

# West Hagbourne Parish Meeting

*These reports will be presented to the Annual Parish Meeting - an open meeting for all residents of this Parish to attend.* Whilst it is a statutory meeting that has to be held once a year, it is intended as an opportunity for us to tell you what the Parish Council has done in the past year, to give you a series of updates that affect the whole community and to give you the chance to raise questions and get feedback on the actions of your representatives at Parish, District and County Council levels.

We publish these reports because in the past it has felt to be just too much to have long records of actions read out in front of a public meeting which few attended.

*We hope you will attend this years meeting on Saturday 19th May at 3pm held at Broomsticks,* your local District and County Councillor will attend and the Thames Valley Police will also be available after the meeting to discuss current policing and give you the opportunity to meet the area beat officers.

May 19th 2007

## Chair's report

May 2007 brings us to the end of our 4 year term as elected Councillor's for the Parish West Hagbourne and two of our number have chosen to stand down this year.

With only three nominations there was no Election, and a result we now have two new members of the Parish Council who came forward to be co-opted onto the Council.

Thanks go to Keith Little for his four year term on the Council, and a special thanks to Bernard Mead who has served as a Parish Councillor for sixteen years since his election back in 1991; he managed to act as a valuable resource of to this Council and his grasp of recent historical information – and his network of contacts within the community has meant that we were able to function in a very effective way.

In essence very little has changed in the Parish this past year which is quite comforting, that's if we exclude the granting of planning permission for the building of thousands of homes in Great West Park, which will take a huge part of our Parish.

This report tries to summarise what we have done during the past year, and includes individual reports from The Village Association, South Oxfordshire District Council – Cllr Patrick Greene, Oxfordshire County Council – Cllr Patrick Greene, William Tyrrell Trust, Parish Plan Steering Group and the History Group.

Each year since our election the Council has provided an update of our list of aims and objectives which are formulated in response to feedback from parishioners and external demands. Effectively these form the basis of our declared 'policy'. An update of these issues is included – and is always available for new items to be added. At the last formal meeting of the Parish Council in May '07, we reported on how we had spent the precept, ( part of the Council Tax which is given to

the Parish to spend ). This covers all the maintenance in the Parish, the salary for the clerk, grass-cutting and other expenditures such as the newsletter and village planting. If anyone wishes to see the full accounts, copies are available from the clerk.

As in previous years we have continued to build improved lines of communication between stakeholders, allied organisations, neighbouring councils and campaigners, so that West Hagbourne increases its visibility in the community as a whole. We have also formed closer alliances with neighbouring parishes, relevant agencies, district and county councils and our MP to help in addressing threats such as the nature of Didcot's continued growth, and the impact of its poor infrastructure planning and the associated traffic issues. We have tried wherever possible to ensure we engage with SODC and their attempts to forge relationships with the local community. Unless we ensure representation we will be neither informed, or able to influence any plans for the future of the area.

We have provided and encouraged the web site which is growing - [www.westhagbourne.org](http://www.westhagbourne.org) Both John Baile and Roger Sweet have taken this project a long way in a relatively short amount of time, and it is now providing a well built resource of all kinds of information. Thanks to all involved on this, it will prove to be really useful in the years to come.

The Parish Council have continued to lobby Highways, SODC and SEERA over the inadequacies of the pavements and road & transport infrastructure in the Parish and around Didcot, and repeatedly pointed out that if the town continues to grow, the impact on this and other villages will be very significant, and some alternative has to be put in place to change the road useage.

PARISH  
COUNCIL  
Chairs Report

TYRELL TRUST

PARISH PLAN

SODC

OCC

HISTORY  
GROUP

VILLAGE  
ASSOCIATION

# Parish Council Chair's report ( cont/d )

South Oxfordshire District Council do seem to have adopted our view and acknowledged that the lack of infrastructure must be remedied, before any expansion of Didcot can continue, though whether West Hagbourne gets a 'suitable' traffic remedy remains to be seen.

