

THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME

Annual Parish Meeting 2021

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on September 9th in Berrick and Roke Village Hall. This document provides the material from the various representatives who gave presentations. Click on the Contents items below to go to items of interest.

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Marian Shaw, Susan Radice, Robert and Emma James, David Bridgland, Rob Marsh, Chris and Anne Kilduff. Abbie Clayton was unable to attend, so submitted her report in writing (section 6). Fourteen parishioners attended.

2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APM ON MAY 9TH 2019

Approved

3. TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON 2020/21 – Ian Glyn

This report is unusual for several reasons.

It is written and delivered in September 2021 rather than May and covers a period of 16 months rather than a year. For those reading it in future years, I need to explain that the Covid pandemic which struck the UK in March 2020 continues to persist and influence our lives. While several restrictions to our normal way of living have been lifted by today's date, we have been unable to meet in public forums till recently and so our Parish Meeting scheduled for May 2021 suffered the same cancellation as that due to be held in May 2020. Hence it being held in Sept 2021.

Furthermore, all Parish Council meetings since March 2020 have been held remotely through the internet rather than in public forum. We were, however, able to restart physical meetings in the village hall in July.

Nevertheless, life in the Parish has gone on and I report on it herein.

3.1. Planning issues

Nineteen Planning Applications required our attention during the year. Of those 2 were withdrawn. We recommended 11 for approval and 6 for refusal. In 3 instances SODC overruled our objections and, at the time of writing, decisions from SODC on 2 Applications are outstanding.

The outcome of some significant Applications remains unclear at the time of writing, and I report on those here.

3.1.1. Chalgrove Airfield

This one has been ongoing for several years. The development of up to 3,500 houses on the Airfield is included in the current SODC Local Plan (which was approved by an Inspector during

the period). But the Applicant has recently withdrawn the Application in the face of stiff opposition (on safety grounds) from the Civil Aviation Authority. We suspect that the Applicants will resubmit having made arrangements to reposition the runway that triggered the CAA's objection on land recently acquired (acquired, presumably, for that purpose). We are informed that SODC's supply of land for its housing needs for five years is robust enough to withstand Chalgrove dropping out of the equation, and this is important because, as things stand at the moment, absent a proven five-year supply of land for housing development, SODC effectively loses control of its planning decisions. Your Parish Council remains totally opposed to the development of Chalgrove Airfield believing that it is a completely unsustainable location for a development of this nature and scale.

3.1.2. Land North of Fairfield in Roke

This one has been on our agenda for a long time. The original Application for a house on this plot was refused by SODC. The applicant appealed and lost that appeal too. Meanwhile the applicant installed a mobile home and associated facilities on the site in an action that is described in planning jargon as an "intentional unauthorised development". He subsequently applied for retrospective planning consent for this arrangement and this Application has been refused by SODC. We are maintaining regular contact with SODC about what actions they propose to take next. My report in May 2020 referred extensively to this unsatisfactory position, and I refer the reader to that report for the detail of the PC's view on this Application.

3.1.3. Land adjoining The Orchard in Rokemarsh

The Parish Council has also taken a robust position in relation to the proposal to build up to 19 further houses adjacent to Rokemarsh and the fledgling development of 240 houses approved and known colloquially as Ben 3/4. Ben 3/4 was approved on the understanding that the continuing separation of Rokemarsh and the sprawling Benson was "dialled in". This Application flies in the face of that principle and commitment and the Parish Council will continue to resist it for that (and other) reasons.

In general, your Parish Council's decisions re Planning Applications before it is informed and directed by the Berrick Salome Neighbourhood Plan and driven by the belief that homeowners should be permitted to improve and alter their property so long as, by doing so, there is no detriment to the community.

3.2. Other Matters

3.2.1. Thames Water

The foul drainage arrangements continue to concern us when the water table rises. We are finally getting some traction from Thames Water in terms of their commitment to remedy the various faults in the system and it remains to be seen how successful the remedial work recently undertaken will be. Thames Water assure us that if it were not for the ingress of water from rising ground water levels, the system is adequate for evacuating the sewage from all houses in the Parish - so their task is to ensure that the system is sealed as effectively as possible from ground water.

