

Drayton (Abingdon) Parish Council



Annual Report 2011-2012

Highlights from the Year

- Lockway Play Area Refurbished (Phase 1)
- Rooks Nest Footpath steps installed
- Bus shelter outside Vickery's refurbished
- Kiln Way bridleway signage installed by OCC to deter vehicles
- Made representations on school bus charges issue to OCC
- Grants totaling £9,000 given to 5 Drayton & 5 local organisations
- Benches cleaned and re-varnished
- War Memorial Arch (St Peters Church) re-varnished
- Grass cut throughout summer months
- Hedges between allotments/burial ground & St Peters Churchyard cut back
- Litter removed from the village throughout the year
- Footpaths maintained by cutting back hedges and putting up signs
- 28 Planning Applications considered
- Continued negotiations on Manor Farm development
- Allotments – supervised by wardens and rents collected
- 11 burials in burial ground supervised, plus work on memorials & reservations

Chairman's Report

This is the end of this Council's second year out of four. We end it with 8 councillors out of an allotted 11. This means that we could either be doing less for the village than could be expected or are all overworked. What is more certain is that the Council is less representative of the village than it should be which is the stand out reason why we need volunteers to get as wide a section from the village as possible involved in some very important debates – I am thinking of the Localism Act and the potential for community or neighbourhood planning in particular.

Without wanting to tread on Heather Morrison's toes or pre-empt the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting, I need to highlight the Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP) and the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) as important past and present issues for the village. Every household should have received a questionnaire for a survey the results from which should give a relatively clear picture of where there is housing need, possibly leading to a development of affordable housing. The Parish Council would probably like to supplement this with further survey work to establish what the village feels about less acute housing need – what if any new housing is wanted and if so, what kind and where it might be built.

This leads onto the IHSP consultation (details in the April Drayton Chronicle) which shows which landowners are keen to build houses in the very short term. This will be discussed later but please note that the Parish Council needs to know your views asap as it will be discussed in time for our reply to be submitted before 20 April.

The next most important issue has been the change of policy by the County Council to charge for taking children to John Mason from inside a 3 mile walking distance. Sincere thanks are due to Karen Sharman (who joined the Parish Council briefly during the year and I hope will do so again at some time in the near future) and Jackie Cook for taking this fight to the Council and whom, with the support of other parents, attended a 'village appeal' and persuaded OCC to look again at the safety of the route – if this appeal fails individual appeals will follow. The Parish Council followed where they and other parents have led and have raised other issues relating to the process followed in making this change of policy. The Parish Council is very concerned that this transport policy (amounting to an annual charge of £240 per child) is extremely divisive and discriminatory.

The third item to highlight is the possibility of obtaining land suitable for providing extended sports facilities. Over ten years ago permission was granted for 16 houses to be built on land at Manor Farm (opposite the Red

Lion) subject to a legal agreement requiring about half the remaining land off Henleys Lane to be transferred to the Parish Council. The cooperation of the Parish Council was secured to enable access to this housing using one of the roads across the village green. In response to a request for a supplementary agreement, the Parish Council questioned the value of the land being offered in the original agreement. The Earl of Plymouth suggested as an alternative that the field between Lockway and the A34 might be made available. Many of the residents on the western side of Lockway attended a Parish Council to express concerns, claiming that the land would be unsuitable for recreational use. At a later meeting a resident of Steventon Road expressed concern about changes which might then occur to the existing recreation field. Apart from a further negotiation with EoP that established that the whole (and not just half) of the field would be made available and an argument about the size of a cash payment, that is as far as the matter has gone. The site is now being considered by the VWHDC for housing under the IHSP. If it is not accepted as being suitable for housing and offered again to the Parish Council, a public meeting is likely to be held to discuss the merits of PC land ownership and use.

Other issues which have engaged the PC are blue commemorative plaques (one for Rev Robinson is recommended for the Church Tower), the village web site, the bus service, rights of way issues, grants and the playground upgrade.

Thanks to Steve Sadler our (relatively) new caretaker, Julian Cook for continuing to cut the grass who between them keep the village looking good. I am very grateful to those taking care of the allotment management - primarily Tim Atkins. I should say at this point that the growing waiting list could be a challenge to the Parish Council in the coming months or years. We should all be grateful to Ann Webb and Sheila Cook and their helpers in the management of the Village Hall and Day Centre respectively and to those running the Alms houses and other clubs and societies, with special mention to Rita and those running the Damascus project, which contribute to the social glue of village life. Can I extend a warm welcome to Revd. Rebecca Peters and I hope that her stay in the village will be a long and happy one.

Thanks to all the councillors particularly in their roles as chairs of committees and working groups. Especial thanks to David Perrow our clerk for his expert handling of the very complex regulations and processes under which this lowest level of the Country's democracy operates.

