

The Parish Council of St. Helen Without

Annual Newsletter 2018

Parish Councillors

Mrs. Caroline Parkin (Acting Chair) Tel. no: 01235 535969 email: caroline.parkin@woottondrysandfordshippon.co.uk	Mr. Mike Page (Vice-Chair) email: mike.page@woottondrysandfordshippon.co.uk
Mrs. Vicki Talbot Tel. no: 01235 522255 email: vicki.talbot@woottondrysandfordshippon.co.uk	Mr. Colin Cox email: xocniloc49@gmail.com
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The Parish Council has three vacancies, one in Shippon Ward and two in Dry Sandford Ward. If you are interested in being co-opted as a Parish Councillor, please contact the Clerk.

Clerk: Anna Clarke

Tel: 01865 321555;

email: clerkshwpc@gmail.com

County Cllr: Mr. Richard Webber

Tel: 01235 534001;

email: Richardwebber777@gmail.com

District Cllr Dry Sandford: Mr. Henry Spencer

email: henry.spencer@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

District Cllr Shippon: Mrs. Catherine Webber

Tel: 01235 534001;

email: Webbercatherine1@gmail.com

Message from Madeleine Russell, Former Chair St Helen Without Parish Council

Since the last newsletter there have been considerable developments and activity for your parish council. The Vale of White Horse District Council have adopted their Local Plan Part 1 for the period up to 2031. Part 2 of the Plan has an enormous impact on our Parish with the Vale seeking to remove all of Shippon from the Green Belt and planning to develop Dalton Barracks and the airfield to accommodate up to 4,000+ new homes. Taking the lead from the very strong views expressed at a public consultation we held in April last year, we will be opposing Part 2 of the Plan when it is considered by the planning inspector later this year. As far as the development of Dalton Barracks and the airfield is concerned our response to the Vale was to contain development within the operational area of the site, to remove no further land from the Green Belt and to ensure infrastructure is in place before any development commences.

Hopefully you will all have received communications about the Neighbourhood Plan which we are developing jointly with Wootton Parish Council. Our thanks go to those of you who completed the questionnaire recently circulated; we have achieved a very creditable (for this type of survey) return of over 30%. The Neighbourhood Plan will give our community a greater, legally based, say in the nature of future development, including the proposals for massive development on the airfield. Given the current government pressure to secure new homes, it is vital that we secure the ability to exert the greatest possible influence on what happens. We are grateful for the efforts of the volunteers who are working hard to develop the Neighbourhood Plan which we hope will be published later this year when a referendum will invite your views on whether it should be adopted.

Such is the increased workload faced by the Parish Council and with a number of new councillors, we have reorganised the workload between 3 sub-committees: -

- Development and Planning
- Highways and Transport
- Environment and Amenities

Reports on what we have achieved thus far and what we have planned for the future appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Suffice it to say that, from my perspective I think we are making real progress and I am hopeful that you will begin to see the benefits of our work as the year progresses.

Sadly, in the past year, we have lost some long serving councillors.

Martin Gilbert and Ken Houlden, stalwarts on the council for many years, who put considerable effort into the maintenance and improvement of Sandleigh Road recreation ground, have retired. They will be a hard act to replace. Fortunately, they have agreed to allow us to continue to access their vast knowledge of the council's activities over the past few decades.

Carole Priestley, who undertook a great deal of work on Highways and Transport issues has also retired. She has very kindly agreed to continue working on some of the projects through to completion.

Geoff Fitzgerald, a past Chair of the council, decided last year to devote his energies in other directions and again we must thank him for his past efforts.

You will note that this has left vacancies for councillors in both wards. There has rarely been a time when the role of the parish council has been so important – if you think you could devote some time to being a councillor please let us know!

Lastly it is with deep regret that owing to changes in my personal circumstances I must also step down from the parish council. Having spent some 40 years in local government in one form or another, this is not a decision I have taken lightly. I wish my fellow councillors every success for the future.

Highways and Transport

We have installed a vehicle activated speed sign in Barrow Road which has already revealed some interesting statistics about the volume of vehicles using this route during the morning and evening peak travel times. It will also provide current data on vehicle speeds which will be shared with Thames Valley Police prompting them to take enforcement action as appropriate.

We are currently, at the request of residents, reviewing the 40mph speed restriction in Honeybottom Lane. With the help of local schools, we are also involving local children in the development of 'speed awareness' posters, which we hope will reinforce the message about driving safely and responsibly. We hope to have these on display later this year.

We have taken on responsibility for grass cutting across the parish within the 30 mph speed limits and our new contractors, Aspire, will commence work in April. We will receive a grant from OCC for this as the work was originally their responsibility. We have opted for an enhanced service which includes trimming of overhanging trees and bushes, litter picking and ditch maintenance. We hope this will noticeably improve the appearance of our roads and verges. There will be an additional cost, but we have kept this to a minimum which, this year, will be met from our reserves.

