutting is much more frequent than before, and the end result is that the Green has never looked better. Jane has also been brilliant at arranging imaginative and fun events on the Green – last year’s Alice in Wonderland themed picnic for example. Sadly, these efforts have not on the whole been rewarded by good weather, but that’s the English summer for you.

The next major project in the pipeline, and a critical part of the Neighbourhood Plan, is the construction of a new sports pavilion and multi-use games area (MUGA) on the Walnut Meadow site. This development has to take place in conjunction with the preparation of the sports pitches on the same site, and the latter has been held up due to work by Millers and their sub-contractors being a long way behind schedule. Part of the cost of the pavilion and MUGA will be funded by Section 106 developer money, but we need grants, and will also have to take out a substantial loan from the Public Works Loan Board. The PC needs to be assured that the drainage on the pitches is satisfactory before it will accept the handover of the land, but when this is all resolved – hopefully by the late summer- we would hope to move the project on.

A parallel project is the construction of a new pre-school, but unfortunately this has stalled for the time being due to uncertainty over the future of the pre-school following an unsatisfactory OFSTED report. The architect’s plans are in place and the quantity surveyors have prepared costings, but it remains to be seen how this situation will develop.

We have had one or two personnel changes over the year. We’ve lost two councillors since last May, and gained one, but

as we started the year one down, we are still two people short. New blood, needless to say, would be welcome. We have a new village caretaker, Chris Wilmott-Smith, and Chris seems to be settling well into the task. But sadly we are about to lose not one, but two people who have made an enormous contribution to the village.

The first is Tom Shebbeare (Sir Tom, to give him his full moniker), who is moving from Drayton to North Oxford. Tom has never been a councillor, but he served on the steering group of Drayton 2020, the group of volunteers who put together the first 'large village' Neighbourhood Plan to be approved in the Vale of the White Horse. He has also chaired the successor body to the steering group – the Drayton 2020 Implementation Committee, for the last three years. Going back a little further into the past, Tom, together with members of the Drayton Community Trust, and other residents who shared the vision, was largely responsible for the creation of the Millennium Green. Around 20 years ago, this land was actually scheduled to be sold off for housing by its owners – the National Trust (of all people!), but Tom and friends literally rescued it for the village, by persuading the Trust to sell way below the market valuation. Persuasion in fact is one of Tom's great gifts! He has always been unfailingly positive and 'can-do' in his approach – a problem solver, and exactly the sort of person you want on your side. He is a great loss to the village and will be greatly missed. No doubt he will find new community projects to engage in in Jericho, and we wish him all the best for the future.

But for the Parish Council in particular, by far the biggest change in the offing is that we are about to say goodbye to David Perrow, our Parish Clerk, who has retired from the post. David has been the Clerk in Drayton for eight years now, and in that time, he has (I do not exaggerate) transformed the way the Parish Council operates. When he first applied for the job, in 2010, he was not appointed – the job went instead to a local lady. The panel felt that David was so over-qualified for the post that he was unlikely to stay any length of time. Well, the lady found the job not to her liking after a couple of months and resigned, so it was offered to David after all. It was surely Drayton's lucky day he was still available, and even more so that he confounded all predictions by staying to the present day. The opening lines of David's CV state 'Senior information manager with track record in strategic planning, change and project management. Budget and operational experience covering HR, facilities management, buildings/health and safety/security; IT & regraphics; learning resources/e-learning'. In short, a bit of everything, and how true that turned out to be.

I should add that David was managing budgets of millions of pounds - up to the £30 million mark, for organisations with up to £10 million in income. He has worked in Oxford at Templeton College and the Bodleian Library, in London at the School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), and many other places besides. How, or for that matter, why, he came to work as Drayton's Parish Clerk remains something of a mystery: I'm only glad he did. His work ethic has been extraordinary; his grasp of detail likewise. Through all the years of developing the Neighbourhood Plan, he has been, as indeed Tom Shebbeare put it, our secret weapon. To the folks who like to quote the old saw about no man being indispensable, I would say only this. In the vast majority of cases, you would be right. David is the exception who proves the rule. This Parish Council, and the village as a whole, owes him a huge debt of thanks.