I would like to end this report on the topic of democracy. I applaud all the work done by and on behalf of the village societies. I must also thank our

County Councillors Mike and Marilyn Badcock and District Councillor Richard Webber for their diligence and work on our behalf. But – and it is a very big but – I am more nervous than ever about the future of your Parish Council. At the beginning of this report I made the distinction between the work to be carried out by the Parish Council and its representation of those resident in the village. Yes, there are jobs which have to be done and more helping hands would be good. However, the greatest concern is to make the Parish Council more representative in the very important decisions it will be required to take in the next year or two, including those in respect of new housing and recreational facilities.

Daniel Scharf (Chairman)

Planning Committee Report 2011-2012

The Planning statistics for 2011-2012 for Drayton were that we received 28 planning applications. Of these the Parish Council fully approved of one and did not object to any, although for 7 applications we did set out concerns we had about them and/or suggested conditions or amendments that should be made. Of these 28 applications, 4 were withdrawn and 3 are still pending a decision by the Vale of White Horse District Council. The VWHDC permitted 19 of the remaining 21 applications, refusing 2.

As can be seen from the above statistics, there have not been any applications which have caused great concern during the past year. However, the Parish Council has considerable concern for the future, through a combination of the changes to planning law being brought in, and the draft Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP) moved by the VWHDC. In the immediate future, the IHSP is of greatest concern, and may be compounded by the planning law changes. The Parish Council sent in a consultation response to the VWHDC on the IHSP, listing 15 points of concern. The IHSP has been brought in by the VWHDC to cover the period before the next formal Plan comes into force, and as a way to meet its house building quota. To meet this target the VWHDC is intending to “relax” its present guidelines on acceptable development, and the consequence could be permanent detriment to the environment of villages such as Drayton, by imposing inappropriate one-size –fits-all development quotas upon them, with little regard to the consequent shortfalls in infrastructure that additional

population will bring – especially our already congested roads and availability of places at the already oversubscribed village school.

This could result in significant development outside the village, removing protection for the countryside – the Parish Council is very concerned that to meet the short term horizon of achieving a target over the next 2 years the long term character of the Vale – and Drayton in particular - could be sacrificed with potentially permanent degradation of the environment. For Drayton the IHSP has calculated an additional 68 extra dwellings (in fact 88, which includes the as yet unbuilt Manor Farm development) as “proportionate development”, with the 15 house development limit for larger villages being scrapped as a consequence. The scrapping of this upper limit of 15 is in itself a concern as it could lead to a very large single additional development which would radically change the character of the village for ever.

“Screening” requests have been invited from developers, which will be considered by planning officers. It is not made clear where the democratic process fits into this. The implications appear to be that planning officers will examine the requests and if they fit within the IHSP they will then be invited to make a planning application and only then will the plans be available for comment by residents, parish and town councils, and possibly ultimately a decision before the planning committee. The consequence so far is that 7 screening applications have so far been received for Drayton, totalling over 400 houses. 3 sites are for 30 to 40 houses, but another 3 are suggesting developments of around 100, 170 and 200 houses respectively, well outside the IHSP “quota” and which would have a devastating impact upon the character of the village.

Even if all these proposals are turned down at the screening stage, it will have the inevitable consequence of raising hopes and expectations amongst landowners and developers and will mean that plans the Parish Council had to find suitable land for recreation in the village are almost certainly undermined, as landowners will not want to sell as agricultural land what they might hope to sell for much more for development. For example the Parish Council was in discussion with the Earl of Plymouth Estates and taking soundings within the village for possible swap of the land to be received by the Parish Council by Henleys Lane as part of the Manor Farm planning consent, with land behind Lockway. The Lockway site is now one of those

put forward for screening for development of around 100 houses under the IHSP.

Going forward, there is therefore clearly some uncertainty about how things will unfold on the planning front within the village. The Parish Council, already under strength, would therefore welcome new members to help deal with what could be a considerable threat to the existing character of the village

Heather Morrison (Chairman of Planning Committee)

Report of the Leisure & General Purposes Committee

(to be inserted)



Rights of Way and Conservation Working Group Report 2010-2011

Thanks to the moderate winter weather and the work of our caretaker, Steve Sadler, the footpaths and bridleways have stayed in good condition this year. Sadly there is always the problem of bottles and cans being thrown along the paths, and during the year the bridleway alongside the A34 was completely blocked to horses by someone irresponsibly dumping a large quantity of concrete; after much negotiation it was finally removed by Biffa.



