

BIX AND ASSENDON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
9TH MAY 2022

- Clerk - Mrs. Karen Wheeler, Home Cottage, Nuffield Lane, Wallingford OX10 6QJ
Tel: 01491 86484 Email: parishclerk@bixandassendon.org.uk

Annual Parish Meeting – 9th May 2022, 7.30pm

Attendees:

Mrs. Ina Chantry (Chair), Mr William Murdoch (Vice Chair), Parish Councillor Mr. Fredrick van Mierlo, OCC Councillor David Bartholomew, SODC Councillor Lorraine Hillier & Jo Robb, Karen Wheeler (Clerk), Jackie Walker – Chair of Village Hall, 11 x member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES

Parish Councillor Ms Sophie Roper

2. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES FROM 1st MARCH 2021

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

3. CHAIRS ANNUAL REPORT 2022/22

This ends my second year as chair of Bix and Assendon Parish Council. This time last year we met in St James' Church, with the doors open and trying to follow government guidance, this year we are back in the hall.

I would like to thank the councillors for their hard work this year, it is not easy to juggle full or part time work and parenting for some with being a councillor. It is a role that can be quite time consuming and at times feel as if there is public support for action but limited public engagement.

I would also like to thank Karen Wheeler, who became our clerk last summer and had a steep learning curve after taking on three parish councils. Clear communication with councillors and local government has proved to be a real benefit to us and our residents. My chair's reports from the previous meetings are all available within the minutes on the website but key points from the year were:

- The survey of residents asking if there was support for 20mph zones received an 85% majority in favour.
- 30mph bin stickers were purchased and accepted by a majority of residents who were offered them.
- The salt bin and old goal posts were removed from the village hall car park and the common.
- There was a meeting between John Howell, Matthew Barber and a number of PCs about the motor bike noise. There was also the data collection on the dual carriageway a few weeks ago. These might result in some sort of action.
- Planning for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee continues

It would be lovely to see more representation from residents, at the last meeting there were some new faces and they presented new viewpoints and perspectives. If we do not see people at the parish council meeting, we can end up having to take decisions in a vacuum and with little knowledge of residents points of view.

4. OXFORDSHIRE COUNCIL COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL AND GENERAL REPORT

Please see separate file

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

Please see separate file

6. HENLEY MUNICIPAL CHARITIES ANNUAL REPORT

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 and governed by a scheme dated 1984. 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 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 and monthly contact with alms house residents was done via telephone. When COVID restrictions were lifted trustees resumed group meetings and monthly visits to residents were also resumed.

Commercial rents are received from 8 properties in Henley on Thames and the income received 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. At this time there are two vacant properties which will be filled shortly. Currently there are 28 residents. 7 single males, 7 single females and 7 couples. Regular property maintenance of the alms-houses and the commercial properties have been the major activities this year.

Grants - Grants were made to Gillots, Badgemore, Valley Road, Nettlebed and Trinity schools and the Henley 60+ and Henley Lions clubs 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.

7. VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL REPORT

Whilst there have been variations of the Covid rules/restrictions over the last year, we're pleased to report that the Village Hall Management Committee meetings have been able to take place in the village hall - this is happily the case for the Parish Council meetings too.

We said goodbye to Tim as our Secretary at last year's AGM, I was very glad to have been able to take our gift over to him to express our appreciation of all his work and commitment to looking after this hall over his time in this role - very sad to then say a final goodbye when he passed away later in the year, we remember him.

We have also been able to restart hire of the hall outside of the Montessori School use, we had temporarily suspended this to be sure there would be no problems arising from the setting up of a work/office for the workers on the building construction happening at the church - in line with Kathy Doodson's reassurances, there were no issues and the suspension was lifted fairly quickly. We remain consistent in our pledge of £10,000 to the Church towards this building work.

In terms of the Village Hall maintenance, Bondright Roofing were employed to replace some of the roof terrace posts and Lewis Every finished off this work with matching of the paintwork, the Ladies Toilets have also undergone renovation.

We continue to consider how we can give back to the community and are pleased to have recently been able to cover the costs involved in planting the replacement tree planted for Armistice that didn't survive.

8. ST. JAMES CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT

We're very pleased to report that, post Covid, services at Saint James Church are almost back to normal.

Our Priest in Charge, Mark Ainsworth, continues to minister to five local Churches. The supporting part time "house for duty" post remains vacant.

