

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

Clerk - Mrs. Jane Pryce, 56 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6PP  
Tel: 01189 475915 Email: parishclerk@bixandassendon.org.uk

**The minutes of the Bix & Assendon Annual Parish meeting and the Parish Council meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 7.30pm via Zoom**

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**1/21 Confirmation of the minutes on the 2nd March 2020**

The minutes of last year's parish meeting were signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

**2/21 Chairman's Annual Report**

Good evening.

I took over the role of Chair of Bix and Assendon Parish Council in May 2020 just as we started to realise the impact Covid 19 was going to have on our lives.

The first change was holding parish council meetings via zoom, taking a bit of time and patience to get used to and requiring a degree of organisation from councillors and residents, no more deciding at 7.25pm that attendance at a PC meeting on a Monday night was just what you wanted. Invitations to access the meeting had to be sent out in advance and this situation continues, probably until the middle of this year.

During the year the three vacancies on the council were filled and it is with real pleasure that we can say that we have representation from all villages and that there are long term residents, new residents, parents, full time workers as well as retirees representing our parish.

The councillors have their own skills and interests which they are bringing to the meetings and this is widening the scope of what can and might be achieved in the next few years.

At the beginning of the year the purchase of two VAS machines had been put on hold while we filled the councillor vacancies. After a vote it was agreed to purchase them and they were installed in the late autumn. The one at Bix has clear sight lines and appears to have an impact on traffic coming from Nettlebed, if the number of brake lights I see going on are an indicator. I still have reservations about the location of the one at the northern end of Middle Assendon as it looks as if it might be obscured by plant growth quite quickly and the sight line does not appear to be long as it could have been if it was located in a slightly different position. OCC Highways have told us that they have the right to cut the hedges back, however, I cannot see that happening regularly enough and it might be down to the farmer.

The traffic calming working group had been set up the previous year and a socially distanced meeting was held on the common in the middle of the summer. A number of ideas were put together and sent to OCC asking if they were allowed or possible. We have also asked for a visit by OCC to discuss possible strategies. To date we have heard nothing. At the last meeting Sophie kindly agreed to take charge of this remit. If there are any residents who are interested in joining this group please contact Sophie, myself or Jane our clerk, a BAG will go out after this meeting.

BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021

Speeding continues to be a problem for all three villages, although the causes are slightly different.

The old tip is owned by SODC. In recent months SODC has suggested we might like to purchase this for a nominal sum. While at first this might seem to be a real opportunity as a parish council, we would be remiss if we did not have this checked out thoroughly in terms of our liabilities and risks and potential costs in terms of insurance. Currently we do not know enough information to make a decision and we need to proceed with the phrase 'what is our liability and risk' at every stage.

Lockdown has also brought about an increase in general litter because of the increased numbers of walkers and cyclists and although we seem to have escaped so far, fly tipping has taken place at Maidensgrove and on the border of Middle Assendon and Fawley. This problem is unlikely to go away in the short term and I would ask everybody to keep their eyes open for anything untoward.

Planning applications have continued to be assessed and commented on by councillors led by Bill. Bill's experience is invaluable and Sophie is also providing knowledgeable advice. Bill will be providing a more detailed report but I would like to thank him and all the councillors who have made comments about planning applications. We do not have to agree with each other but we do come to a consensus and work well as a team.

The finances of the parish council are secure and we have some reserves, which, while a portion was spent last year on the VAS machines. Those reserves will be used for other projects still to be decided.

I would like to thank the councillors and Jane for their work in this last year, it has not been an easy year. Jane provides us with administration support, the benefit of knowledge built up over the years working as a parish clerk for a number of parishes and good contacts within the various organisations we have to deal with. Also thanks to Lisbeth Theisen for remaining in the position of chairman till the May 2020 meeting to ensure a quorate of councillors.

I for one, have missed the face-to-face meetings, more than I thought, there is no picking up on body language or nuances of expression, we are all just heads and shoulders and have a horrible tendency to move around the screen. Once face to face meetings are allowed again, I look forward to seeing more residents, all of which will help to make the parish council meeting a place where residents' opinions can be heard, listened to and responded to.

### **3/21 Annual OCC Report**

I am now coming to the end of my second term as your County Councillor but will be standing for re-election in May. Over the last eight years I have attended almost every single parish council meeting. For each meeting, I supply a written report in advance about general OCC matters, then follow this up at the meeting itself with a verbal report about local items. This local report is then also supplied in writing after the meeting.

Local matters I have been engaged on over the last year include:

- Pot holes (of course!)
- Flooding and drains
- Traffic calming (including Councillor Priority Fund contributions)

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

- Restoration proposals for the Lower Assendon to Bix cycle path (more later)
- Vegetation clearing
- Deer incidents
- Reading Transport Strategy (including Third Reading Bridge)
- Henley HGV ban proposals

I have also assisted residents directly on an individual basis.

Although we have now been constrained to virtual meetings for nearly a year, I try to maintain as close a relationship with the parish council and residents as possible.

Thanks were given to David for £1,000 Highways grant for the 2 VAS signs.

#### **4/21 Annual SODC Report**

##### **Covid-19**

The Covid-19 crisis has dominated the Council's operations over the past 12 months with up to 40% of council officers redeployed to Covid response at any one time. Officers have distributed business grants, set up a Community Hub to support those in financial need and have also been responsible for establishing the asymptomatic testing centre at the Beacon in Wantage.

Council has successfully adapted to home-working and remote meetings for all Committees and workstreams. All Council functions have been maintained with officers working from home. Many officers face the dual challenge of full-time work with home-schooling for children and it is to their credit that the Council has continued to operate so successfully. The Economic Development team along with officers from Finance took on the giant task of managing government grants. To date, 11 schemes have paid out just short of £6million to business. Our businesses, to a large extent small and medium sized, with over half based outside towns, will be key to the recovery, and we will continue to do all we can to support them through this in the coming year. We continue to encourage businesses to sign up to updates from Business Support: [www.svbs.co.uk](http://www.svbs.co.uk) for the latest.

Other challenges have come from the closure of the District's leisure centres. Staff have been working closely with GLL to ensure the continued operation of our leisure facilities for residents.