Our protestations for three years over the flooding in Brook Lane, at last were answered when the flooding pattern changed this past winter. The outflow from the upper field managed to compound the problem, and as a result the ditch was dug out, blocked gulleys dealt with and one stretch even re-piped. We have continued to try and deal with the obvious blockages in Main Street and this is ongoing.

The complaints and objections to the timetable changes implemented by GWR prevented some of the inter city service stops at Didcot being cut – but the service has been radically changed as the nature of peak and off peak services is now seen as a prime way of increasing revenues from the already hard presses commuting public. We have voiced our opinion on this, and have been told yet more changes may improve services.

The village maintenance programme has remained unchanged this year. Some tree planting has taken place and further planting may continue along the parish boundary. As in previous years we continue to accept all offers of any 'free' trees which are offered to the Parish.

We continued the annual traffic measurement and now aim to make a comprehensive report to compare the change(s) against previous year results. Some of these results are included in this report.

The Parish Plan has now been published, and some of the identified aims have already started to be implemented. As a result one group concerned with improving the general appearance of locations around the village. The village enhancement group, not the Parish Council, applied for a grant and replaced the style on the Upton path with a fabulous new kissing gate. Our thanks should go to Dave Totterdell and Mary Ann LeMay especially for their work on making this happen. Dave should also get thanks for clearing back the first stretch of School Path.

The experiment implemented by the Highways Department reported very little change in speed of traffic through the village, as a result of the removal of the white lines through the village. Though the removal of the unnecessary road signs has definitely improved the visual street scene. We hope to further gauge opinion at the Parish Meeting.

The brewery, Greene King, confirmed in March of this year that they have commenced the legal process to transfer ownership of the plot opposite the Horse & Harrow (the old Toll House Garden). We have eventually had the land cleared and it will be ploughed, levelled and put to grass. Rowan Napper has undertaken this work, and we appreciate his extra effort to

improve this part of the village. It now remains for the Parish to indicate what they actually want to do with this area. There are risks attached to all of the proposals put forward so far, and this will be included in discussion at this years' Parish Meeting.

The Parish Council have been consulted on several minor planning applications this year, and one new house has been built along with lots of minor additions and alterations. We are only consulted on planning, but final 'decisions' to grant or refuse planning are actually made by SODC.

I do need to take this opportunity to formally thank my fellow Councillors for sharing the responsibility of taking part in other Committees, attending meetings with other organisations and for their input into the process of responding to numerous consultations which seem to form the basis of so much local government decision making.

I am sure all of my fellow Councillors would want to thank our Parish Clerk - Roger Sweet who has managed our paperwork, kept us informed about policy change, dealt with the budget and tried to ensure we operate within the confines of ever changing legislation. As a result, much of our documentation and statutory obligations have been rationalised and brought up to date. This has involved a lot of work on the part of the Clerk and this should ensure we operate in a 'proper' fashion for several years to come.

Can I also give our annual thanks to Tracey Anderson for printing the newsletter, repeat my thanks to John Baile and Roger Sweet for the development of the website and to Mary Ann LeMay for the planter by the pond. Also to Hagbourne Farm Partners for keeping their footpaths mown, and for the occasional cut that continues to keep Moor Lane clear. Thank you to those of you who continue to pick up litter as you walk the footpaths and those who come along to the village tidy ups.

Our regular Parish Council meetings are rarely attended by Parishioners, but when they are, we hope we manage to listen and act on the subjects that have prompted your attendance. One result of this dwindling of any audience is that we now start Parish Council meetings at 7.30pm - though we have undertaken to continue to set aside the first half hour of the meeting for anyone who does attend, in order to deal with anything relevant or important that you want to discuss. It gives you the chance to see your Parish Council in action, and whilst we appreciate your support, we also need to know that we are representing you in the way that you want us to. So please tell us if anything is bothering you or if you have suggestions for things you would like to see us do.

You don't have to attend a meeting to tell us what you think or want dealing with, you can always email the clerk or any of the councillors, or just drop us a note. Our telephone numbers are always in the newsletter, and on the back of this report too.