We have two or three services a month at Bix with a Joint Benefice on line "Zoom" service once a month. During the lockdown we often teamed up with our local "Joint Benefice" Churches. (Nettlebed; Pishill; Rotherfield Greys and Nuffield).

We welcomed more than 100 people to Christmas services and just recently almost 60 people, including 10 children, came to Church on Easter Sunday.

The Community Hub is progressing nicely. Building work started in November and is due to finish by the autumn. (We're hoping for earlier – the roof is already on). The extension provides a kitchen and toilet. The back of the Church is being reorganised to provide a more flexible space for community use. We hope that this will be particularly valuable during the week when the school is using the village hall. Our next project will be to replace the central heating in the main body of the Church.

Although there won't be a fete this year, our fund raising continues. Look out for the raffle at the Jubilee party; the plant sale and a book sale / strawberry tea.

9. ALLOTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

Issues over trespass and a need to confirm access rights related to Henley Cottage. New padlock installed but an urgent update to be requested from SODC by Chair. SODC agreement to be provided to the Parish relating to its use Chair also to request update. One allotment given up for the year 2022/23. BAG to be sent to advertise vacancy.

10. WEBSITE AND COMMS ANNUAL REPORT

4 Main Areas of responsibility:

- Bix & Assendon Grapevine (BAG)
- Website
- Hosting

- Parish Councillors Email

Bix & Assendon Email Newsletter (The Grapevine)

Hosted online as an email subscriber service by Constant Contact. Still the most effective method for reaching the largest number of parishioners, well regarded and supported by parishioners. Mainly used to promote meetings, planning applications and upcoming events in the parish. Service been running 13.5 years since November 2012

- Average 8 emails a month go out on the BAG service.
- 293 individual subscribers - stable number - handful leave/join every year as people move into/out of the parish.
- High open rate 55-65% depending on the subject

Parish Council Website

Website hosted by Doteasy and is still mainly used as the online source for contacting the parish council, highlighting meetings for the forthcoming year and maintaining online records of parish council meetings and minutes to satisfy statutory requirements for online access.

Low traffic to the website on a monthly basis, as only a small community of some 220 households and 500 people.

The design of the website has not been updated for a number of years, mainly due to low traffic volumes to the site not really justifying any additional expenditure.

Hosting

Hosting services are through Doteasy and most of the support activity involves maintaining the integrity of the parish council website service, making sure the site is backed up and secure from malicious online attacks, and liaising with the technical support team at Doteasy to resolve any technical issues with the website.

Parish Councillors Email

The email service for parish councillors and the parish clerk is also hosted by Doteasy, and generally runs reasonably smoothly, but the parish council is currently looking at upgrading the service level from Doteasy to allow for increased mailbox storage and attachment sizes for their email addresses.

This is a low cost exercise. Individual @bixandassendon.org.uk email addresses for all parish councillors and the parish clerk is to meet their statutory requirements and move away from using personal email addresses.

Other Areas:

Social Media

In the last few years, particularly during the Covid outbreak, there has been a number of locally focused social media groups springing up on Facebook, WhatsApp etc. run and administered by local individuals and focused on being part of the local community.

Whilst not of immediate concern, the parish council may want to consider whether they would like to have an "official" parish council presence on social media in the future, although

this may prove to create more headaches than it solves and would also require a much higher time commitment for any individual tasked with running their social media groups.

Questionnaires / Surveys / Feedback

There is an abundance of online customer marketing, questionnaires, surveys and feedback technology available and the parish council may want to consider whether any of these tools would be useful to assist their work in the local community.

11. PARISH ROADS ANNUAL REPORT

Flooding and potholes have continued to be an issue with Old Bix Road and other local lanes in bad repair. Some remedial work has occurred but further monitoring will be required.

12. COMMON HOLDERS ANNUAL REPORT

Plans are in place to put some defences around the field to stop any joy riding and reduce the threat of travellers.

13. CHILTERN SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT

Formal report unavailable however, the paths are being walked regularly and issues are raised with the Chiltern Society who contact land owners when necessary.

Report made at the meeting of path deviation over in Bix Underwood. (Clerk to raise with Chiltern Society)

14. OPEN FORUM

Items raised:

- Mill close planting of trees – referred to SODC
- Removal of an ancient hedgerow – referred to SODC
- Chestnut close, ditch and flooding risk due to sediment build up. Ditch installed by OCC June 2001. Further detail to be supplied by residents.
- Hill view septic tank discharge is of concern – referred to SODC

Meeting closed at 8.35pm