

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SHIPLAKE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN SHIPLAKE MEMORIAL HALL
ON MONDAY MAY 12TH 2014 AT 7.45 P.M.

- 1. PRESENT:** Mr T Taylor, Mr G Thomas, Mr F Maroudas, Mr R Head, Mr D Pheasant .Mr M Leonard (DC) Mr D Bartholomew (CC) late arrival .Mr G Davies, Mrs J Arnott, Mr C Smith, Mrs A Law, sent their apologies.

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Current appointments:

Mr T Taylor, welcomed all the councillors and then stood down.

The Clerk requested nominations for the post of Chairman.

On a motion proposed by Mr G Thomas and seconded by Mr R Head, Members unanimously approved Mr T Taylor as Chairman.

On a motion proposed by Mr T Taylor, Seconded by Mr D Pheasant, Members unanimously approved Mr G Thomas as Vice Chairman

The Chairman took his seat for the following elections, all of which were unanimously approved
WORKING PARTIES.

Planning: Shiplake area: Mr G Thomas. Mr T Taylor Mrs J Arnott, Mr D Pheasant

Proposed by: Mr R Head, Seconded by: Mr F Maroudas.

Grants and Finance: Chair Mr T Taylor, Mr G Davies Mr C Smith and Mr. Maroudas. Proposed by: -- Mr G Thomas, Seconded by: Mr R Head.

REPRESENTATIVES ON VARIOUS COMMITTEES.

Memorial Hall: Mr. R. B. Head. Proposed by: Mr G Thomas, Seconded by: Mr D Pheasant.

Badgers Walk Playground: Mr. C Smith. Proposed By: Mr T Taylor, Seconded by: Mr D Pheasant.

Memorial Hall Playground: Mr G Davies: Proposed by: Mr T Taylor, Seconded by: Mr R Head.

Shiplake C. E. School: Mrs A Law/Mr G Davies Proposed By: Mr T Taylor, Seconded by: Mr G Thomas.

Shiplake Station: It was noted that the garden section of the SVCC are taking care of the Station grounds

- 3. DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS & INTEREST.** Councillors were given the opportunity to declare any gifts or interest in any item on the Agenda. Mr G Thomas declared an interest in Yule Lodge and Mr D Pheasant declared an interest in Willow End planning applications

- 4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 7TH 2014,** Were approved on a motion proposed by Mr F Maroudas and seconded by Mr G Thomas **MINUTES OF THE APM HELD on 1st MAY 2014 2014,** were approved on a motion proposed by Mr G Thomas and seconded by Mr R Head

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. Item brought forward from last meeting: Policy for correspondence sent to PC Council agreed to review any correspondence and items of interest raised by members of the public at each meeting and make discretionary decision on whether to publish response on website.
2. Litter Bin @ Bus Stop Plough Lane Clerk has obtained a quotation for £106.49 plus Vat for supply only from Glasdon. Mr M Leonard requested to ascertain whether bin was supplied by District Council **ACTION : Mr M Leonard**
3. Mr R Head had produced a report with a proposal to change the Junction of Mill Lane, Reading Road and Memorial Avenue to allow pedestrian crossing . This item brought forward from last meeting. The Clerk was requested to submit the plan to OCC highways for review and comment **ACTION : Clerk**
4. Further response from Thames Water received and circulated. Council agreed for Mr G Thomas to draft further response. **ACTION : Mr G Thomas**

6. POLICE MATTERS.

Full report submitted at APM

7 O.C.C. Cllr D Bartholomew -

Mr D Bartholomew submitted his Annual Report 2013-2014 see APPENDIX 1 and his current monthly report

GENERAL OCC REPORT

1. ADDITIONAL HIGHWAYS FUNDING

The Prime Minister has launched a new nationwide highways fund worth £168 million.

Highways authorities, such as the County Council, can bid for funding by 22nd May with work completed by 31st March 2015. Oxfordshire County Council will be bidding for approximately £5.4 million; this is welcome news on top of the additional £4.7 million already allocated by the government for damage caused by the recent flooding. The Conservative Independent Alliance put an extra £1 million into the budget for highway repairs, which will help to improve the condition of the county's roads, but there is still a backlog of the required capital funding.