**Phil Taylor** - Chair

2003-2007  
Parish Council

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the clerk

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# traffic measurement results

These figures have been compiled to show the results of traffic flow through the village. This is part of an *on-going project* which will report back as more data is analysed

## Results of West Hagbourne peak hour through traffic survey: November 2005 - October 2006

Average number of motor vehicles passing through West Hagbourne during peak hours

	To Didcot: 7.30 - 9.30 am	From Didcot: 7.30 - 9.30 am	Average number of vehicles passing through WH 7.30 - 9.30 am	To Didcot: 16.30 - 18.30 pm	From Didcot: 16.30 - 18.30 pm	Average number of vehicles passing through WH 16.30 - 18.30 pm
Normal weekdays	240	664	904	500	268	768
School holidays	180	574	754	496	251	747
Hagbourne Hill partially closed	188	555	743			0
Hagbourne Hill fully closed	159	329	488	250	218	468

Average number of motor vehicles passing through West Hagbourne on normal weekdays - peak hours: by days of the week

	To Didcot: 7.30 - 9.30 am	From Didcot: 7.30 - 9.30 am	Average number of vehicles passing through WH 7.30 - 9.30 am	To Didcot: all motor vehicles 16.30 - 18.30 pm	From Didcot: all motor vehicles 16.30 - 18.30 pm	Average number of vehicles passing through WH 16.30 - 18.30 pm
Monday	242	653	895	547	256	803
Tuesday	239	674	913	513	264	777
Wednesday	240	671	911	522	254	776
Thursday	259	674	933	474	246	720
Friday	221	637	858	426	321	747

## Village Association report

The *Annual General Meeting* of the West Hagbourne Village Association took place on the 7th November 2006 at Broomsticks, by kind invitation of Marion Judd.

The beginning of the year was marked by the sad and untimely death of Steve Gore following so soon after the birth of the lovely triplets. June and Peter represented the village and the Association at Steve's funeral. Later we were glad to be able to offer some financial support to Julia and the children.

Unfortunately there has been a lack of support for recently organised events.

However, the Madge Trophy garden competition took place and was won by Bob & Joyce Beacroft.

Two successful coffee mornings were held during the year and we hope to repeat these.

We are planning to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Association in 2007 by providing a free summer lunch for villagers. There will be some entertainment and, for the more active, a competition organised by Simon Ford. Other attractions are planned.

*Peter Mitchell*  
May 2007

## **History Group report**

During this year three new members have joined the West Hagbourne Village History Group and a *new chairman, Josie Hill* and secretaries, *Val Walton* and *Diane Garland* were appointed.

### **The website**

The History Group has contributed to the development of the website with its own dedicated pages. As well as information about the Group and its various projects, there is a potted history of the village; a summary of the contents of its publication Windsor Hakeborne: the Story of West Hagbourne, together with a review and an order form; a section debunking some local myths; an explanation of the village name and details of West Hagbourne's entry in the Domesday Book.

### **Medieval Chapel**

The site of the medieval chapel on land behind Chapel Hayes was mapped by the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group (BARG) in September 2004. The follow up survey by BARG confirmed that there was a chapel but the print out of the findings were rather difficult to decipher.

### **Archives and photo albums**

The History Group continues to maintain an historical archive and is presently creating photo albums of village events including the Silver Jubilee and the millennium

celebrations. Research on the family trees of Woodleys and Nappers and seeking information on Francis Beasley born 1753, are among the projects. A scheme for recording trees that have been planted in memory of people from the village has been proposed.

### **Visit from Kath Woodley**

Mary Wiley recently had a visit from Kath Woodley from New Zealand. She is keen to research her family history.

### **New Book**

A new book on the 16th century quarrel between the Dunch and Windsor families, *West Hagbourne at Court of Star Chamber* by Pete Annells and Jillian Hedges has been published.

### **Expansion of Didcot**

The Group is concerned about the expansion of Didcot and is keen to protect our village.