##### **Corporate Plan**

The Council drafted and unveiled its new Corporate Plan, following a hugely successful consultation exercise which attracted almost 1000 individual responses. The Corporate Plan will guide council policy, projects and spending and defines the Council's priorities for the next four years. For the first time ever, the budget will reflect the Corporate Plan priorities as endorsed by our residents.

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/SODC-Corporate-Plan-2020.pdf>

The key themes of the Corporate Plan are:

1. Protect and restore our natural world;
2. Openness and accountability;
3. Action on the climate emergency;
4. Improved economic and community wellbeing;

**BIX AND ASSENDON**  
**ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

5. Homes and infrastructure that meet local needs;
6. Investment that rebuilds our financial viability.

### **New Offices**

One project that is gathering pace is the new joint South and Vale offices at Didcot. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for flexible, sustainable, value-for-money offices that are accessible by public transport and so, it was decided to locate SODC's new hub at the Didcot Gateway, on the border of the two Districts.

The building will be of the highest environmental standards and may include space for other tenants such as Housing Associations, enabling a better return on investment (subject to viability assessments).

The move out of Milton Park will enable significant savings on rent and utilities and it is hoped we will be in the new premises in 2024.

### **Housing and Homelessness**

SODC's new Housing and Homelessness strategy was published and we are proud that SODC was the first Council in Oxfordshire to adopt the Housing First approach. Working with Aspire Oxfordshire and SOHA Housing, SODC has successfully placed 12 homeless people into permanent accommodation, enabling them to have a stable home while they get the mental health, addiction and other support they need to get their lives on track. We are delighted the Housing First scheme has now been rolled out across Oxfordshire.

### **Social Housing**

SODC is establishing a delivery vehicle to provide affordable and social housing to meet the District's urgent need for affordable, sustainable homes for our key workers. We have ringfenced more than £4m of developer funds to launch the project.

### **Planning**

Significant changes to the planning regime are being proposed by government and last year, SODC filed a robust response to the "Planning for the Future" white paper and the associated metrics for calculating housing need. We await the results of the consultation but have concerns that moves to "cut red tape" through the expansion of permitted development rights and the creation of planning "zones" could actually lead to a loss of local accountability and decision-making, increased centralisation and poor planning outcomes.

### **Changes to Delegated Powers**

The growing backlog of matters to be heard by the Planning Committee and the challenges of adapting to online meetings at the start of the Covid pandemic led to a change to the call-in procedures for minor applications. This meant that where a Parish Council objects to a minor (9 houses or fewer) application, there is no automatic right of call-in to Committee. Instead, the Ward member must call the matter in citing planning reasons. The new scheme of delegation is due to be reconsidered by Council and will automatically lapse on 31 July if Council does not vote to renew them.

### **Local Plan 2035**

After six years and much controversy, the Local Plan 2035 was adopted by Council in December. This followed the intervention of the Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick, in 2019,

after Cabinet recommended withdrawal of the Plan from inspection and an order by Mr Jenrick to see the plan through inspection and adoption.

Following the first ever virtual inspection of a local plan, the independent inspector found the Plan sound, subject to main modifications including the addition of a policy on low-carbon housing and a policy on consultation with communities.

The Council adopted the Plan with an outright majority of 19-18.

The Plan is now the Local Plan for the District and officers are working with developers to take applications through the system and ensure we retain our five-year Housing Land Supply.

The Council is now looking to a potential joint Local Plan with the Vale with a view to sharing the costs of gathering evidence, drafting, inspection and adoption of the Local Plan and achieving uniformity across the two districts in terms of environmental and sustainability measures and putting climate, nature and affordability at the heart of planning across our two Districts. A new Plan would also enable the potential creation of new Green Belt to compensate for the loss of Green Belt in the ELP2035.

### **Enforcement**

The Council has recruited an additional full-time staff member to the enforcement team alongside two new consultants to help build a more robust and responsive enforcement function at the Council.

### **Oxford to Cambridge Arc and Expressway**

The government has published plans to turn the Oxford-Cambridge Arc into a world-leader in “growth and sustainability.”

SODC’s Leader, Cllr Sue Cooper, greeted the announced plans thus:

“Finally, there is some recognition of the pressures on local infrastructure and community wellbeing from the Government. South Oxfordshire is only a small part of this large Arc stretching across to Cambridge, but we can play an important role in setting the right direction for this new body and ensuring it is accountable to elected councillors and local residents, not just the Government.

The knowledge economy, including local successes such as the Covid vaccine development, can be a strong part of the rebuilding the UK economy, but this should be by working with other areas of the UK, not by building excessive numbers houses around and between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge.

We must also do what we can to ensure that Arc projects protect and enhance our natural environment and so we welcome the continued opportunity to work with the government and our partners to explore how we can best achieve this. I also intend to use our collective local influence to push for stronger environmental planning policies and investment in green technology.

South Oxfordshire District Council policy remains against the building of an Expressway from Oxford to Cambridge and we will continue to watch the Arc very closely to ensure it does not act as a means of un-pausing this road building project.”

**BIX AND ASSENDON**  
**ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

**Budget**

The last financial year saw the Council's finances adversely affected by loss of income (for example, from car parks) in addition to increased costs arising from the pandemic. Against this backdrop, it is pleasing that the Council has avoided service reductions in its 2021/2022 budget.

The Council continues to face challenges in achieving a balanced budget over the medium term, as a result of long-term low Council Tax. However, we have made a range of decisions to shore up revenue and reduce costs including increasing fees and charges (for example, planning pre-app fees, carpark charges), continuing to extract ourselves from the Capita 5Cs contract, taking the decision to locate the Council's new offices in Didcot (which will save significant rental and other costs in the long-term) and properly stewarding our property portfolio (we have completed a full survey of all Council-owned property - no such survey had been done before) as well as staffing for climate change, project and programme implementation.

Council Tax will increase by the maximum allowable without a referendum - £5 on a Band D property. This takes SODC's portion of Council Tax from £126 to £131 annually on a Band D, one of the lowest levels nationally and some £68 below the average for an English Shire District.