Finally, I should like to thank all of the Parish Councillors and our Deputy Clerk, Chris. They have turned out conscientiously and in all weathers to meetings which often went on for a dauntingly long time. They have contributed to the work of the Council in countless ways, mostly cheerfully, sometimes grumpily (usually with good reason), but they have 'put in a shift', 'done their bit', whichever way you choose to describe it. The point being that what they are doing is local democracy in action. At a time when so many people feel less and less in control over their own lives, getting local people to participate in the community and take part in local decision-making has, arguably, never been more important.

Thank you all for coming to the Annual Parish Assembly. The usual Parish Council meeting will follow at 7.45pm or a bit later, depending how we go.

## **Rights of Way & Conservation Working Group**

Graham Webb (Chairman, ROW&C Working Group)

This year we have only had a few problems with fallen branches, which we have been able to deal with promptly, in spite of a change in Village Caretaker.

The proposed work to the bridleway from Sutton Wick to Oday Hill (FP29) has been discussed further, with the objective of making it suitable for cyclists. A site meeting with OCC was held, and on the basis of their experience they suggested that as a first stage the hedgerow be cut right back to enable the path to dry out. This would be carried out by OCC, and so we must wait for them to complete this.

In accordance with OCC's requirements for disabled access the footpath barriers at FP13, 14 and 25 have been removed. There has been some discussion about this, as it is felt that in places their removal opens up an unguarded entry for children and dogs onto a busy road. The PC will monitor this. As part of these measures, the kissing gate on FP13 (Henley's Lane to Millennium Green) has been removed and set aside for reinstallation as a swing gate for better access.

The refurbishment of the Millennium Green paths has been completed. This has used the original specification of self binding gravel. We are very pleased with the result, and have considered the same surface for the footpath from the corner of Henley's Lane (FP14). The contractor has been engaged on a maintenance basis to keep the paths clear of encroachment by the grass in future years.

Responding to comments about the state of the Allotment Path (FP11) we have laid a surfacing of wood chippings to see if this improves matters.

The Walnut Meadow footpaths are expected to be finalised as the development approaches completion.

We are happy to be notified, by the Footpath Warden and others, of any problems needing attention.

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!

## **Leisure & General Purposes Working Group**

**(Chair vacant at present)**

The L&GP continues to monitor the playground, open spaces and Burial Ground, and the work of the Village Caretaker. This year the caretaker was replaced following the resignation of Steve Sadler. Chris Wilmott-Smith was appointed to this role as contractor.

With thanks to Graham Webb, the Burial Ground graves layout was extended, since the original allocation of grave spaces was near full.

## **D2020 NDP Projects Board Committee**

Patricia Athawes (Chairperson, Projects Board Committee)

The D2020 NDP Projects Board replaced the D2020 NDP Implementation Committee during the year.

Thanks are due to Tom Shebbeare, who has chaired the Implementation Committee since the NDP passed referendum. Tom stood down as Chairman since he is now moving out of the village.

## **Planning Committee**

Richard Wade (Chairman, Planning Committee)

**Planning statistics for 2017-2018:** Drayton Parish Council received 48 planning applications, 12 less than last year.

### **Parish Council**

Support	17
No Objection / Comment / Response	19
Objection	8
No response	3
Pending	1

### **VWHDC**

Permitted / Consent	32
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Refusal	2
Withdrawn	1
Amended	8
Pending	5

## Finance & Personnel Committee

David Perrow (Clerk/RFO) / Patricia Athawes (Chairperson, F&P Committee)