We are currently tendering for the refurbishment of the 'village gates' situated on Long Tow, Barrow Road and at Gozzards Ford. We hope this will be completed in late Spring.

We have established a good liaison with OCC Highways and would draw residents attention to the 'Fix my street' area on their website. This enables anyone to enter details of highway issues (e.g. potholes, uneven kerbs, obstacles and other dangers) which are then brought to the notice of the Highways team. Our experience is that issues are dealt with and the 'reporter' is kept up to date with progress via email. Potholes are a particular issue at present. Financial constraints mean that these have to be prioritised by the potential danger they pose but the more that are reported the more the pressure placed on OCC to find the funding to deal with them.

Development and Planning

We have received 25 planning applications over the year some of which have been very contentious with local residents.

The Manor School development which is for a sports complex and additional classrooms was passed as an exceptional case in the Green Belt despite considerable objections being made. We held a public meeting to ensure all residents were consulted and this was well attended. A Project Manager has been appointed and work is commencing. We continue to liaise with the school as work progresses.

The application for 4 houses on the paddock on Barrow Road were considered to be too large for the site and the proximity to listed buildings. The application was returned to the landowner and alternative plans submitted which require the ground level of the site to be excavated to reduce the impact of the buildings proposed on neighbours and buildings of historic interest and this was then passed.

The development on Wootton Road for 200 houses, which is within our Parish, has had Outline Planning permission granted by the Vale of White Horse DC.

The developer Vortal, approached the PC about a site on Lashford Lane which they wished to develop with co-operation from us under a Community Right to Build Order. Again, we held a public meeting at which many residents expressed their objections and the parish council declined to support this order.

Environment and Amenities

We recently carried out some major work on the trees, bushes and shrubs in Sandleigh Road Recreation Ground – which is owned and maintained by us on behalf of the community. This was prompted in part by concerns raised by some residents with property backing on to the recreation ground about damage being caused to their property by our trees. The growth will now be managed on a regular basis.

The parish notice boards in Shippon and Dry Sandford are in poor condition and we have decided to replace them both with new, sturdier aluminium versions. Although these are primarily for the display of statutory notices should you wish to display anything in them please contact the Clerk and if space permits we will be happy to accommodate you.

Neil Parkin, a Shippon resident, has offered his services to the Council as researcher and archivist. We feel quite strongly that with all the development proposed the historic identity of the parish should be recorded with the aim of establishing a coherent approach to preserving the key elements of its identity for future generations. If you have any photographs, documents or family history relating to St Helen Without we would be pleased to hear from you.

We have also decided to develop our own website to replace the one currently shared with Wootton Parish Council. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Message from County Councillor Richard Webber and District Councillor Catherine Webber

Air Quality / Traffic and Infrastructure

Whether or not you live in Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtenay, Drayton, Marcham or Shippon, you will be aware of and affected by the number of housing developments in our area. The expansion of Didcot and Abingdon and the threat of coalescence of our villages are going to affect us all, if it has not done so already.

Most of us accept that the country needs more houses and that our part of Oxfordshire, with its high employment and thriving economy, is an obvious prime target if houses are to be close to jobs.

Unfortunately, in the keenness (some might say desperation) to get houses built, the problem of lack of infrastructure (particularly adequate roads) has been playing second fiddle. Our road system is beginning to reach capacity. Every new development has an impact on every other. There are increasing traffic jams on major roads through our villages; even the rat runs are filling up, and air quality is becoming a major problem in many areas.

It is hard to see a solution to this, without a large-scale investment in new roads. Housing developments do not, in themselves, generate enough money to pay for this, so we depend on Government money to make up the shortfall.

And Government is beginning to address this problem. In north Abingdon, a pot of £9m is to be provided to make the Lodge Hill interchange 4 way to allow for over 1,000 more houses. If Marcham is to take another 500 houses, Shippon another 2000, and Sutton Courtenay any more at all, even more investment is needed. OCC transport officers, who have the unenviable job of trying to make our road system work, are pointing out the problem to government and District planners with the result that we can expect many more objections to planning developments. The message is stark, but clear – “Without more infrastructure, we cannot take more houses”.

But is the solution simply building ever more roads? We know that more roads generate more traffic. Would the major investment be better spent on better bus services and cycle ways?

Richard Webber Cllr OCC, Sutton Courtenay and Marcham Division

Other News

Abingdon Town Council informed us in February last year that they had requested the Vale to undertake a Community Governance Review as they wished to extend their boundaries to take in the whole of Shippon and the Airfield. We strongly objected and the matter was deferred until the next statutory CGR which takes place in 2019.

News from Dalton Barracks

We maintain a close working relationship with the Regiments based at Dalton Barracks. Our thanks go to Derek Kelso who diligently attends all our meetings in his role as Liaison Officer.

It was with some regret that councillors attended a ‘flag lowering’ service last August to mark the disbandment of 612 Squadron after its many years of providing training to local young people and providing instruction and experience in gliding to Air Cadets.