2. CONNECTING OXFORDSHIRE

The Leader of the Council, Ian Hudspeth, launched Connecting Oxfordshire in April. The presentation revealed the strategic transport schemes, which will be delivered by the County Council and partners such as Network Rail, between now, and 2020. It was also an opportunity to start the debate as to the future of transport in Oxfordshire post-2020. We simply cannot wait until 2020 before we start thinking about the transport system, especially with the anticipated growth of 86,000 jobs and 106,000 homes by 2031. The debate will feed into the forthcoming Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and help ensure we have a transport system that enables residents to move around the county efficiently.

For more information on Connecting Oxfordshire:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/apr/county-council-leader-outlines-his-visiontransport-connecting-oxfordshire>

To access the consultation (closes 16th May) on an initial report of LTP4:

https://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/LTP4SEA_ScopingReport/consultationHome

3. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Following the major flooding in 2007, the Pitt Review recommended that a single authority should be responsible for managing flood risk in local areas. This was endorsed by subsequent legislation, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, under which Oxfordshire County Council became the Lead Local Flood Authority for the County. The County Council will be going out for consultation on the strategy from June.

4. PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES

Almost 90 per cent of children (89.09%) due to start primary school in September have been offered a place at their first-preference school – despite a large increase in the number of applications received by the County Council. Significant efforts to increase primary school capacity in Oxfordshire have been made in recent years, with permanent expansions at many schools. Since 2009 the Council has added around 1,000 new reception places at schools across the county.

For more information: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/apr/nine-out-10-children-get-place-first-choice-primary-school>

5. EVERY SECONDARY SCHOOL TO HAVE ITS OWN NURSE FROM SEPTEMBER

Beginning in September, every secondary school in the county will have a full time school health nurse based on-site. The Council's public health directorate developed the new contract to ensure a universal school health nurse service across Oxfordshire, allowing pupils of all ages to access essential support and guidance around subjects ranging from mental wellbeing to healthy eating. Working with the head teacher, the school health nurse will put together an individual programme for the school. Topics such as mental health are expected to be high on the agenda, along with the traditional subjects of sexual health and smoking prevention.

6. OXFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CARE PROVIDERS

The County Council has initiated the development of a Care Association to represent all service providers across all client groups in Oxfordshire. This move is part of the council's market development strategy to work with the care sector to ensure the delivery of good quality services now and in future years. The Association will have a key working relationship with commissioners and

can act as a single point of contact for providers throughout the county. It will also take the lead on sharing information, innovation and best practice on quality together with advising on business development, workforce, skills and training issues.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

7. LAFARGE APPLICATION TO EXTEND CAVERSHAM QUARRY

OCC has still not been notified of the Secretary of State's intentions regarding the potential call-in of this application.

8. SPEED CAMERA NEAR PLOWDEN ARMS

Shiplake College has kindly confirmed it will meet the costs of the power supply. Subsequent to this, Anthony Kirkwood has asked the police and the camera equipment supplier for their availability for a site meeting to check the technical suitability of this site. It is hoped this will occur in the next couple of weeks. OCC has agreed to the use of camera maintenance funds to meet the site visit fee charged by the camera supplier.

Also, for information, at a meeting between OCC and the police last Friday, future support for the existing GATSO 35mm systems (the type of equipment to be re-located) was briefly discussed, and it seems likely this will continue for several years, although no definite timescales were given.

9. POTENTIAL THIRD READING BRIDGE

As the PC is aware, I am taking a proactive stance with regard to this matter and requested an invitation to the second summit in June. This was refused.

10. REPAIR OF ROAD BETWEEN PLAYHATCH ROUNDABOUT AND SONNING BRIDGE

Initial modelling suggests the preferred option of raising the road may be feasible. OCC officers have a further meeting with the EA this month to progress the design. This matter has high priority within OCC Highways.