### **History Group Display**

A display of the History' Group's projects and items for sale (books, notelets, tea towels etc. ) will be available at Broomsticks on 15th July when the Village Association is celebrating it's 10th Anniversary which includes lunch and entertainment for all West Hagbourne villagers.

*Val Walton*

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## **William Tyrrell Trust report**

### **Current Trustees**

- Mike Butler
- Marion Judd
- and Bridget Pickup.

The Trustees met twice during 2006-07.

### **Tenancy**

During this year agreement with the tenant has been reached to formalise the terms of the tenancy according to current legal requirements.

Again, thanks are due to Mike Butler for negotiating with the tenant on behalf of the Trust.

### **Allotments**

It has been agreed that the tenant will take on the allotment land as part of the formal tenancy agreement, subject to review. The tenant will also take on responsibility for the water supply.

### **Dispersement of Charity funds**

Three grants were awarded during 2006/07. A grant was made to Julia Tiller to help with equipment costs for her triplets. Two further grants were made to Elizabeth Telford and Hannah Wing. Both girls took part in World Challenge schemes to help with conservation projects in developing countries. Elizabeth spent a month in Ecuador helping with a turtle conservation scheme and teaching young children. Hannah went to Borneo where she joined a team helping in a local village.

The Trust continues to offer support to young people and others in the village for worthwhile causes. Anyone wishing to apply for a grant should send their application to the Trustees

### **Accounts for 2006/07**

The annual Charity Commission returns were made in August 2006. The Trustees are grateful once more to Bridget Pickup for preparing the accounts for the year which are available for inspection. Thanks go to Ian Thompson for auditing the 2006/7 annual accounts.

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## **Parish Plan Steering Group 2007**

The Parish Plan, a vision of how residents would like their community to develop, has finally been circulated.

This has represented a major piece of work for the Steering Group but they could not have done it without the help of many villagers and funding from the Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council.

Many of you will be aware of new projects that have already been initiated as a direct result of the Plan but this is a living document and the first opportunity to review it will be at the Annual Parish Meeting. New ideas can easily be incorporated so come along and tell us how you want to get involved.

*Sue Totterdell*

# South Oxfordshire District Council report ( contd )

It has been another busy year working on the Councils Performance Plan making sure that we have continued to improve services. Over the last three years councils working with the Government have changed ways in which we work, there is far more emphasis on partnership working with other councils, police, business and the voluntary sector.

The Council web casts meetings such as planning, cabinet and council meetings and from April will also include scrutiny, audit and corporate governance and some high profile licensing committee meetings. Visit [www.southoxon.gov.uk/webcasts](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/webcasts). We have a very good web site [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) and our newsletter 'Outlook' is very well read and full of useful information.

## Recycling

With your help recycling has risen over the last year by 5.49% to reach 33.3% over our target of 33%. The introduction of the brown wheelie bin for garden waste has been a huge success with 11,120 bins ordered so far, and being used and collected, and orders for bins currently approximate to 150 a week with a delivery time of about 14 days). We cannot be complacent as there will be heavy fines if we do not reduce waste going to land fill. We intend to make it easier for everyone to recycle looking at different methods when our contract with Grundons is re-tendered.

## South East Plan

The present Labour government, after the current Examination in Public (EIP), through this plan will make decisions on the number of new houses to be built and where they are to go. Didcot is recognised by this government as a growth area and over the next twenty years the council will have to make decisions after much consultation and planning in partnership with the Vale of White Horse District Council as to where government demands for housing in Didcot will be built. Also, the Councils will have to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is forthcoming including the deficit that currently exists.

## Affordable Housing

We have put £1.4m towards affordable housing this year and over the years much more. Money is not the issue it is actually the landowner bringing land forward and the hold up of large housing schemes in Didcot. Properties are not all to rent but shared equity helping people to get onto the property ladder. We have reduced homelessness to single figures, which not only helps people but also reduces the council's costs. We have also hoping to introduce a 'Choice Based Letting Scheme' with government grant to help people to decide where they might like to live.