We receive very few complaints from residents about Army activity on the airfield but those that we do are promptly addressed through Derek. We are currently exploring ways in which we and the Army can work together to our mutual benefit.

The two Royal Logistics Corps Regiments based at Dalton Barracks provide transport and supply capability in support of Army deployment anywhere in the world. Consequently, much of their effort entails training their own personnel in the difficulties entailed in deploying in differing climates and terrain as well as familiarising other elements of the armed forces in the capabilities they can provide

Local residents are welcome to access the airfield, provided they obtain the relevant passes from the guardroom and respect the rules governing access. The airfield is a ‘live’ training facility and residents, for their own safety, must take care to steer clear of training events.

Friends of Shippon - contact Carole Page on 07792 252 254

The Friends of Shippon meet on the second Friday of each month at 7.30pm in Shippon Church Hall. We have a range of speakers and presentations. If you are interested in what is happening in the village then please come along and join us. Membership is £12.50 per year, which is excellent value for the events that we hold, and visitors are always welcome and are just charged £3.

Forthcoming events are;

- 11th May: Children and War – Liz Woolley
- 8th June: Toffs in Trouble – Julie Ann Godson
- 7th July: Afternoon Tea (please note this is on a Saturday)
- 14th September: Pudding and Pimms Evening
- 12th October: Musical Evening with Pandemonium
- 9th November: Shelley’s Chocolates demonstration
- 7th December: Christmas Social

We have three affiliated groups;

Book Club – contact Carol Gibbins on 01235 527211

The Book Club meets once a month at 7.30 at member's houses to discuss the latest book and to decide on future reads.

Bridge Club - contact Mo Hinkley-Smith on 01235 521657

The Bridge Club meets at Shippon Church Hall at 7.30 on alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Singing for Pleasure - contact Madeleine Russell on 01235 523557

This group meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 2pm in Shippon Church Hall. It is open to all and there are no auditions! There is a small charge of £2.50 per meeting, which includes tea and cake.

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council meets on a Monday evening, approximately every 6 weeks. The venues alternate between Dry Sandford Primary School and the Church Hall, Barrow Road, Shippon. Sub Committee Meetings begin at 7pm, and the main PC Meetings begin at 7.30 pm. The first item on the agenda is an opportunity for residents to bring their concerns to the Council avoiding the necessity to sit through a long agenda of routine business. Future meetings are as follows:

14 th May 2018 AGM at Shippon Church Hall, APM, 7pm start	25 th June 2018 at Dry Sandford Primary School
6 th August 2018 at Shippon Church Hall	17 th September 2018 at Dry Sandford Primary School
29 th October 2018 at Shippon Church Hall	10 th December 2018 at Dry Sandford Primary School

The Parish Council is available to deal with your concerns and you can contact the Clerk if you wish any matter to be discussed at the Council Meetings. Her contact details are above.

Wootton & Dry Sandford Community Centre

The community website has information about facilities and activities in the parishes of Wootton and St Helen Without. It can be accessed on www.woottondrysandfordshippon.co.uk

Parish Rate 2018-19

The Parish Precept has been set at £17,051 for the financial year 2018-2019. It is some years since the parish last raised its precept and having reviewed our current financial position we have decided that there will be no increase this year.

HOW YOU CAN HELP OUR COMMUNITY

The Parish Council makes every effort to ensure that the infrastructure of the village is kept in good order.

Residents and landowners can, however, be a tremendous help by –

- **Ensuring that their hedges are cut back to avoid impeding highways and footpaths**
- **Ditches are kept clear to prevent flooding**
- **Cars are parked appropriately – parking on the pavement can make it difficult for mobility scooters**
- **Speed limits are observed within the Parish**
- **Potholes, littering, defective street lights and crimes are reported using the contact numbers below.**
- **Residents' co-operation would be appreciated in keeping the Sandleigh Road recreation ground free of litter. Please take your litter home**
- **Reporting incidents of dog fouling to the Environmental Warden**

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Thames Valley Police: Serious crimes 999: non-emergency crimes 101. The Parish PCSO is Rich Osborn.

Vale of the White Horse District Council: Litter and domestic waste & reporting Fly Tipping: Waste contractor Biffa
Tel. 03000 610610 or E-mail: admin.vale@biffa.co.uk

Vale of White Horse Environmental Health: env.health@southandvale.gov.uk Tel. 01235 422403

Vale of White Horse Planning Department, Vale of White Horse District Council; Tel: 01235 422600

E-mail: planning@whitehorsedc.gov.uk;

Planning Enforcement: Tel – 01235 422600 E-mail planning.enforcement@southandvale.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council Street Lighting: Tel. 0800 317 802 or online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire Highways: potholes and other problems relating to highways and footpaths can be reported online: fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk or for urgent potholes by telephone on Tel. 0345 310 111

Military Aircraft Noise Issues: SWK-lowflying@mod.gov.uk Telephone: 01780 417558 Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm