

Rotherfield Greys Annual Parish Meeting

7.30pm on Monday 16th May 2022

PRESENT:

Nick Digby (Chair), John Hill (Cllr), Robert Hadfield (Cllr), Karen Wheeler (clerk), Cllr Susan Hems (Cllr), David Bartholomew (OCC, Cllr) (part), Richard Ovey (Cllr), Jo Robb (SODC Cllr) (part). Members of the public – 3

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

2. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES FROM 8TH MARCH 2021

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate and true record and were signed by the Chair.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Chair's Annual Report 2021-22

Thanks to the current Parish Councillors who are all present, Richard Ovey, John Hill, Rob Hadfield, Susan Hems and myself, Nick Digby. Thanks also to our Parish Clerk, Karen Wheeler. Thanks are due to our elected representatives, on Oxford County Council, Cllr David Bartholomew and South Oxfordshire District Council Councillors Jo Robb and Lorraine Hillier.

Below is a brief summary of the year.

Planning applications

24 received during the year (2021/22) of which: (27 in 2020-21)

2 objections by the PC

Highlands Park

Development is now nearly complete.

As a council we continue to be very concerned about the increased levels of traffic that will be generated and will pass through our village as a result of this development.

Remembrance Sunday

The 103rd Remembrance was marked with wreath laying at the War Memorial. For Col. Peter Blaker, the village representative of the Royal British Legion for many years, this was his last wreath laying, he passed away in January.

The Village Fete

The fete successfully resumed after the break in 2020, cancelled due to the pandemic. It attracted large numbers, brought the village together and raised funds for the church and villager hall.

Finance Our finances remain on a sound footing, with a healthy balance in excess of £20,000.

Charities

The parish council made a variety of charity donations totaling over £2,000. These are made to local good causes and community groups.

Litter Picking

An informal litter pick took place in April organized by Graham and Jo Duncan.

Replacement Field Gates.

We supported financially the replacement of two styles with gates. We actually received a thank you from a local resident who uses the gate regularly and appreciated the change.

Platinum Jubilee

We are supporting the organisation of several village events to mark the Jubilee at the beginning of June.

Nick Digby

Chair – RGPC

4. OXFORDSHIRE COUNCIL COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL AND GENERAL REPORT

See separate report

5. SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL AND GENERAL REPORT

See separate report

6. HENLEY MUNICIPAL CHARITIES ANNUAL REPORT

Henley Municipal Charities comprises three small and two larger charities, which together are administered under a scheme approved by the Charity Commission in 1984.

The beneficiaries of the charities must be resident in the town of Henley or the villages of Greys and Bix.

This year, trustees have continued their regular visits to residents and, ably supported by clerk Miss Wendy Boshier, have provided financial, emotional and practical support to residents and helped guide those in the post-Covid transition. Resident wellbeing is a key priority.

Trustees and the clerk provide a listening ear and support to residents who are bereaved or suffering ill health. The Relief in Need fund has been available to residents who may be struggling with the cost of living crisis.

The day-to-day management of the charities is undertaken by its clerk working under the supervision and direction of the charities' board of trustees.

There are 13 trustees, including the Mayor of Henley and the rector of St Mary's Church. The Chair is Mr Michael Forsdyke.

Thanks to the generosity of past benefactors, the Charities are fortunate to own the freeholds to a number of commercial properties in the town as well as having income from investment funds available to ensure the maintenance of the buildings which are historic and Investment programmes for the forthcoming year include the installation of new windows on the building on Vicarage Road. This has ensured the charities remain in robust financial health.

The largest of the five charities is the Almshouse Charity, which owns 25 one- and two-bedroom homes which are available, in return for a modest maintenance contribution, to those who have limited means and savings and are unable to afford to buy or rent a home on the open market.

Maintenance of the properties (inside and out) is the responsibility of the charity and the residents are required to be capable of independent living and willing to keep their homes clean and tidy.

When a vacancy arises, it is advertised in the local paper and "feelers" are put out to local organisations who might know of people for whom an almshouse might be suitable.

The Church Charity has commercial property investments from which the income is applied in part towards the upkeep of St Mary's Church and in part towards the maintenance of the almshouses.

The small Education Charity makes its investment income available for grants to the local primary schools and small grants to individuals of limited means who need help with their education, such as funding the purchase of books. A grant was awarded to the Over60s Club and Relief in Need Grants given to residents in the area of benefit who apply and are eligible.

The Bridge Charity uses its income to support the needs of the residents of the almshouses, while the Relief in Need Charity has a remit to help those in the wider community and does so by making grants available for the Mayor's Christmas party and Henley Lions Club's Christmas parcel scheme.

This year, the Charities welcomed two new residents. The residents were chosen from a number of applications with an interview committee responsible for ensuring chosen applicants meet the criteria. A further vacancy has arisen and will be advertised shortly.

Residents of Bix and of Rotherfield Greys are warmly reminded that they reside within the geographical area of benefit and so are eligible to apply to live in one of the almshouses and can also apply for Relief in Need or Education Charity funds. Please spread the word to your residents – this is a local charity with the funds to make a positive difference to local people and provides real quality of life to eligible residents.