11. SHIPLAKE PUBLIC FOOTPATHS 7 & 36 (MILL LANE)

The field officer has again written to all of the residents requesting them to check their respective sections of the path and attend to any 'maintenance' matters e.g. Removing overgrowing vegetation / misleading signs etc. He has requested the work be completed by the week beginning 26th May and he will then be attending to the waymarking of the route and noting any outstanding problems to follow up on an individual basis. The bank under the railway viaduct is still safely cordoned off with a good path to the side. This allows people to continue using the path whilst Network Rail make their necessary arrangements to undertake the full repair. At the moment there is no start date from them.

12. COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY BUDGET

I have a much smaller budget for this year (£5000 to be shared across nine parishes), but would be pleased to consider an application from the PC in the region of £500 for an appropriate project.

The Chairman expressed concern about the Experimental Traffic Order decision by OCC .Mr D Bartholomew suggested the Chairman write to Mr Mark Kemp, as per his previous months report, expressing his concerns.

ACTION: Mr T Taylor/Clerk

The Clerk was requested to chase up a response from the letter sent to Mr Rodney Rose and forward a copy of original correspondence to Mr D Bartholomew **ACTION : Clerk**

8 S.O.D.C. – Cllr. M. Leonard.

Mr M Leonard submitted his Annual Report see APPENDIX 2

9 OPEN FORUM The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.47pm to allow questions input from members of the public present .Mr James Parsons commented that he was just moving to the village and was keen to be active part of the community so had come along to see the workings of the Parish Council .The Chairman resumed the meeting at 8.50pm

10 SPECIAL REPORTS-PLANNING.

11 PLANNING

PLANNING REPORT-APRIL 2014.

The following applications and determinations were received from SODC Planning, and recommendations made regarding the former are as follows:

A) APPLICATIONS.

P14/S0483 Yule Lodge, New Rd, Lower Shiplake RG9 3LH

Applicant: Mr J. F. Parsons Type: Minor

Amendments to current proposal for demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement 5-bedroom dwelling.

Recommendation: **REFUSAL** on grounds of scale and bulk and potential loss of character building to village.

P14/S0988 Willow End, Bolney Road, Lower Shiplake RG9 3NT

Applicant: Mr & Mrs A Cartland Type: Minor.

Proposal: Demolition of existing bungalow and outbuilding and erection of chalet –style dwelling with ancillary outbuilding.

Recommendation: **NO STRONG VIEWS**, with caveat re construction traffic safety considerations given the site's proximity to level crossing and blind corner, and comment re idiosyncrasy of rear window/roofing arrangement.

P14/S1010 Woodstock, Crowsley Rd, Lower Shiplake RG9 3LE

Applicant: Mr M Lynskey Type: Other

Proposal: Children's Tree-house (retrospective)

Recommendation: **NO STRONG VIEWS**.

P14/S1114 6 Badgers Walk, Lower Shiplake RG9 3JQ

Applicant: Mr E Dinarvand Type: Other

Proposal: Single storey front extension.

Recommendation: **NO STRONG VIEWS**.

P14/S1039 Newlands, Memorial Avenue, Shiplake Cross RG9 4DN

Applicant: Mr H Gadson Type: Other

Proposal: Erection of replacement detached garage and detached garden room.

Recommendation: **NO STRONG VIEWS**.

P14/S1158 17 Plowden Way, Shiplake Cross RG9 4DG

Applicant: Mrs J Ward Type: Other

Proposal: Replacement garage.

Recommendation: **NO STRONG VIEWS**.

P14/S1160 Kingsley Gate House, Mill Road, Lower Shiplake RG9 3LX

Applicant: Mr M Broom Type: Other

Proposal: Two storey side extension with dormer to side elevation, entrance door to side elevation and new windows to side elevation.

Recommendation: **NO STRONG VIEWS**.

The recommendations were approved on a resolution proposed by Mr F Maroudas and seconded by Mr R Head

B) DETERMINATIONS.

P14/S0404 Herons Hill, Mill Lane, Lower Shiplake RG9 3ND

Proposal: Erection of 2-storey side and rear extension incorporating garage conversion into living accommodation and detached double garage and store (cp our NSV).