3.2.2. Increasing Traffic Volumes and Speed

We remain extremely concerned that local developments will further exacerbate the volume and speed of traffic using the lanes through our Parish and a “traffic group “ has been working on the issue for some time. It is a laborious process involving OCC Highways, but much progress is being made. The traffic group has made a recommendation to Councillors which will be discussed directly after this Parish Meeting. Your PC will then circulate a recommendation to all parishioners and seek views on the proposal before the process of pursuing the proposal through the various consents procedures is started. I urge each and every one of you to take this issue seriously and let us know what your views are on the matter. The proposed solutions may well be controversial to some and there will certainly be a significant cost of implementing them. Your Parish Council will want to be certain that they are supported by most parishioners - so the expression of your thoughts on the matter will be very important.

3.2.3. Village Hall

Progress on regularising the ownership structure of the Village Hall and, also, on implementing the improvements for which we have got planning permission have been affected by Covid but will re- emerge on to our Agenda as restrictions continue to abate.

3.2.4. PAGE

There was good and bad news from PAGE during the year. The immediate threat of gravel extraction right on our doorstep was removed but there remains a risk that it might re-emerge on a site between Newington / Stadhampton and Drayton St Leonard. So, your Council decided to continue to support PAGE (in its new guise as PAGE 2020) as they seek to persuade others that there is no need for new extraction facilities and that the local site is not appropriate.

3.2.5. Oxford Cambridge Expressway

The immediate threat to the Parish seems to have gone away as the project falls off central government’s agenda.

3.2.6. Tree Planting

We are proposing to plant a copse of trees on the recreation ground. The saplings are being donated by the Woodland Trust and the Parish Council are pleased to support this environmentally friendly initiative. The current uses of the recreation ground will be unaffected by the initiative which we hope will improve the appearance and biodiversity of the area.

3.2.7. Gigaclear Cabling

We discovered during the year that the all-important Gigaclear cabling has not been installed as reflected on their map, so we have produced on the PC website a definitive map of the location of the cables. I urge all Parishioners to study this map and to ensure that any work being undertaken in the roads or verges close to their houses is done in the full knowledge of the existence of the route of our all-important broadband internet supply. The cables themselves are installed remarkably close to the surface in many locations.

I finish this report by thanking my fellow councillors, on behalf of all parishioners, for the time and effort they have put in to managing the Council affairs during this very strange and difficult time. And most particularly to our Clerk (Chris Cussens) who continues to do the most extraordinary job on our behalf keeping us in order and keeping everyone informed.

Before I sign off, I'd like to tell you a story.

It's a story about a community of approx. 130 households and approx. 300 people.

It's a community that rejoices in its inclusivity and its welcome to all.

It's a community that benefits from a church , two pubs and a village hall.

It's a community benefitting from plenty of local activity throughout the year.

It's a mixed community with some working - some not - some busy - some not- some young - some not!- some boisterous - some not.

It's a community which suffers remarkably little dissent.

It's a great place to live.

You may recognise it!

I have a good insight in to this community and my story goes on to tell you that, if this community is to retain its special place in our hearts it is going to be necessary for members of it to volunteer to do the things that bind it together and make it our special place.

Those who have done so in recent years are getting older and, in any event, new faces, new ideas, new momentum is to be encouraged.

My insight also tells me that several of the organisations on which we depend need volunteers to keep them going and that simply relying on the same old faces to carry on is not going to work - or be acceptable.

So, in order to give my story a happy ending, I ask each and every one of you to consider how you can help. There will be vacancies on the Parish Council, on the Village Hall management committee and as trustees of the two charities that so benefit us. The teams that run the events we so enjoy will need rebuilding. And we should crave the new ideas that fresh faces can bring.

Our website now carries a page indicating the help our organisations need and boasts a way that Parishioners can offer to volunteer. [Click here](#) to access that page and make this storyteller a happy man - Please!

4. OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

4.1. COUNTY COUNCILLOR (Freddie van Mierlo)

Our new County Councillor introduced himself as representing the LibDem party. He stated that he will issue a report nearly every month to all Parish Councils and anyone else who requests them from him at freddie.vanmierlo@oxfordshire.gov.uk. No reports were issued for September as there were no Parish Council meetings in August. Highlights of the last month were

- Oxfordshire 2050 – consultation to produce a new strategic plan for Oxfordshire - the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan.
- HGV consultation – to be issued in Oct/Nov this year
- Addressing the planning application for the land next to The Orchard, Rokemarsh, which he will continue to follow up
- The County Council is going to take over from Thames Valley Police in enforcing on-street parking in the county, effective Nov 1st, with lots of benefits
- Plans for 20mph zones are being trialled in Cuxham, with roll-out elsewhere dependent on the result and local wishes
- A consultation on how Oxfordshire’s bus services can be improved has been under way, ending Sept 13th.

4.2. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR (David Turner)

4.2.1. SODC Operational Issues in COVID19 times

Since the SODC offices closing in March 2020 there have been very few staff operating from and telephones.

The Council were charged with operating all the various schemes, particularly financial, that the Government has put in place to keep the economy functioning as best as it can. In my opinion the officers have been great in discharging all the duties of the Council as well as the extra duties given to them by National Government. The Government has agreed to fund the extra costs involved.

The Council has on a regular basis informed Parish and Town Councils of the information surrounding COVID19. In addition to advice the Council has regularly updated Parish and Town Councils on COVID19 statistics for South Oxfordshire with comparisons with other Oxfordshire Districts and National trends. SODC’s headquarters in Milton Park. Fortunately, modern technology has enabled the Council to keep functioning with officers working from home using computers

Each South Oxfordshire District Councillor was provided with a £2000 budget to assist volunteers helping people in COVID19 related problems. I have kept informed all Parish Councils and other appropriate organisations of the grants available. From my budget so far, I have provided the following:

- **Chalgrove Parish Council.** £500 towards food parcels etc for disadvantaged people.
- **CHATS (Chalgrove Transport Scheme).** Two grants one of £400 and another later one of £300 towards all the hygiene equipment required during Covid19 restrictions when transporting people to hospitals, doctor’s surgeries and dentists, etc.

My annual Councillors budget of £5000 towards community projects have been distributed as follows:

- **Brightwell Baldwin Parish Meeting.** £2000 for new play apparatus in Brightwell Baldwin Parish.
- **Thame River Trust.** £2013 for work on Chalgrove Brook (river) to improve water quality and work on the banks to improve habitat for various species.

- **Chalgrove/Watlington First Steps Children’s Centres.** £987 for a new project. This is a plan for 2021/22 to support parents with babies and young children during Covid and post Covid. This will provide emotional support and communication via social media, email and telephone in lockdowns and daily sessions whenever we can open safely. The need to reduce loneliness, isolation and anxiety has proved to be very high and the demand for sessions increased dramatically from parents across 17 villages in South Oxfordshire with highest numbers from Watlington and Chalgrove where facilities are based. The ability to respond flexibly to needs is essential to the success of the project. Note. the Watlington Ward District Councillor has agreed an equal amount

The Councillor’s grants budget for this year is now open for bids. Please see the SODC website for full details.

The General grants both capital and revenue will be open in the Autumn of this year. Please see the SODC website for full details.

4.2.2. Joint Local Plan

The two District Councils, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse, have now agreed to develop a joint Local Plan, which would take the Councils through to about 2040/41 rather than producing new individual plans. There would be significant cost savings from taking this route, in the gathering of evidence, the development of common policies and the inspection process. There is also strong logic in working together on issues such as the development of Didcot, affordable housing and on environmental policies and practices. A joint committee would oversee the process, but the final decision-making would still lie with the individual Councils in order to ensure local accountability. The importance of Neighbourhood Plans is unaffected.

4.2.3. Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

SODC has joined the other 5 Councils in Oxfordshire in adopting a new strategy to provide consistent and extended infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, particularly for those who do not have this facility at home, or who are visiting the area as tourists or on business. This is an important step along the way towards decarbonisation of transport and will hopefully make it easier for people to choose an electric car next time they are buying, knowing that they will be able to charge it when they are out and about. This is of course an immense project, and it will take some time for it to be delivered.