## Crime

We continue to fund 8 PCSO's working with the police to help reduce crime. We have invested a total capital budget of £1,379,000 towards CCTV cameras in Wallingford, Didcot, Henley-on-Thames and Thame. There is also a deployable camera for use in the villages, which is a pilot and has yet to be evaluated.

## Leisure

As part of our commitment to improve sports centres we are investing £3,386,000 of which £2,807,000 is for the Henley-on-Thames Centre. There has been a delay in the Henley scheme, which has now started. However the other sports centres are completed and are now high quality facilities and as a result we have seen an increase in their usage.

We are able to afford this money by the community fund i.e. interest on the investment from sale of the council houses 10 years ago.

In Didcot the 5-screen cinema (Cineworld) has opened on the 1st May and the Arts Centre will open early 2008. We have made an investment of £48,000,000 over many years into the provision of a new commercial centre for Didcot, the Orchard Centre. Didcot is the growth area for South Oxfordshire and needs to have our support to gain the necessary infrastructure. We have given capital money grants to villages and towns for their improvement scheme such as the play area and village halls. There are council bursaries for young people to help with their sport, music or arts. The young talent in our area is amazing and these bursaries give the young people a real boost - some may even make the Olympics.

New is revenue grants to voluntary organisations as they told us they did not need capital but certainty of revenue for at least 3 years.

## Environmental Health

Environmental Health has had a very busy year with the Licensing Act but we coped with all the applications and now we have to look forward to the smoking ban in July.

During the year we joined the Benefit and Financial Services with the Vale of the White Horse Council. A contract with Capita for the service has increased the quality plus saved the council £500,000. We are discussing with Capita Customer Service improvements by introducing a Centre, already more than half the calls that are taken come through a Capita Customer Service Centre.

Customer satisfaction information that we have to collect for a government target has steadily increased over the last three years apart from waste statistics.

Cleanliness	62 - 73%
Waste collection	82 - 81% - reason being new scheme - brown wheelie bins introduced
Sports/Leisure facilities	51 - 58%

Planning continues to improve; applications are turned around much quicker these days. The government reward the council for reaching their targets, which enables us to employ staff. We are pleased to say we have been able to reduce the enforcement cases during the year and continue the good work. There are still some very high profile cases:

- Gypsy site at Hadden Hill
- Bike racing at Lewknor
- To have a house demolished in Stadhampton

We have worked with officers to find 5% savings across the council without reducing services. This has enabled the council, for the second year running, to make no increase in your council tax for SODC services. We could have reduced the tax this year by 2.2% but then next year we may well have had to increase tax, as the government grants to councils are so unknown. Our aim is consistency. Your ward member thanks the West Hagbourne Parish Councillors for their co-operation during the year.

Cllr *Patrick Greene* May 2007  
Hagbourne Ward,  
*South Oxfordshire District Council*

# ***Oxfordshire County Council*** report ( contd )

LOW TAXES, REAL CHOICE, VALUE FOR MONEY

## ***The Oxfordshire County Council***

Conservative controlled that provides around 80% of the county's local authority services. These include social care, education, trading standards, highways and transport, the registration service, the fire and rescue service, countryside service, libraries, museums and Youth services.

### ***Cabinet members:***

Leader of the Council Cllr Keith Mitchell, Cllr David Robertson - Deputy Leader of the Council and member for Strategic Transport Policy, Cllr Charles Shouler - member for Finance, Cllr John Howell - member for Change Management, Cllr Jim Couchman - member for Social and Community Services, Roger Belson - member for Sustainable Development, Louise Chapman - member for Children, Young People & Families, Michael Waine - member for School Improvement, Cllr Ian Hudspeth - member for Transport Implementation and Cllr Judith Heathcoat - member for Community Safety

### ***Change Management Board***

Comprises of the council's management team plus three Cabinet members. The Board has put into place a change programme that encompasses the organisational and behavioural changes required to deliver low taxes, real choice and value for money for the people of Oxfordshire.

Amongst some of the highlights is that the shared services centre became operational in January that centralised a lot of back-office support functions in HR, finance and procurement that is expected to deliver savings of £27 million gross over the next 8 years.