Planning permission granted by SODC, subject to 6 conditions.

P14/S0762 2 Brocks Way, Lower Shiplake RG9 3JG

Proposal: First storey dormer extension.

Planning permission granted by SODC, subject to 4 conditions. (cp our NSV).

P14/S0491 Waynflete, Station Road, Lower Shiplake RG9 3JS

Proposal: New vehicular access and erection of attached single storey garage, store and utility room to side/rear of existing property.

Planning permission granted by SODC, subject to 6 conditions (cp our NSV).

C) OTHER

-Objection submitted to OCC Draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy consultation document regarding extension to Sonning Eye gravel workings, on grounds of flood risk, environmental and transport impacts.

-Complaint received regarding cutting down of trees on newly sold property on Reading Road-referred to SODC Planning.

12 FINANCIAL MATTERS.

1. A copy of the financial statements for May 2014 was reviewed

The following payments were approved:

R V Hudson – salary April	9.15	330.96
R V Hudson – expenses, office allowance. April	10.15	92.64
Inland Revenue – clerk’s tax & NIC April	11.15	220.40
Replacement Litter Bin	12.15	127.79
<u>Mr M Leonard to ascertain whether SODC supply bins</u>		
Donation to Shiplake Nursery (website prize)	13.15	60.00
LCR subscription	14.15	17.00
HTS (hire of screen for APM)	15.15	30.00
Broadband	16.15	27.25
Mobile phone ins	17.15	3.99

The Accounts/Payments were approved on a resolution proposed by Mr D Pheasant and seconded by Mr T Taylor

13. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION.

14/15 HIGHWAY MATTERS.

1. Parking issues Corner shop / School Mr D Bartholomew reported that the OCC engineers said that there was no likelihood of replacing parking bays as there had been no safety issues since the installation
2. Flooding at Primary School. The Clerk was requested to ascertain the reference number when reported
3. Mr R Head reported that road signs were missing from Memorial Avenue .Clerk requested to report to SODC .ACTION : Clerk
4. Clerk was requested to order new sign for Memorial Hall to be located at Junction of Memorial Avenue and A 4155. ACTION : Clerk

15/15 MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT.

16/15 RECREATION GROUNDS/OPFA

1. Badgers Walk - Mr C Smith being absent there was no report on the condition of the equipment and general condition of the playground.
2. Memorial Hall. Mrs Law being absent there was no report on the condition of the equipment and the general condition of the playground.
3. The Clerk reported that he had had site visits with two contractors in connection with the refurbishment of Badgers Walk.

17/15 FOOTPATHS

Process to adopt footpath between New Road and Badgers Walk ongoing.

18/15 SHIPLAKE – DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES.

Projects for improving facilities within village

Phase 1

1. LASHBROOK RESERVE: nothing to report

Phase 2

2. BROADBAND UPDATE: The date provided by the OxOnline project team is now for a projected completion in April 2015, based on 2 cabinets, for complete coverage of the parish with the exception of postcode RG9 4BN. The latter requires additional funding, which is being discussed with and hoped will be provided via SODC's additional funds for the project. Importantly, the projected installation of fibre in the Wargrave exchange has been confirmed for December 2014; the project Openreach project manager for which is also responsible for Shiplake.

3. VILLAGES PLAN UPDATE: Details provided at the APM on 1st May with copies of presentation materials provided for appending to Council documentation, which will shortly be available on the website. Any updates to this will be provided on the website by the end of May. All future updates will be provided on the website.

4. VILLAGES WEBSITE: Site is working well with approx. 140 registered users, many more unregistered users accessing the site and consistent very +ve feedback. Use of the website for reporting progress on the SVP initiatives will likely increase these numbers. Use of the forum, however, has been disappointing. The website team has compiled a list of enhancements it feels would improve the site, reflecting feedback and initiatives to make use of the site even more attractive. These enhancements are categorised under: Analysis & Reporting, Content Integration, Content Management, Front Page Design, Forum, Notifications, and Security. Notifications, the Forum and Content Integration have been prioritised, with the intention of specifying those aspects which will have most impact/value and to identify development funding requirements within the next 3 months.