The Council is progressing the delivery of its corporate plan objectives as far as possible including the development of a new delivery vehicle to enable the Council to build its own low-carbon affordable and social housing.

We need a proper, long-term financial framework from government. Uncertainty makes future financial planning extremely difficult. However, longer term, insourcing of services and investing to save, have set us up well for the future.

**New Appointments: Cycling Champion, Thames Champion and Tree Champions**

The Council has made a number of new appointments in line with its Corporate Plan priorities to protect and restore the natural world and protect and enhance the River Thames and its setting.

Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye was appointed South Oxfordshire's Cycling Champion.

Cllr Jo Robb was appointed River Thames Champion in June 2020. The Thames Champion is responsible for improving access to and promoting sustainable use of the river and for working with councillors, Thames Water, the Environment Agency and other groups to improve the cleanliness and biodiversity of the Thames and its tributaries in South Oxfordshire.

Jo set up the Thames Valley Rivers Network, a collective of more than a dozen parish, town, district, county and borough Councillors from along the length of the river to call with a united voice for an end to sewage pollution and improved access to the river. She has been working towards obtaining bathing quality water status for a stretch of the river in Wallingford as well as working with the Rivers Trust to water quality monitoring projects. A community river clean-up day is also planned for later in the year (Covid permitting) alongside a range of projects to improve access to the river for all.

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

Last month, in recognition of the importance of trees to our District, Council appointed two new “Tree Champions.” Cllr Peter Dragonetti will represent trees and ancient woodlands in the East of the District while Cllr Ian Snowdon will work toward the protection of trees in the West of the District. Both Tree Champions will work with officers on the drafting of a new tree planting policy and policies to ensure the protection of trees and ensuring that new planting projects see the right trees planted in the right places.

**5/21 COMET bus Annual Report**

Claire Harwood managed to put on extra trips at the end of last year to use up the credit we had accumulated on trips that were cancelled during the lockdowns.

Claire and I are hopeful that as many of our users will now have been given their first dose of vaccination, we will soon be able to start the service again. We are however, dependant of the go-ahead from Comet. We will aim to use the funding you’ll be providing to run extra trips (credit from the start of 2021) to ensure all our users have an opportunity to book due to the limited number of passengers allowed on each run.

As usual, bookings to be made, in advance with Claire Harwood (via email above or phone: 01491 640805)

We have not heard if the HandyBus service will start again. Therefore, Claire will manage the Comet Bus bookings fairly to allow regular users and new users an opportunity to visit the shops to do their own shopping.

**6/21 Bix & Assendon Grapevine (BAG) and website Annual Report**

**Chris Chantry**

The website continues to be up and running and is running smoothly. Nothing to report and no major issues. The website is hosted by a company called Doteasy. It is designed to be simple and it maintains the council’s legal requirements for record keeping, public disclosure and accountability with such documents as minutes, etc. It has been upgraded with a SSL certificate to indicate the site is secure. As there are no sales, credit card data or comprises people’s data, search engines like to show that the site is secure. This was a low-cost excise.

The Grapevine email service (BAG) has only one change this year. Thanks to Alix Horne - Amax Designs for use of her picture of the village hall which is used as a logo for BAG emails, for allowing this at no charge. We currently have 291 registered email addresses. This is the main communication channel for the parish council to the residents. Generally, 1 or 2 new people join up per month and 1-2 leave every 3-4 months (leaving the area for example). It has an excellent open rate at 44% but for more interesting subjects such as planning raises the open rate to 65%. 78 BAGs have been sent out this year (2020/21).

With the agreement of the parish council, each councillor and the clerk now have a dedicated work email address.

It is noted that there is now a couple of private social media accounts that have popped up over the last couple years. Some on Facebook and Whatsapp. The parish council might like to consider setting up of a Facebook page? This would allow more PR for community events.

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

Q. There was a question about the number of residents or houses would give an indication of use of BAG as a percentage.

A. Number of houses was 262 and the number of residents was about 490.

**7/21 Village Hall Annual Report  
Jackie Walker**

We went into lockdown at the end of March and as a result we did not have our meeting in May, as we were not permitted to meet in person and had not moved into a position to hold a meeting online.

July - Stephanie, Lisbeth, Tim and I (Jackie) held a socially distanced extraordinary meeting on the common at the hall, to discuss potential of support for the Montessori school if, if required

Rental payments had been brought back into balance · It was decided that, in the current circumstances, it was not viable to hire the hall to anyone other than the school.

Lisbeth has stepped down as chair of the parish council and is no longer the parish council representative. We've been very happy to welcome Ina as the new rep. for the parish council and also greatly appreciate that she was able to set up Zoom to enable our first online meeting in November.

Calvin Frankum resigned as treasurer and Lisbeth took over the position with the agreement of the committee.

**8/21 Henley Town Council Liaison Annual Report  
Jackie Walker**

There is not much to report. There was a meeting of the Transport Strategy Group.

I would like to hear of the outcome of the meeting between the chair, clerk and David Bartholomew about the cycle path and I can report back to the TS Group.

There is a county wide strategy being developed by the County Council for charging of electric vehicles. This is to create a standardised approach in three levels. The first is to put charging points in car parks and then looking at on street parking and then off street. I shall report back.

**9/21 Henley Municipal Charities 2020/21  
Richard Tomlin**

Henley Municipal Charities 2020-2021

Henley Municipal Charities (HMC) comprises the following individual charities, The Almshouse Charity, The Relief in Need Charity, The Educational Charity, The Bridge Charity and the Church Charity which are managed on a unified basis. The first three charities offer assistance to people living in the areas of benefit by way of almshouses and grant allocations

The management of the HMC is the responsibility of the trustees, who are 13 in number and include 2 Ex-officio trustees (the Mayor of Henley on Thames and the Rector of St Mary the

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

Virgin Church, Henley on Thames) 3 Nominative trustees one from each of the Parish Councils of Bix and Assendon and Rotherfield Greys and from the Town Council of Henley on Thames, and 8 Co-opted trustees.

The day to day running of the HMC is carried out by the clerk who liaises with the chairman, treasurer and committees of trustees who oversee particular areas of activity i.e., grant applications from educational establishments, planning issues, property development. In order to comply with government Covid19 restrictions monthly meetings of trustees were carried out via ZOOM. Monthly contact with almshouse residents were done via telephone, visits only being made when urgent property maintenance work was required.