4.2.4. Leisure Facilities

Locations now open for indoor activities:

- [Park Sports Centre](#) (gym, badminton sports hall hire, squash)
- [Didcot Wave Leisure Centre](#) (swimming, swimming lessons, gym)
- [Abbey Sports Centre](#) (gym)
- [Henley Leisure Centre](#) (gym, swimming, swimming lessons, squash)

- [Thame Leisure Centre](#) (gym, swimming, swimming lessons)

All activity sessions will need to be pre-booked ahead of your visit. Activity bookings will be available 7 days in advance for members (from 6pm for swimming, from 8pm for gym and from 10pm for other activities) and 5 days in advance for non-members.

Further information including timetables, activity pricing, etc are available on the SODC website.

Upon arrival for your activity, please follow all Covid-secure measures to keep yourself and others safe. Please change at home and be activity ready, as changing room and shower access is available at a reduced capacity. Advance online and app bookings will only be accepted to manage the number of customers within the facility at any one time. Sanitising materials will be available to use.

5. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT – Craig Tribe

On behalf of the Parish Council, I present the receipts and payments accounts of the Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Receipts for the year totalled £10,889. This compares with £13,193 in the previous year. The main sources of income were the parish precept of £8,365 and donations of £1,765 from some parishioners in respect of professional fees relating to a planning matter. VAT paid of £749 was recovered.

Total payments for the year were £9,786 compared with £7,565 previously. This year included £1,480 for hedge laying and sundry works by the village hall as part of our village improvement efforts. Legal and professional fees were about £1,000 higher than last year but all the expenditure was covered by the donations referred to previously. The increase in expenditure was subject to VAT and therefore the VAT paid increased by £732. All VAT paid should be recoverable.

There was a net surplus for the year of £1,103. This compares with a surplus last year of £5,628.

The parish council accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis. This means that there are sometimes time differences as to when income and expenditure are recognised in the accounts.

Total reserves carried forward to 2021-22 were £22,959. A reserves summary is shown at the foot of the accounts. Of the total amount, all but £6,628 was allocated to specific projects.

For 2021-22 the Parish Council voted for an increase in the Band D parish precept from £50.24 to £55.26, a rise of 10.0%. The precept is the amount that parish councils charge their parishioners, via the council tax, to meet their budget requirements. The increase was in accordance with our policy of increasing reserves to provide funding for future projects for village improvement. The councillors believed that it was better to increase the precept by a reasonable amount each year rather than a large increase in a future year.

Current projects include improvements to the village hall and car park, and traffic management plans. These are the same as last year having been delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. BERRICK SALOME QUARRY CHARITY – Abbie Clayton

6.1. Charity Overview

The Quarry Charity brings in a rental income of £2000 per annum from the business on the B4009 on an old disused quarry. The Charity exists to administer these funds for projects or equipment which benefit the community of Berrick Salome Parish (Berrick Prior, Berrick Salome, Roke and Rokemarsh). Anyone can apply for funding on behalf of an organisation or village project. The Trustees, a small group of villagers, elected at the Village Meeting, administer these funds on behalf of the village. Anyone interested can ask to be nominated for election - just contact Abbie Clayton (07738319200 abigail.clayton@getfeedback.net).

6.2. Current Committee – New members needed!

In May 2020 Guy Slocome stood down as the Chair of the Quarry charity. The committee would like to thank Guy for his work and direction over his time as Chair. The role of Chair has temporarily passed to Abbie Clayton (currently treasurer) but we are currently in need of new members – and ideally a new Chair.

Abbie would welcome new members to support the current committee to, this is not a great commitment, typically we review any requests remotely in a timely manner and meet perhaps once a year to review funds, significant requests and future plans. Please contact Abbie on the above email or phone number if you would be interested in getting involved or finding out more about what's involved.

6.3. Current Funds

Our income over the last 12 months has been £2000.00 derived from rent received from the Wilkinson's Wood Yard site on the B4009; interest of 75p was also received.

No requests were made in the last 12 months.

As of 18th August 2021 the Quarry Charity's bank balance stands at £11,305.43.

7. BERRICK SALOME QUARRY CHARITY – Committee Re-election

Committee re-elected but see para 6.2 above.