5. NEWSLETTER: It is envisaged an issue of the Newsletter will be produced in June to be available electronically on the website and in hard copy from various sites in the villages.

Future Phases

- 6 CYCLEPATH.TO HENLEY.
- 7 TREE PRESERVATION
- 8 FOOTPATHS TO LINK EXISTING PATHS
- 9 FOOTBRIDGE WARGRAVE
- 10 TICKET MACHINE AT STATION.
- 11 FERRY
- 12 VILLAGE FESTIVAL/STREET PARTY
- 13 NEW PLAY AREA LOWER SHIPLAKE RECREATION AREA
- 14 VILLAGE BOAT CLUB -SLIPWAY
- 15 VILLAGE GREEN-MEADOW
- 16 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SURVEY-BETTER MIX OF HOUSING---COMMUNITY PLAN
- 17 HIGHWAYS DEVELOPMENT OF SAFER CROSSING AT MEMORIAL AVENUE AND STATION ROAD/WAR MEMORIAL

19/15 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS.

20/15 S.O.D.C.

21/15 OCC

1. Work on developing the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 has been announced .,circulated by email link address .<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/local-transport-plan-ltp4>

22/15 O.A.L.C./O.R.C.C.

1. ORCC's News Bulletin April 2014 received and forwarded by email.

2. Revised ORCC's Policy Bulletin - April 2014 received and forwarded by email

23/15 MEMORIAL HALL

1. Mr Head had nothing significant to report.

24/15 CHILTERN SOCIETY/CPRE

1. CPRE newsletter April 2014 circulated by email
2. Chiltern Society email newsletter May 2014 circulated by email

25/15 DEFRA & OTHER GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENCE

26/15 TOWNLANDS & OXFORDSHIRE PCT.

1. Invitation received from Oxford University Hospitals to attend Public Open Day at NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre 19th May 2014 .Tabled

14 CORRESPONDENCE

Council discussed correspondence from Mrs A law reflecting her disappointment at not be able to continue to be a member of SVCC. Council felt strongly that there should be a reconsideration of this decision given that Councillors can continue to be a part of Council despite living outside the Parish boundary and that Binfield Heath used to be a part of Shiplake Parish

15. ITEMS OF INTEREST OR FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION.

There being no other items of interest the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.57pm

R.V.Hudson.

Clerk to the Council.

25/05/2014

APPENDIX 1

Annual Report 2013/14 to Shiplake Parish by Oxfordshire County Councillor David Bartholomew
May Election

I was pleased to be elected last May as your County Councillor. The Division I represent covers nine parishes: Binfield Heath; Bix & Assendon; Eye & Dunsden; Harpsden; Highmoor; Rotherfield Greys; Rotherfield Peppard; Shiplake; and Sonning Common. Divisions are now much larger than previously as the number of County Councillors has been considerably reduced.

Responsibilities

In addition to representing the interests of residents in the nine parishes and my place on the full Council, I accepted a place on each of the following committees: Education Scrutiny Committee; Planning & Regulation Committee; and Cabinet Advisory Group on Income Generation. I have also recently joined the Audit & Governance Committee.

Parish Council Meetings

Most of the parish councils I am responsible for meet every month and I attend most meetings. (I have attended 10 out of the last 12 Shiplake Parish Council meetings.) If ever I can't attend, I send a written report. At each of the parish council meetings I attend, I give a general report on county matters, then follow this with a report on matters specific to that parish.

Key Shiplake Parish Issues May to March

Some of the local Shiplake matters I have been involved in follow (in no particular order):

COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY BUDGET

I have been pleased to support the applications from Shiplake Parish Council for £1750 to cover Villages Plan print costs and for £1500 for website development. I have also supported an application from Wargrave & Shiplake Regatta for £500 for training punt restoration.