Commercial rents are received from 8 properties in Henley on Thames and the income is applied to meet the objectives of each of the named charities.

The areas of benefit for the HMC are the parishes of Bix, Rotherfield Greys and the Town of Henley on Thames

### **Almshouses**

The HMC is responsible for the administration of 23 almshouses (11 for double occupancy and 12 single) which are situated in Church Avenue, Western Close and Vicarage Road, Henley on Thames. All properties have residents in place. Currently there are 30 residents. 8 single males, 8 single females and 7 couples. Regular property maintenance of the almshouses and the commercial properties has been the major activities this year

### **Grants**

Grants were made to Henley College, Gillots School and Nomad.as well as Christmas grants to alms house residents The Church Charity gave its annual grant for the update and repairs to the Church Wardens of St Mary the Virgin Church.

Dr Richard Tomlins    March 2021

## **10/21 Church and Community Hub**

### **The church (St. James)**

#### **Overview**

Excluding one off items relating to the Community Hub project and the ruin, the P.C.C. broke even in 2019.

This was in line with our intentions. In this Covid-19 year the P.C.C. continued to pay the Parish Share to the Oxford Diocese to the best of its ability. Unfortunately, the absence of summer fund raising events resulted in a large shortfall in payments. £ 16,942 was set by the Diocese. £ 13,000 was paid in 2019. But in 2020 only £ 10,500 was paid. (£ 10,669 gross, less a £ 169 refund received via the Deanery). The amount set by the Diocese in 2021 remains £ 16,942.

The P.C.C. has unrestricted reserves of approximately £ 5,000.

The 2020 PCC income has suffered from the lack of its main fund-raising event, the summer fete. (Hopefully 19th June 2021 !!!). Also, the lack of regular services since March has affected collections.

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

A popular Zoom service takes place on Sundays, often attracting 60+ people from our group of five Churches. Also, we had several outdoor services at the ruined Church in the summer.

### **Incomes**

Covenanted income held up well. It is largely received from Church members by standing order. There are now fourteen regular donors with at least one more person joining shortly. The envelope scheme will be discontinued for 2021, although pew envelopes will remain for ad hoc donors. Cash collections were much lower than 2020 with regular in-Church services stopping on 15th March.

Fund raising was limited to successful plant sales in May. (Friends of Bix held an Auction of Promises for the Community Hub in March, raising almost £ 5,000). However, the main fund raiser, a summer fete, was not possible due to the Covid-19 situation.

### **Expenditures**

See above concerning the Parish Share paid to the Diocese.

The Parish Contribution paid to the Joint Benefice increased by almost 20%. This was to cover a shortfall arising from "The Link" magazine (with its advertising revenue) ceasing publication, with the J.P.C.C. needing to fund the cost of the Administrator as well as the Priest In Charge's expenses.

Due to the reduction in Church activity this year, along with the PIC waiving the refund of his expenses when lockdown started, the J.P.C.C. had a substantial surplus in 2019. (The Administrator was also "furloughed" on reduced salary). In 2021, rather than refund this to the Churches, the J.P.C.C. will be reducing the Parish Contribution down to 2019 levels. (The J.P.C.C. needs to retain funds for items such as photocopier replacement. Also, without "The Link", the J.P.C.C. is expecting to run at a deficit in a full "normal" year.

Lighting and Heating remained at 2019 levels, only because the Direct Debit to SSE was left at £ 50 / month.

The "Synod and Sundry" line is increased by £ 150 due to an energy audit fee.

The Fabric expenditure relates to payments for Community Hub drawings; a Community Hub website and the cost of digging an exploratory trench in the Churchyard.

Ruined Church expenditure included the normal cost of insurance, plus the cost of servicing a mower used by volunteers to cut the grass there.

### **Reserves**

The Current Account Balance on 31st December was £ 9,975.05. (£ 9,236.05 after "payments in progress" at year end). Of this £ 4,476.31 is restricted.

The Gold Account Balance was £ 21,424.91. Within this total £ 4,926.95 is ring fenced for the maintenance of the Ruined Church in agreement with the HLF. The balance, over a number of years was donated for fabric related expenditure and is therefore restricted to those purposes.

**Kevin Duthie FCMA**  
**1st January 2021**

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

### **The Community Hub**

As the 2020 income exceeds £ 10,000, the Friend of Bix Church's annual return needs to include a schedule answering questions set by the Charity Commission.

And as the 2020 income exceeds £ 25,000 the Friend of Bix Church's annual return is required to include formal accounts, subject to independent examination. (This is already the case, using the same auditor as Bix P.C.C.).

### **2020 Highlights**

Fund raising towards the "Community Hub" at Bix Church continues.

A donation of £ 50,000 was received from a Charitable Trust. It is hoped that a similar donation will be received in 2021.

An auction of Promises raised £ 4,997 in March, just before the Covid-19 lock down. £ 300 of this had to be subsequently returned to a donor. (The prize was half the cost of a cottage hire rather than the full amount).

A donation of £ 2,000 was received from a donor. Other fund raisers included a Plant Sale (in addition to the one by the P.C.C.) and sales of apples.

These donations will be used to contribute towards the cost of the Bix Community Hub - an extension and modification of the Church to include a kitchen; a toilet; multi use community space and a heating upgrade.

There were no significant expenditures in 2020.

The Good Exchange charge was for a fund-raising web site, where, unfortunately, no funds were raised other than the "pilot" donations made by P.C.C. members.

### **Closing Balances**

On 31st December the Friends of Bix Church account balances at CAF bank were: -

Gold Account	£87,458.73
Cash Account	£4,836.62

Kevin Duthie FCMA  
3rd January 2021  
Personal data removed  
11th February 2021

### **11/21 Bix Tank and nature reserve**

The Bix Tank is owned by The Nettlebed Estate. There is a big bore hole and pump on the land. There is an information board up by it where you can read all about it. A few of us volunteer to keep it clean and tidy and cut back. We tend to do a round robin to a few of us in the lane and Bix and Assendon and once or twice a year, we just all do a 'cleaning the tank' day when we all come with our spades, rakes, cutters and wheelbarrows and tidy it up all around and dredge the tank if necessary. Anyone is always welcome to come and help - the more the merrier. We normally do one session in mid-October on a Saturday and sometimes one in the Spring if it has got a bit untidy.