7. ST. NICOLAS CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT

Organ rebuild with hopes for it to be ready for the Jubilee celebrations
Church Charity which also give towards education continues

8. THE GREYS WOMEN'S INSTITUTE ANNUAL REPORT

Our Virtual Annual Meeting took place on 17th March 2021 when new Committee members, Ina Chantry, Merryl Roberts, Jennifer Smith and Jackie Walker were elected and Jackie was confirmed as the members' choice for President.

In June, due to changed Covid regulations, some members met for lunch at Swiss Farm, instead of congregating in Greys Village Hall. July saw us back in our Hall at last for a very belated Centenary celebration tea provided by Time for Tea. And in August we took a boat trip with the Rivertime Boat Trust on the Thames, which Greys WI last did in 1932.

Our September meeting was a virtual demonstration of how the first Harry Potter films were made, to which we invited years 5 and 6 from Peppard Primary School. Thanks to the technical expertise of Ina and her husband and courtesy of Julie Green, the Education and Learning Manager of Warner Bros Studio, this was a great success. Sadly, in September we had to report the loss of three members; Shirley Bates, Josee Leadley and Joy Williams.

October saw us learning about straw craft which is critically endangered. Members were able to make their own straw hearts; an exercise enjoyed by all with much chatter and laughter.

'Don't panic, Mr Mainwaring' was the title of our November meeting when we welcomed back Darren Curtis and his wife, Tracy, to explain how we could overcome feelings of panic and inadequacy.

A week after our November meeting, some members met for a delicious Christmas lunch at Henley Golf Club.

For our Christmas party in December, following a Christmas Trivia quiz, we joined Jane and Phyl in their programme of traditional Christmas carols. This was followed by a scrumptious Christmas tea provided by members and a bumper raffle raising £76. Donations of toiletries, toys and household goods were collected for the Afghan Refugees in the Henley area and our

Knit & Natter group has been busy making bonding bears and garments for premature babies in the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Planning for our 2022/3 programme is in hand.

Jennifer Smith, Greys WI Secretary

9. VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL REPORT

Having been closed in accordance with Covid regulations for virtually eighteen months, the Hall started to open up again in July 2021.

Initially, the take-up of regular classes and hirings was slow, but things are now picking up and getting back to pre-Covid levels. Although one or two classes seem to have been lost for good, the popularity of the Hall for meetings and parties appears to be unaffected.

The fabric of the building is in good shape and both the cleanliness and outside appearance have been improved enormously by our new Caretakers.

In December 2021, Mary and Alex Angell took over from the Catlins and are now living happily at Nightingales (across the road from the Hall) with their two small children Rose and Ben.

We are indeed incredibly fortunate that due to the foresight of Sir Felix Brunner who bought Nightingales for the sole use of the Hall's Caretakers, that we are able to offer our Caretakers accommodation.

We were particularly grateful to receive half the proceeds of the Village Fête held in September at Greys Court, which together with a £10,000 grant from the Government at the beginning of the pandemic, has kept our financial position healthy during the past year.

Rae Ward – Chairman.

May 2022.

10. WAR MEMORIAL ANNUAL REPORT

Thanks to Mr Green for providing maintenance to the War Memorial area. Further restorative work would be of benefit. On agenda for Annual Parish Council Meeting.

11. PARISH ROADS ANNUAL REPORT

Tickets regularly raised on Fix my Street. Predominantly flooding, potholes and foliage. Work to create a village footpath remain on hold awaiting resources from OCC.

12. CHILTERN SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT

See separate report

13. CRICKET CLUB ANNUAL REPORT

CRICKET CLUB ANNUAL REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL 2022

In spite of some on-going Covid restrictions we managed to play a full season of cricket in 2021. The playing record was good. Of the 20 matches played, 9 were won, 6 drawn and 5 lost. We were able to re-introduce the cricket tea in the later part of the season and we hope this will be a regular feature again this year. In mid-season we made our regular fixture against Stonor into the inaugural contest for the Cusden Cup, which will now become an annual event in memory of Mick Cusden, our long-serving player, Chairman and mentor. Sadly the year was marked by more tragedy when his wife, Di, died in December. A bench in memory has been donated by

the families . It will be kept in the pavilion and brought out on match days and placed in the spot where Di used to sit enjoying the game.

Financially, we were assisted during the Covid period by a grant from the local council so we remain in a relatively sound position. We are as always indebted to our Vice Presidents who support us annually and would like to thank those who live in the parish for their on-going support. New VPs are always most welcome! Being financially sound enables us to maintain the playing area to a high standard and to ensure that the Green looks at its best during the Summer months. Sadly we lost a magnificent chestnut tree during the Winter storms.

Last season we supported the work of the MCC Hub, a charitable branch of the organisation aimed at providing opportunities for less-advantaged young people, by staging some matches on the Green and we will do so again this year. Also this season, for the first time, we will host some Oxfordshire Under 11 Girls county fixtures. Details will be published in the Contact magazine and I am also attaching our fixture card to this report

Finally, next year, 2023, will mark the 150th anniversary of the first recorded cricket match on the Green and we are planning some activities to mark that special event

Peter Dawkins – Chairman

N.B Fixtures 2022 information received and to be published on Parish website.

14. Open forum – all electors are welcome to raise any issue relating to local government with reference to the Parish of Rotherfield Greys

The Fete returning this year was particularly positive for the Parish and raised funds again as in previous years. money. Planning is underway for the fete to be held on the 1st Sunday of September 2022

Meeting closed 8.25pm