SHIPLAKE TO HENLEY CYCLEPATH

I met with cycling charity Sustrans and they then produced a report detailing costs for a feasibility study to consider various route options. In conjunction with the parish council and the Villages Plan group it was subsequently decided to focus on the railway option and I facilitated an introduction between the Network Rail Community Relations Team and the Shiplake Parish Council chairman, who is now leading on the project.

THAMES FARM (110 HOUSES)

Along with the parish council chairman and others I spoke against this application at the SODC meeting in October, and that the application was unanimously refused.

TWYFORD-HENLEY BRANCH LINE ELECTRIFICATION

I felt there was a low level of awareness about this issue in the village, so I arranged for Network Rail to make a presentation at the parish council meeting on 9th December. The meeting was well attended by residents. Key points are:

1. The standard height for the contact wire is 4.7 metres (5.6 metres above Level Crossings).
2. Support gantries will be spaced approximately every 55-60 metres along each side of the railway.
3. The actual design and positioning of the gantries cannot be provided at this stage.
4. Woody and overhanging vegetation within 6.6 metres of the outside running rail or up to the boundary fence (whichever is reached first) will be cut back.
5. Once cleared, the area will be maintained to avoid vegetation encroachment.

POT HOLES/ROAD CONDITIONS IN SHIPLAKE

I receive many communications on this subject! I cannot deal with individual problems unless no action has been taken after a reasonable time once they have been reported through the official channels. These are: highwayenquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk and <http://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC ORDER (ETO)

I lobbied OCC Highways on a monthly basis in order to have the ETO ratified. This was necessary to make permanent the parking restrictions introduced the previous year.

Ratification finally occurred in March. I am now supporting Shiplake Parish Council in its efforts to make further improvements to the scheme.

SPEED CAMERA NEAR PLOWDEN ARMS

Many have been baffled why this camera faces out of the village just before the limit changes from 30 to 50mph. At the beginning of the year I arranged a site meeting with the OCC Road Safety Officer, a

representative of the parish council and the Shiplake College estate manager. With the support of the college, plans are now moving forward to relocate the camera to the other side of the road so that it faces towards the village.

LAFARGE APPLICATION TO EXTEND CAVERSHAM QUARRY

This application was approved by the County Council's planning committee on 2nd December subject to the Secretary of State being given the opportunity to call it in. I wrote to the Secretary of State and urged that the decision should indeed be called in. John Howell MP has subsequently done the same. The Council has still not been notified of the Secretary of State's intentions.

MINERALS & WASTE PLAN CONSULTATION

A consultation is currently taking place that would include land on the southern boundary of Shiplake within the area of exploration for future gravel extraction. I highlighted this to the parish council and it has now put forward a detailed response.

POTENTIAL THIRD THAMES BRIDGE

Reading Borough Council and others are forcing matter up the agenda. In essence, the proposal is to build a new bridge across the Thames linking the A329 (M) to Caversham Park Village near the Playhatch roundabout.

The current OCC and SODC position (which the parish council and I wholly endorse) is that a bridge without supporting infrastructure will simply move traffic from Reading into South Oxfordshire, with the A4155 and B481 suffering in particular. Of course, new infrastructure brings its own problems. A summit between John Howell, Rob Wilson and council leaders was held on 3rd March to discuss the way forward. It was agreed officials from Reading and OCC would meet to share traffic data and consider traffic modelling needs. There will then be a second summit in June. I am taking a proactive stance on the issue and doing my best to ensure the views of affected parishes are put forward to key figures in the debate.

Key County Issues May to March

BUDGET & FINANCE

As a County Council, much time has been taken up with financial management: we have had to balance increasing demand for essential services against every increasing budget pressure. Since 2010, we have saved £127 million, with plans set to save another £74 million over the next few years. Despite this, further cuts to our budget by Central Government mean we must find another £64 million, bringing the total reduction to £265 million. The Budget dealing with these matters was passed by Full Council on February 18th.

BROADBAND

Last August, OCC announced that BT was to be the provider for a multi-million pound investment in the county's broadband network and infrastructure. Faster broadband is vital to Oxfordshire's economy and the aim of the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme is to extend the reach of superfast broadband to an additional 65,000 homes and businesses by the end of 2015.