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

[http://www.oxfordshirevillages.co.uk/southoxonvillages/bix\\_and\\_the\\_assendons.html](http://www.oxfordshirevillages.co.uk/southoxonvillages/bix_and_the_assendons.html)

**12/21 Bix Common Field Holders**

Bix Common Field is a freehold owned in common and cared for by nine properties in the area of Bix and Assendon which used to abut the land, which is historical (and ‘owned in common’ is how that is derived). The term is ‘Owned in Common’ hence Bix Common Field. Bix Hall, Bix Manor (us), Greenmarsh Farm, Benwells Farm, The Old Rectory, Bottom House, Valley Farm, Upper Assendon Farm, Stonor and Home Farm in Middle Assendon are the properties that own it in common and the owners of these properties are known as Commonfield Holders. So, it is private land, not common land. The land is one of the very few pieces of land in the country that is still owned in that way. The Common Field Holders let the Common Field to a local farmer to take the hay crop and that farmer maintains that hay crop by spraying it and harvesting it during the year. I think there may be a definition and information about The Common field on the Bix and Assendon website, or at least there used to be. Indeed, they allow walkers on there and horse riders and all should follow the paths. Any village events that have ever taken place on the Common field have been with the permission of The Common field Holders. The overriding view has always been to protect the land as a piece of greenspace for the village to enjoy.

**Louise Hall**

**Bix Manor**

Gary Hall has provided a page of Commonfield History and this was requested to be put on the website. The clerk would talk to Chris Chantry about that.

**13/21 Planning Annual Report**

**Cllr. William Murdoch**

Only 20 applications had been received. The parish council had only one objection. The SODC had granted 15 and the other 5 are still under consideration.

**14/21 Police Matters**

**Cllr. Ina Chantry**

**Police and Crime Report for Bix and Assendon Parish Council**

**March 2021**

As usual Bix and Assendon has been a safe place to live but has also seen some crime. In the last year there has been:

- 1 ASB
- 1 Vehicle
- 2 Criminal Damage & Assault
- 5 Other theft
- 1 Bike theft
- 1 Public order

While these statistics do not give us a great deal of information, they do show that there have been no crimes where an individual has been seriously physically hurt, assaulted or injured. For all three villages the major concern has been and is speeding. In the summer the SID device was used a couple of times in Middle Assendon. It demonstrated that there are people who speed and that often a high vis jacket was enough to make them slow down long before they even caught sight of the SID machine.

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

We know that the police send their mobile speed cameras to Bix and Middle Assendon on a regular basis, however, that regularity is not as often as we would like and Lower Assendon would benefit from some police visibility. A FOIA request was put in to find out more details, in particular if the camera was ever set up at the weekends to catch the motorbikes which cause a lot of issues in Bix and Lower Assendon, however their response said they could not provide that information without a cost.

PCSO Matthew Aldridge should be starting to work with us in the near future and he is very interested in reducing rural crime including speeding and irresponsible driving. We look forward to building a positive and productive relationship with him.

Question about a recent burglary and a bit of drug dealing and could a greater police presence be possible?

A. There is a new PCSO who will be coming to a parish council meeting in the future. Although the drug dealing maybe not be residents, this needs to be monitored as requested via BAG.

### **15/21 Footpaths Annual Report**

The Path Maintenance Volunteers Group have put in 83.8 hours of work in the parish this past year, mostly renewing gates.

Path 4, running from the Nettlebed Road to path 7 and on to Valley Farm at Bix Bottom has had a number of rotten posts, gate and fencing replaced.

Path 24 by the cemetery had a large tree removed and the route of the path restored.

At times the path through the dairy unit has been blocked off by an electric fence to enable cattle movement. Notices have now been attached to gates explaining how to remove and replace the fence safely.

Path representatives' duties have included basic maintenance such as renewing broken discs, refreshing arrows on trees, trimming vegetation and reporting problems, all of which have been kept up to date, and all paths checked during the past year.

**Jane Aitken**

### **Bix and Assendon path representative for the Chiltern Society**

The Chiltern Society has been operating a Donate-a-Gate scheme - whereby people could donate a gate in memory of a family member or friend - for many years, but only in Buckinghamshire.

Now a similar scheme is available in Oxfordshire. Typically, such gates will replace stiles, and thus provide easier access to footpaths for walkers of all capabilities. Anyone interested in the possibility of donating a gate should simply visit the Chiltern Society website and click on the link to Donate-a-Gate: we will then be in touch with you to discuss how we can make it happen.

Sometimes donors would like a gate in a specific location, others are happy for it to be anywhere in the Chilterns. An Area Secretary from the Chiltern Society will work with the

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

donor to identify a location, and seek the necessary permission from the landowner for the change from a stile to a gate. The landowner is able to choose whether they would like a wooden or metal gate (this is usually dictated by whether they have livestock in fields) - but in either case, we are able to affix a plaque with the donor's chosen wording. All the negotiations with the landowners are carried out by the Chiltern Society, together with ordering the gate and any other necessary materials. The Society's volunteers install the gate, free of charge. The only cost for the donor is the gate itself (which can vary from about £300-£450) and the plaque.

Since the scheme launched a few months ago, there has been considerable interest. Two of the first ones to go in will be near the farm in Stonor (next to the field which currently has very young cows in it), where they will replace two rather aged, rickety stiles.

**Maggie Templeman**  
**Area Secretary, Chiltern Society**

**16/21 Allotments Annual Report**

Almost all allotments are looking very good. Voles are proving to be a problem. It is so good to see all plots are being used and productive.

The clerk was requested to send the parish councils' thanks for the above annual report's providers.

It was requested, of the clerk, that many thanks to given to all the annual reports contributors, from the parish council.