### Comparison: 2016-17 Outturn with 2017-18 & 2018-19 budgets

Income (VAT excluded)	2016-17 Outturn	2017-18 budget	2018-19 budget
Precept	£40,000	£80,000	£85,000
VWHDC & Other Grants and Donations	£22,165	£474	£0
Other Grants	£42,036	£0	£0
Allotments	£633	£600	£650
Burial Ground/Memorials	£2,085	£1,550	£2,000
Public Amenities/Open Spaces	£55	£0	£0
Interest	£145	£0	£12
Other Income	£748	£0	£0
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£107,867</b>	<b>£82,624</b>	<b>£87,662</b>
<b>Earmark from Reserves</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£107,867</b>	<b>£82,624</b>	<b>£87,662</b>
Expenditure (VAT reclaims excluded)			
Administration	£17,596	£17,800	£25,562
Grants and Donations S19	£15,770	£16,000	£12,500
S137	£200	£1,000	£1,000
S142	£0	£1,000	£1,000
Burial Ground/Allotments	£2,196	£2,500	£2,500
Play/Recreation	£48,232	£3,000	£3,500
Public Amenities/Open Spaces	£3,262	£6,500	£7,500
Press & Public Relations	£106	£100	£100
Rights of Way/Conservation	£405	£1,250	£1,250
Miscellaneous	£4,101	£474	£450
Drayton2020 Administration	£18,243	£5,500	£8,300
Drayton2020 Projects	£0	£27,500	£24,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£110,111</b>	<b>£82,624</b>	<b>£87,662</b>

Grants 2017-2018	
Drayton Pre-School (s19)	£1,770
DAMASCUS Youth Project (s19)	£3,500
Drayton Millennium Green Trust(s19)	£2,400
Drayton MGT – Mad Hatters Tea Party (s19)	£360
Drayton Football Club – Grass Cutting (s19)	£980
FODSA Fete (s19)	£350
Stonehill Community Garden (s19)	£250
Oxfordshire South and Vale CAB	£1,000
Clean Slate	£100
The Abingdon Bridge	£1,000
Enrych Oxfordshire s137	£1,000
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>£12,710</b>

**Drayton (Abingdon) Parish Council**  
**Summary Receipts and Payments for Year Ended 31st March 2017**

**Last Year Ended**                      **Current Year Ended**  
**31st March 2016**                      **31st March 2017**

**Operating Income**

£40,000.00	Precept	£40,000.00
£5,160.00	Grants Received	£22,165.00
£570.50	Allotments	£632.95
£1,854.00	Burial Ground	£2,085.00
£247.12	Interest Received	£145.21
£961.98	Other Income	£12,259.69
£0.00	Administration	£46.00
£0.00	Play & Recreation	-£269.99
£0.00	Public Amenities & Open Spaces	£55.00
£0.00	Drayton 2020 NDP	£30,000.00
£0.00	Miscellaneous	£748.85
<b>£48,793.60</b>	<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>£107,867.71</b>

**Running Costs**

£15,360.69	Administration	£16,585.34
£107.60	Employee Pension Contribution	£251.53
£324.75	Employer Pension Contribution	£759.22
£7,460.00	Grants S19	£15,770.20
£875.00	Grants S137	£200.00
£1,000.00	Grants S142	£0.00
£1,972.47	Burial Ground/Allotments	£2,195.73
£2,651.18	Play & Recreation	£48,231.88
£79.52	Press and Public Relations	£105.50
£6,080.18	Public Amenities & Open Spaces	£3,262.09
£491.63	Rights of Way & Conservation	£404.93
£2,991.30	Drayton 2020 NDP	£18,243.42
£869.30	Miscellaneous	£4,101.21
£1,585.57	VAT Data	£13,017.04
<b>£41,849.19</b>	<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£123,128.09</b>

**Receipts and Payments Summary**

£57,991.36	Opening Balance	£64,935.77
£48,793.60	Add Total Receipts(As Above)	£107,867.71
£106,784.96		£172,803.48
£41,849.19	Less Total Payments(As Above)	£123,128.09
<b>£64,935.77</b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£49,675.39</b>

These cumulative funds are represented by:

£64,935.77	Current and NS&I Bank Accounts	£33,278.15
£0.00	Unity Trust Drayton NDP Projects	£16,397.24
<b>£64,935.77</b>		<b>£49,675.39</b>