The contract OCC agreed was based on achieving the maximum coverage for the county for the funding available. Those communities that find themselves in the 2-24Mbps areas on the map are those where it is currently most challenging to extend broadband infrastructure.

The map published on the OCC website is indicative, giving preliminary coverage. Since the contract award, BT has sent crews out across Oxfordshire to assess the situation on the ground. It may be the case that where conditions differ from contract assumptions, the coverage areas may change. Further enquiries can be made to Lisa Michelson, Broadband Community Engagement Lead at OCC. She can be reached at 018650 815

673 or lisa.michelson@oxfordshire.gov.uk. (At our local level, Parish Councillor David Pheasant has been extensively involved in the Broadband issue and knows more about the Shiplake situation than anyone!)

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The County currently offers a more generous provision of 'Home To School' transport than the law requires. The law states that where a safe walking route within the required distance does not exist, transport to the nearest school with an available place must be provided and paid for by the County. Currently, the County funds transport to any school within the catchment area. This often means that a child will be transported past a school with a place to go to another in the catchment area. By reverting

to the legal minimum, the County could ease budget pressures. A series of consultation meetings were held throughout the autumn and winter. Unsurprisingly, the meetings were attended mainly by opponents and they generated a large amount of publicity. The Council had to set this against its duty to the wider community.

The Education Scrutiny Committee met on 4th February and voted to recommend to Cabinet that free home to school transport was restricted to the nearest available school, with a phased introduction from September 2015, meaning no child currently at school will be affected. At a special meeting later that day, the Cabinet voted to accept the Education Scrutiny Committee's recommendation, and that formed part of the budget proposals. These measure represent savings potentially as high as £2M per annum.

WINTER RESILIENCE & FLOODING

In the winter months, we usually expect to be dealing with snow and ice but this year we had to deal with major flooding across the county. Staff in relevant departments across the council provided a 24-hour service during the flooding period. On Saturday 1st March, 150 councillors from all three tiers attended the first flood summit. Locality-based workshops discussed 2014 problems and gave ideas on local solutions, the results of which will be analysed and circulated. A panel from Highways, Fire, EA, Thames Water and Thames Regional Flood & Coastal Committee answered questions. OCC Subsequent to the meeting on 1st March, around 40 politicians and representatives of local and national agencies came together to consider reducing the long-term risks of flooding in Oxfordshire. There was strong support for taking the Western Conveyance, a major scheme proposed by the Environment Agency to carry flood water west of Oxford. More information on the summit and the conveyance channel: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/mar/oxfordshire-flooding-summit-commitstaking-flood-channel-project-forward>

STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT

While the County Council is not responsible for the smaller scale planning carried out by district councils, such as individual houses and developments, it does play a major role in providing the surrounding infrastructure. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment determines the growth that will happen over the next 20 years, and the required estimate has been raised in every district:

District Area	Estimated Housing per annum	Estimated Total 2011-31
Cherwell	1,142	22,840
Oxford	1,390	27,800
South Oxfordshire	750-800	15,000-16,000
Vale of White Horse	1,028	20,560
West Oxfordshire	660-685	13,200- 13,700
OXFORDSHIRE	4,970-5,045	99,400-100,900

This will then feed into the Local Development Framework with appropriate sites allocated. The County Council will be assisting in this process to ensure that they are in sustainable locations with the required infrastructure however ultimately where the sites are will be for the District Councils to determine.

South Oxfordshire District Council Annual Report

Overall report on the Work at South Oxfordshire District Council

The council continues to work in challenging times but has been able to cope without any cuts to services.

The efficiency savings made over the last five years by joint working with the Vale of White Horse District Council and shared contracts have meant that the council can once again reduce council tax by 2.5%. This being the third consecutive year means a total reduction of 7.5% which is very positive. New Homes Bonus money is received from the government for new homes that are built in the district. We received one million pounds this year and expect to receive nearly two million pounds next year. This money will be spent on projects where houses are being built to improve infrastructure.