**The full Parish Council meeting follows the Annual parish meeting**

BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

**Parish Councillors present:**

Mrs. Ina Chantry (chairman), Mr. William Murdoch (vice-chairman), Mr. Fredrick van Mierlo and Ms. Sadie Hellon

Oxfordshire County Councillor David Bartholomew  
SODC councillor Jo Robb

Also present: Mrs. Jane Pryce (Clerk) and 5 members of the public

Key: BAG – Bix & Assendon Grapevine alert email service to residents  
CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy  
OALC – Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils  
FMS – Fix My Street – website to report highway problems

**019/21 Apologies for absence**

Lorraine Hillier was unable attend. Cllr Sophie Roper sent her apologies.

**020/21 Members declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None

**021/21 Confirmation of the minutes on the 2nd November 2020 and 4th January 2021**

These minutes were signed by the chairman, Cllr. Ina Chantry and declared a true and accurate account of the meetings. There was a sentence with a grammatical error in the January minutes, which would be corrected before giving the final document for posting on the website.

**022/21 Matter arising from the minutes**

In the January minutes, it was mentioned that a CIL officer would be in touch with the clerk to arrange a meeting about the cycleway repair. Outcome: A Teams meeting was booked to discuss the repairing of the Bix to Lower Assendon cycleway for Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Although the feeling, generally, that without costs and inspection of the cycleway, it would be difficult to contribute much in a meeting. The clerk managed to arrange a site visit for Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> and she accompanied the OCC officer on the cycleway and the whole length was walked. Unfortunately, the costs came in as the meeting was closing. Although the meeting was well attended by SODC and OCC officers and councillors. The costs were £13,000 for 1.3 miles of the cycleway with fences positioned occasionally for safety. This can be carried out by 2 men, for 2 weeks with a bob cat. Emails since suggest that more work to do a joined-up cycleway which is detailed in the OCC report below. A project proposal needs to be submitted to OCC. Funding of 50% by SODC has already been submitted.

The splitting out of assets inspection form per councillor was requested again, the clerk said it was on her list to do.

The VAS sign at Middle Assendon was deemed to be partially hidden by a tree and the sight lines, to heed the warning of speeding, given by the sign, was given too late. This is too be checked and monitored by OCC Highways.

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

The flooding at Broadplat (Greenmarsh Farm corner) – it was suggested a letter from both parishes (as on the boundary of both Bix & Assendon and Rotherfield Greys) needed to be drafted and submitted to Highways. The clerk works for both parishes and will bring this to the attention of the RG parish council at the next meeting which was Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

**023/21 OCC Report**  
**GENERAL OCC REPORT**

In response to Jackie Walker re. the Transport Strategy Group, above.

**OXFORDSHIRE ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY (OEVIS)**

This currently being developed and will be progressed to Cabinet in due course.

The rest of this report will be on the website.

**SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON**

**RESTORATION OF OLD CYCLE PATH FROM LOWER ASSENDON TO BIX**

I met with the parish chair, the clerk, Cllr Robb and SODC officers to discuss this proposal. The idea now is to expand this to become a cyclepath from Henley to Nettlebed. There would be three sections:

- The Henley to Lower Assendon section which already exists as a shared use path
- The Lower Assendon to Bix section which was the original subject of discussion
- The Bix to Nettlebed section that already exists as a path but needs siding-out/improving

SODC officers have indicated that 50% of the costs could be covered by CIL monies, subject to agreement by OCC officers, to whom I have relayed the proposal and met with an encouraging response.

**ASSENDON SPRING RISING**

I was notified by the clerk that the spring is rising and suggested it would be very helpful if she notified the landowners via BAG as ditch-clearing is their responsibility under 'riparian rights'. OCC is responsible only for ditches on Highways land. There has been considerable confusion in the past about who is responsible for what. If there are blocked ditches known to be on Highways land, these should be reported on FMS asap. Some grips will be re-cut over the next couple of weeks.

**POTHoles AND FLOODING – FMS REFS: 2284334, 2324000, 2385642**

In response to a resident's enquiries, I escalated three reports and received these answers:

2284334: Three pothole repairs were raised and completed at this location

2324000: Defect notices were raised to clear the blocked gullies

2385642: Pothole repair raised and completed

Questions were asked about potholes on the Rectory Lane – why only ones at the top have been done but not the ones lower down?

If the lower ones are not done please let me know the FMS number to follow up.

The Bix VAS sign – was it working? Both David Bartholomew and the clerk had seen it working.

**BIX AND ASSENDON**  
**ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

Maybe if the battery was low on power due to lack of sunlight for solar panels?

Fly-tipping and rubbish thrown out of cars was a real problem. There is now a new camera that photographs this behaviour so the culprit can be fined. But this question should be directed to SODC.

Jackie Walkie thanked David Bartholomew for the above information on vehicle charging and would inform the clerk when the next Transport Strategy meeting would be happening so the cycleway could be discussed with the HTC and she could join her.

### **024/21 SODC Report**

It is very pleasing to attend such a positive, can-do meeting.

### **Budget Update**

The last financial year saw the Council's finances adversely affected by loss of income (for example, from car parks) in addition to increased costs arising from the pandemic. Against this backdrop, it is pleasing that the Council has avoided service reductions in this budget. The Council continues to face challenges in achieving a balanced budget over the medium term, as a result of long-term low Council Tax. However, we have made a range of decisions to shore up revenue and reduce costs including increasing fees and charges (for example, planning pre-app fees, carpark charges), continuing to extract ourselves from the Capita 5Cs contract, taking the decision to locate the Council's new offices in Didcot (which will save significant rental and other costs in the long-term) and properly stewarding our property portfolio (we have completed a full survey of all Council-owned property - no such survey had been done before) as well as staffing for climate change, project and programme implementation.

Council Tax will increase by the maximum allowable without a referendum - £5 on a Band D property. This takes SODC's portion of Council Tax from £126 to £131 annually on a Band D, one of the lowest levels nationally and some £68 below the average for an English Shire District.

The Council is progressing the delivery of its corporate plan objectives as far as possible including the development of a new delivery vehicle to enable the Council to build its own low-carbon affordable and social housing.

We need a proper, long-term financial framework from government. Uncertainty makes future financial planning extremely difficult. However, longer term, insourcing of services and investing to save, have set us up well for the future.