Perhaps the most satisfying achievement has been the installation of steps at the end of Rooks Nest path, so that the descent on to the B4016 is now easier and safer. This success led the Parish Council to suggest to Sutton Courtenay PC that similar work should be carried out on Footpath 17, almost opposite the turn towards Milton; though in Sutton Courtenay parish the path is much nearer to Drayton. In cooperation with the OCC this has been done and what was once quite a hazardous drop is now hugely improved.

At the end of 2010 the Parish Council planted an oak tree in memory of long serving Councillor, Norman Stimpson. Unfortunately lack of rain and an unsatisfactory method of watering meant the tree did not survive. We are grateful to Richard Ballard, VWHDC Parks Officer, for the recent planting of another, larger tree at no charge. Having learned a hard lesson, it is hoped we shall do better at ensuring this one survives. We also have plans to plant a tree in the burial ground this year to replace one that had to be felled.

Jenny Pooley (ROW& Conservation Group Chairman)

Press and Public Relations Working Group 2011-12

At the first monthly meeting following the election of the new Parish Council it was proposed and approved that a new working group be created with specific responsibility for Public Relations and & Press activities.

The first action of the new working group was to draw up its Terms of Reference which included defining how members of the Parish Council in their official capacity will communicate with the Press.

Village website - the group assisted the Community Trust with the launch of the website in June 2011 and has provided input into the sites working practices

Blue Plaque proposal – it was the working group that put together the official nomination following the suggestion made by a Church Warden at St Peters re the Revd F.E. Robinson which is pending approval

Village News - the Group provides important news via the village website and ensure that this is also communicated to the Drayton Chronicle and wider press as and when required.

Village Hall - the Chair of the Working Group is currently providing some assistance to the Village Hall with its communications and publicity activities

The Group is more than willing to offer support and advice to any of the Villages organisations with its communications. Please contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance.

Laurence Zipson (Chairman - PR & Press Working Group)

Finance Report

Comparison of 2010-11 Outturn and 2011-12 and 2012-13 budgets

Income (VAT excluded)	2010-11 Outturn	2011-12 budget	2012-13 budget
Precept	£32,000	£32,000	£40,000
Allotments	£237	£510	£450
Burial Ground/Memorials	£1405	£1200	£1500
Interest	£251	£150	£50
TOTAL INCOME	£33,893	£33,860	£42,000
Expenditure (VAT reclaims excluded)			
Administration	£11,314	£12,000	£11,085
Grants and Donations S19	£10,947	£12,500	£17,400
S137	£1,200	£3,500	£1,500
S142	£560	£600	£1,000
Burial Ground/Allotments	£1,886	£1500	£2,050
Play/Recreation	£1,447	£1750	£2180
Public Amenities/Open Spaces	£5,611	£5460	£5475
ROW	£430	£700	£1,100
Miscellaneous	£827	£0	£210
TOTAL	£34,222	£38,010	£42,000

Grants 2011-2012

Drayton Boules Club	£100
South and Vale Carers	£300
Caudwell Day Centre	£500
Drayton Football Club	£60
Home Start Southern Oxfordshire	£200
DAMASCUS	£3,000
Drayton Village Hall	£3,000
The Abingdon Bridge	£500
Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau	£1,000
Ryder-Cheshire Volunteers	£350
Total Grants	£9010

Drayton (Abingdon) Parish Council

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/3/2011

	2010/2011
RECEIPTS	
Precept	£32,000.00
Allotment Rents	£236.76
Burial Ground/Memorials Income	£1,405.00
Bank Interest	£250.93
Borrowings	£0.00
Grants & Donations	£0.00
Public Amenities/Open Spaces	£0.00
Other income	£0.00
VAT refund	£1,853.40
	<u>£35,746.09</u>
PAYMENTS	
Staff Costs	£6,817.24
Loan Interest	£0.00
Other admin. costs	£3,403.23
Insurance	£1,093.52
Grants	£12,706.80

Grants Section 19	£10,946.80	
Grants Section 137	£1,200.00	
Grants Section 142	£560.00	
Burial Grounds/Allotments		£1,886.05
Play/Recreation Gds		£1,447.06
Public Amenities/Open Spaces		£5,611.47
Rights of Way/Conservation		£430.33
Miscellaneous costs		£827.35
VAT paid		£889.65
		<u>£35,112.70</u>
Bal b/f		£36,605.94
Add total receipts		£35,746.09
		£72,352.03
Less total payments		<u>£35,112.70</u>
Balance c/f 31st March 2011		<u>£37,239.33</u>
BALANCES REPRESENTED BY:		
Current Account		£4,708.68
NS&I Account		£34,187.15
		<u>£38,895.83</u>
Less unrepresented cheques		£1,656.50
Plus unrepresented credit		£0.00
		<u>£37,239.33</u>