Grants

The council continues to understand the difficulties communities and charity groups face when trying to develop their own facilities. For that reason we continue to have a one million pound community grant fund.

The council has given a £15 million loan to SOHA to enable them to accelerate their housing programme.

Planning

The council is pleased to have an approved local plan which means that large developers cannot gain planning permission on any site they feel is desirable as is happening in districts that do not have such a plan. During the last few months we have been working with other Oxfordshire districts as instructed by the government to review social housing numbers. This means that we will shortly start a process similar to the local plan to accommodate more houses and the plan will be extended from 2027 to 2031. This is not a happy position but is one where we have no choice. There are more houses actually being built than in previous years.

Neighbourhood Plans

Thame now has an agreed neighbourhood plan following their referendum and Woodcote will shortly be holding their own referendum. We have lots of similar plans in the pipeline such as Henley and Sonning Common. Smaller parishes prefer community led plans.

Planning Enforcement

We have put additional resources into this area as it is important to explain to parishes what we can and cannot do. Where there is a breach of planning there is frustration at the limit of what the council can do and the speed at which it can be done. We are required to give those in breach of planning time to make amendments where possible. However, some issues raised as enforcement are actually minor developments and are now permitted under permitted development rights. Government reforms have now made it easier for people to erect extensions.

Housing

The council continually works in partnership to keep the number of homeless people needing temporary accommodation low. We have seen a rise in this number in the past year but it remains fewer than 20 households. The cost of providing temporary accommodation can be high so it is important to keep this number down.

Waste

We continue to be one of the highest recycling councils in the country. The joint contract with the Vale of White Horse District Council works very well. Residents say “this is a good and easy system”. The floods caused some areas to have collection days changed. However, everyone did their best in exceptional circumstances.

The Big Clean Up continues to be a huge success so once again we have increased the budget by £90K with even more money for the market towns over the next two years.

Market Towns

The market towns are very important to the district and we work in partnership with town councils, business partnerships and share costs of town centre coordinators where agreed. Our economic

development team work hard across the whole district involving many small businesses. Car park charges have not increased and free parking on Saturday afternoons in some of our car parks has proved popular. Any surplus car park income is spent on upgrading toilets and car parks and not on any other services.

Leisure Centres

Leisure centres are well used by all ages. We work with the contractor to ensure that the facilities are of a standard acceptable to the user. The present provider's contract comes to an end next year so we have been going through a procurement exercise for the letting of the new contract which will be shared with the Vale of White Horse District Council giving more scope for better value.

Didcot

Didcot is the largest growth area in the district with Great Western Park building 3,000 houses, one of the largest sites in the South East. We are working with Hammersons to achieve phase two of the Orchard Centre development which is still proving difficult to secure an anchor store in the current economic climate. Didcot will benefit from Science Vale Oxford as the government has agreed millions of pounds to encourage new business growth to the science parks. There will also be government monies for infrastructure. This is a very exciting part of the district which should create spin off businesses for the whole of the area.

Cornerstone Arts Centre is well worth a visit for the wide variety of shows, exhibitions and children's sessions plus the café.

Boundary Review

The boundary review is now complete and the commission agreed the reduction in the number of councillors from 48 to 36 which will happen following the May election in 2015.

Community Governance Reviews

Community Governance Reviews have not taken place for many years and started at the end of last year. The process is looking at parish boundaries so we are suggesting some changes and where it would affect residents they are being consulted. Parish councils have already been involved and no changes will be made until we hear the views of the parish councils and residents. The review must be complete by August so will be decided at the council meeting in July.

Office Accommodation

If you have had reason to visit the council office at Crowmarsh you will have seen a lot of activity. Vale staff are moving into our accommodation giving us an annual rent of £175,000. Their Abingdon office is being rented to an Oxfordshire County Council service. This is good partnership working of local authorities.

We will continue to work hard to provide good services and value for money in partnership with others. The council website (www.southoxon.gov.uk) can give details of all our services, councillors' allowances, contractors and meetings that you can watch at home as they are webcast.