### **The Assendon Ex-Tip**

I believe the clerk and the chair met with a SODC disposals officer on Thursday to discuss the ex-tip. Your views and wishes are at the fore front and being very forcefully made to the officers when making their decision.

Financial benefit is not the only consideration for the foremost consideration in how we treat areas of our property. Restoration of nature is one of the top corporate plan priorities, this would definitely go in your favour.

I will keep you updated on that.

### **Council Tax Support**

Council Tax is a regressive tax that hits the poorest hardest. We have extended our council tax reduction scheme to support those who may struggle to pay their council tax. Please contact us if you need help.

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/council-tax/extended-support-for-those-struggling-to-pay-their-council-tax-could-benefit-more-than-3000-households/>

### **Winter Support Grants**

The Winter Support Grant scheme is available for households who have been hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic. Support is available in the form of advice, supermarket and fuel vouchers or through the direct payment of energy or water bills. If you are struggling to afford food or pay your fuel bills, you may be eligible to receive help. Get in touch with your nearest advice centre for further guidance or if you know of someone who is struggling please tell them to get in touch with Citizens Advice – 0808 278 7907.

Our community hub is still operating via [www.southoxon.gov.uk/communityhub](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/communityhub) or on 01235 422600. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you need help.

### **Local Plan 2035: Chalgrove**

In mid-February, the Civil Aviation Authority's Airfield Advisory Team wrote to the Council expressing their opposition to Homes England's planning application for a new settlement on Chalgrove Airfield. This letter puts the future of development at Chalgrove in doubt.

The letter states: "It is our strongly held view that the AECOM report has fundamentally failed to understand the complexity and the many nuances associated with Martin-Baker's operation at Chalgrove."

It recommends that development aspirations at Chalgrove Airfield are discontinued, arguing the site cannot accommodate both a housing development and Martin-Baker's specialised operations.

However, SODC's 5-year housing land supply is robust even without the 3,500 houses at Chalgrove (illustrating the over-provision in the LP2035).

A local Community Interest Company (CIC) called Bioabundance has sought leave to conduct a Judicial Review of the decision to adopt the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

The grounds for challenge are that:

the worsening effect on climate change of excessive housing numbers is not given adequate attention; the calculation of housing numbers is not coherent; at the adoption vote, councillors unlawfully took account of threatened consequences of government intervention, and the vote was dictated by MHCLG.

The applicants are seeking permission from the High Court to proceed with their claim for Judicial Review. They have yet to be granted a date for their initial hearing.

A similar JR application against Cherwell District Council has been granted permission to proceed.

### **New Parking Order agreed**

At Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> February, the proposed new Car Park Order was approved. This was approved by Scrutiny on 1 March. The order aims to improve consistency across the district

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

and to address a shortfall in revenue from this service. This means that, from 1<sup>st</sup> April, we will be introducing charges on Sundays in SODC town centre car parks (from 10am, with a free first hour), with the exception of the Goldsmith's Lane car park in Wallingford, which we co-own with others who must also approve the new charging regime. All SODC-owned car parks will provide one hour's free parking at any time of the day, and will also offer half-priced permits for electric vehicles. In response to the public consultation on this matter, charging on Sundays has been pushed back by an hour to accommodate many church services.

Q. What is happening about a new survey for ex-tip? A. As the previous one seems to have been lost in the fire. A new survey and analysis will be carried out before any decisions are made.

Q. Insurance for ex-tip for SODC? Costs? A. This will be checked and information forwarded.

Jo Robb's support was thanked.

Q. Pre-application planning charges? A. This information wasn't to hand – this will be forwarded.

Taxi licensing policy – it has been suggested that they have debit/credit card payments made possible.

### **025/21 Clerk's Report**

A lot of my time has been taken up with the Bix to Lower Assendon cycleway. There have been meetings, which seem to have a positive outcome for funding to repair this cycleway.

I suggested a speed/volume laser camera for Lower Assendon be installed when lockdown was over. Ina Chantry also suggested one at Bix. This will be discussed more at the May meeting. Locations were chosen and it was decided that 2 cameras installed and book them out for 2 weeks 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> week in June.

The ex-dump site has been visited and started to be assessed. There is, at present, no further information.

The preparation for the annual parish meeting is somewhat changed from normal format and more community groups have been added. Most of the annual reports have been given via email and have been put in these minutes.

After 7 years in-situ, the defibrillator details have needed to be updated and the batteries and pads. This has been done. I have had conversations with the South Central Ambulance Service about the app used – which is called 'Save a Life'. This should be the only one used as it is updated via the SCAS so all defibrillators are shown to have batteries and pads that are useable. There seems to be quite a number of 'apps' available.

As the donated and planted Armistice Silver Birch Tree has died, there have been requests that three trees be planted (one of each village) for the Year of Covid. Total of 4 trees. The possible donation of trees is still on-going as is the permission to plant on the Bix Common

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

by the Field Holders. The variety of tree was still in question. This will need to be discussed more and also the location.

This will be further pursued at the May meeting in agenda item ‘matters arising from the minutes’

**026/21 Planning**

Cllr, William Murdoch

**a) Applications Received**

None requiring a parish council response within timeframe for this meeting.

**b) BAPC Recommendations**

**P21/S0089/HH**

1 Chestnut Close Middle Assendon RG9 6AY

New single storey Porch extension, plus change garage flat roof to pitched roof.

No response from the parish council

SODC target decision date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

**P20/S4876/FUL**

Swiss Farm Caravan Park, Marlow Road, Henley-On-Thames RG9 2HY

Bespoke 5\* Holiday Lodge Development for 24 Holiday Lodges in Lieu of Camping on the existing camping field.

BAPC OBJECTS: Not appropriate in an AONB

SODC target decision date: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**P20/S4581/FUL**

Windmill House, Lower Assendon RG9 6AN

Proposed storage building.

No BAPC response

SODC Target Decision Date 4th February 2021

No residents had submitted responses.