Also, Change Management has had tight control on recruitment that has resulted in a drop of non-schools posts after eighteen months of 300 or 6%.

Furthermore, a system of fundamental reviews of how services are delivered has challenged how by changing the way we work the same service can be delivered better and more cheaply. A good example of this has been the review of home support services that has already identified savings of £600K per year in this service.

### ***Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)***

The Audit Commission has assessed the way that the County Council is run and the delivery of services as 'Excellent' (Four Stars). This is the highest possible rating (on a scale: excellent, good, fair, or weak). The County Council is now amongst the best performing councils in the country.

### ***Budget Highlights***

Council approved a Council tax rise of 4% on the 13th February as part of a 'lean and green' budget. The Conservative manifesto pledged to bring the rise down to 4% by the end of the current term up to 2009 but this has been achieved in just two years. This is due to tighter and stricter control with good financial management. Balanced budgets have ensured that new spending pressures have been offset by savings.

### ***Areas or extra funding include:***

A total of £450,000 has been set aside for projects that will help reduce the council's carbon footprint and, as a result, save money in future years. The council's aim is to reduce carbon emissions from its own buildings and activities by 2012. This commitment has attracted a further £300,000 from the Carbon Trust, bringing the fund to a total of £750,000. All projects funded will need to demonstrate not only carbon savings but also significant financial savings for the council over the next five years.

A total of £665,000 has been set aside for the fire and rescue service including money to pay for more part-time firefighters and the '365 alive' campaign. The campaign aims to save 365 lives through increased safety education over the next ten years.

An extra £700,000 will be spent on fuel and other costs associated with school buses

An extra £800,000 to cover escalating energy prices including street lighting.

A total of £700,000 will be spent on meeting the cost of caring for Oxfordshire's most vulnerable children in care and to increase the number of social workers supporting families.

A figure of £150,000 has been budgeted for to improve learning opportunities for young people with special educational needs who are 16 or over. The extra cash means that some students, especially those with severe learning difficulties, will be able to continue their education at their special school.

£400,000 for repairs to the Thames Towpath.

An extra £2.1 million above inflation increase next year for Adult Social Care, with further above inflation increases rises planned for the following three years. By 2010/11 the additional funding will be £5.6 million on top of inflation. It will also be setting aside an extra £300,000 each year to help the army of unpaid carers who look after older loved ones or younger adults with disabilities. The council, which will spend a total of £158,628,000 on adult social care in 2007/08, will use the extra money to support the very elderly and their carers in their own homes as long as possible.

### ***Capital Projects that effect the local area.***

The County Council's capital programme includes provision of £280K for a new youth centre on the site of the current centre in 2008/9. The new youth centre project depends on getting agreement for the re-development of the whole site, which is expected to include some housing. The first step will be an options appraisal to decide what is the best way of replacing the current youth centre and will involve joint working with Wallingford Town Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. The project will be a major new facility for the town's young people. This follows a grant earlier in the year of £2,000 for the town's youth activities out of the Council's Chill Out Funds.

A sum of £1.5 million has been set aside to provide a replacement for the Wallingford Fire Station.

£450K for the purchase of Oakley Wood waste recycling centre.

Your local councillor serves on the Environmental & Economy Scrutiny and Audit Committees. Under the Environment & Economy Scrutiny committee he serves on a review of 106 Development Awards with the hopeful outcome of making the system more accountable and transparent. Of local matters he is pressing for more road safety measures particularly along the A4130 between Frogs Island bend and Tesco's in support of the North Moreton Parish Council. He continues to ensure road repairs are promptly brought to the attention of the Drayton Office. He is a member of the 'Wallingford' - Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG). Has pressed for some time, speed checks and enforcement in the 30mph limit of the Wallingford road, Cholsey and recently the police have carried this out and is pressing for further speed checks within the Moreton Division. Your Division member thanks the West Hagbourne Parish Councillors for their co-operation during the year.

Cllr ***Patrick Greene*** May 2007  
Moreton Division  
***Oxfordshire County Council***