8. BERRICK SALOME RELIEF IN NEED CHARITY – Graham Cooper

The Charity was set up to provide grants of money, provision of items or provision of facilities for persons in need living in the Parish of Berrick Salome. These grants are to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the beneficial area (viz Berrick Salome, Berrick Prior, Roke and Rokemarsh) who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

Income is received from rent from a parcel of agricultural land and a fixed interest investment plus interest on accumulated income. The income for the year to August 2020 was £964.

Four grants of £860 were made during the year.

The balances held at the bank at 31 August 2020 were £12,686.

The Trustees of the Charity are

The Rev Dr Michael Lakey (ex-officio as The Rector for the time being of St Helen's Berrick Salome)

Nominative trustees appointed by the Parish Council of Berrick Salome

Mrs. J. Franklin (Chairman)

Mr. G. Cooper (Treasurer)

Co-opted trustees appointed by special resolution of the Trustees with special knowledge of the Parish

Mrs. S. Clayton

Mrs S. Derbyshire

Mr G. Cooper grahamcooper95@gmail.com acts as administrative officer.

9. APPOINTMENTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

No others represented. Our representative for the Mill Stream Day Centre withdrew due to lack of demand from the village.

10. PAGE

Our representative, Rob Marsh, resigned from the group last September. Nothing has changed recently, though the group is aware that the issue could well return.

11. VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – John Bird

The hall reopened for public use in August following enforced closure since March 2020 due to Covid. Permitted activities like Pilates during the closure period were compliant with government Covid restrictions in force at the time. The VHMC (Village Hall Management Committee) continued to meet during the closure period to ensure these requirements were met and routine items like insurance were attended to.

Over the winter there was an undetected infestation of mice which has now been treated by a pest control firm. Unfortunately, the dishwasher wiring was chewed beyond repair and the machine had to be replaced, generously paid for by Wallingford Bridge Club.

The resumption of face-to-face bridge at the hall since re-opening on the 1st September has been very slow for a number of reasons, not least the availability of online bridge which many players have taken up during the Covid pandemic. It is hoped that attendance will pick up, but it is possible that the club's future usage of the hall may be lower than pre-Covid levels. The club is currently on a pay-per session basis but can revert to the traditional fixed payment for days booked in advance if and when things are back to normal.

The VHMC currently has about £6000 on account and the amount owed to the bridge club under the rent-free arrangement to repay advances made for major renovations is now only about £1600. In the event that income from the bridge club does turn out to be reduced going forward (and it is hoped this will not be the case), the hall has enough income from other hirers to cover maintenance and services.

The planned Phase 3 redevelopment for which we have planning permission (ie 2 rooms, a second front entrance, better storage and improved external appearance from the road) has also been delayed until post-Covid as finance is not available from the Bridge Club or other sources at present.

The basis of the hall charity has now been changed to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which avoids any risk of personal liability on the part of the trustees, but the final step of converting the structure of ownership has been delayed due to the difficulty of opening a new bank account

during Covid. All other formalities are now completed, thanks to patient and diligent work on the part of Jonathan Parkinson.

A new VHMC will be needed before the end of this year, so would anyone who is willing to serve as a member and/or trustee please contact John Bird. The task is not onerous, the committee meets 3-4 times a year and usually facilitates the meeting with a pint in The Chequers or the HSH.

12. VILLAGE ALLOTMENTS – Alison Blakey

Alison was pleased to report that all plots are occupied for the first time in a very long time. She encourages everyone to walk through the allotments to stop and chat with those working there and admire their produce.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

John Radice raised a proposal from Susan Radice to close the Chalgrove Road to through motor traffic, with barriers at the sharp left turn and at Hare's Leap driveway. It was too narrow for 2-way traffic, suffers from repeated dumping, and could be again a peaceful walk for villagers without being forced onto the verges. He considered that we should be planning to restrict car use where possible and encourage cycling and walking. Following discussion, no decision was taken on this.

John Radice retired as Clerk to the Annual Parish Meeting. Ian Glyn offered thanks on behalf of everyone for the service John has provided since he started as Clerk in 2003.

It was agreed that the roles of clerk to both the Annual Parish Meeting and the Parish Council should be combined.