**P20/S2280/FUL**

Land adjacent to Drews Wood Cottage, Bix RG9 5DL

Temporary (3 years) siting of mobile homes (essential rural workers dwelling)

BAPC response – SUPPORTS

SODC Target Decision Date 16th December 2020

**P19/S4395/HH**

The Barn, Broadplat Lane, Bix RG9 4RS

Alterations to external openings with new glazing, raised chimney stack, new external timber cladding, roof alterations and installation of new rooflights/repositioning of existing rooflights

BAPC response - NO OBJECTIONS

SODC Target Decision Date: 27th January 2020

This application was amended in August. The pc submitted the same decision but the target decision date has not been changed.

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

**P19/S1548/FUL**

Grey Lodge, Old Bix Road, Bix RG9 6BY

Demolition of existing dwelling and studio and replacement with a new house.

BAPC response - NO OBJECTIONS

SODC Target Decision Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Again – no change.

**c) SODC Decisions**

**P20/S4317/LB**

Bix Bottom Farm, Bix RG9 6BH

Addition of a new kitchen range and removal of the 1981 utility room addition, modern first floor partitioning alterations.

SODC GRANTED

**P20/S4315/HH**

Bix Bottom Farm, Bix RG9 6BH

Addition of a new kitchen range and removal of the 1981 utility room addition, modern first floor partitioning alterations.

SODC GRANTED

**P20/S432/HH**

Round Hill House near Fawley RG9 6HU

Conversion of existing space in the detached barn into ancillary accommodation

SODC GRANTED

**P20/S4750/HH**

Tanglewood, Henley Park, Fawley, Henley-On-Thames RG9 6HY

Variation of condition 2 (approved drawings) on application

Part single storey and part two storey utilities extension to existing dwelling

SODC GRANTED

It was requested that it be minuted that it would be really helpful to the parish council if residents submitted responses to any application (to the SODC website) that concerned them.

And a BAG was suggested.

**027/21 Correspondence**

Bix Bottom Farm (conversion of stable building to dwelling) is now to be known as Bix Bottom Barn.

The Standing Orders have been updated and emailed to councillors. They were agreed and will be available on the website.

**028/21 Finance**

**Payments:**

Annual payment for COMET bus £494.

Jane Pryce wages for Feb/March £ 455.00

Annual subscription to OALC £146.16

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

**Bank**

Income: None

Bank balance: £10,696.07

I have noted a warning from another clerk: “The point is that the actual Community Account incurs no charges but the existence of an International Payment facility triggers one”

If the direct debit for Constant Contact, is an America company, is pursued this might cause this problem. This will be discussed with Chris Chantry.

The S137 charity and subscriptions amount per parishioner has increase to £8.41. Which allows an annual spend of £4,120.90. Current expenditure is £1,197.02.

**029/21 Proposal for an Environment/Climate Action Working Group**

**Background:**

The UK government declared a climate emergency in May 2019. Since then, climate emergencies have been declared at multiple level of government, including South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) & a number of Parish Councils. In February / March 2021, SODC also declared an ecological emergency.

There is common agreement in Bix & Assendon Parish Council that it is incumbent on all levels of government to do what they can to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and to protect and enhance the natural environment.

However, it is unclear what actions can be taken by parish councils and what the best kind of support we can provide is. Neighboring councils, including Nettlebed PC, Watlington TC, and Henley TC have also begun working on similar topics and – to avoid reinventing the wheel – Bix & Assendon PC needs a mechanism for working with them and learning from each other.

**Proposal**

Proposal is thus:

Rather than immediately declaring an emergency, without an action plan, Cllr Freddie Van Mierlo proposes to set up a Working Group (WG) – called Bix & Assendon Parish Council Climate Action Working Group – to:

- (1) Report on the top activities that Bix and Assendon PC can take in the short and medium term on the climate and ecological emergencies
- (2) Develop a ‘green plan’ for the parish
- (3) Establish relationships and links to neighbouring parishes and groups to share best practice, and liaise with SODC and OCC on opportunities to leverage their enhanced scale and spending power
- (4) Support grassroots organizations and activity

**Scope**

The scope of the group should not be limited to climate only, but take a broad view of the climate and ecological emergencies.

**Members**

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

Representing the Parish Council on the WG will be Cllr Freddie van Mierlo, alongside other interested councillors. The WG will invite opinion from External experts (approved by parish council), as well engage with neighbouring parish councillors, the village hall and other organisations.

Proposal was agreed by Ina Chantry and seconded by Sadie Hellon.

A BAG will be sent out to ask for members. Freddie von Mierlo was thanked for that.

**030/21 Any other business**

There were concerns about a field in Middle Assendon where it appears that hedges were being ripped up but other reports that the hedges were being laid and managed. More information was needed and it was suggested that some engagement with the workers to understand what was happening.

For Oxfordshire County & SODC District Council elections - Purdah starts 29 March 2021

The Chairman and vice-chairman is proposed and seconded at the May meeting.

**Training available to councillors**

Tuesday March 23rd 1pm  
Finding new town and parish councillors  
3 places available  
Half day afternoon

Thurs. June 3rd & Thurs. June 10th 9.30am  
Clerks, the Knowledge  
9 places available  
2 morning sessions

Thurs. June 24th 10.30am  
Employing Staff with Confidence  
17 places available  
Half day morning

Tuesday July 13th 10am  
The Experienced Councillor  
12 places available  
Half day morning

Tues. Sept. 7th & Tues. Sept. 21st 9.30am  
Clerks, the Knowledge  
Two morning sessions

Tuesday Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> 10 am  
Roles and Responsibilities  
Full day over two sessions

Tuesday October 26th 10am  
Introduction to VAT

**BIX AND ASSENDON  
ANNUAL PARISH AND COUNCIL MEETING  
1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

Half day morning

Tuesday October 26th 1.30pm

Budgeting

Half day PM

Ina Chantry informed the meeting that the bore hole data, to warn of the Assendon Spring rising, was at 85 metres but was levelling off. This reading was taken that morning.

Protocols for Death of a Senior Figure:

1 minute silence at the beginning of a meeting

Bix church flag at half-mast

A BAG issued with condolences

**031/21 Public Comments**

The clerk would speak to Matt Beesley (Bix) to see if there was a WhatsApp/Facebook for the village.

Next Meeting – Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 10.20 pm