

West Hagbourne

annual parish meeting

reports for 2008 / 2009

The Annual Parish Meeting is a statutory meeting held once a year for all the residents of the Parish of West Hagbourne. It is intended to provide an opportunity at which we can tell you what the Parish Council has done over the past year, to give a series of updates on matters that affect the whole community and to allow you to raise questions of your representatives at Parish, District and County Council levels. This year your *MP Ed Vaizey* will also be there.

In the past the following reports have been presented to the Annual Parish Meeting but at last year's meeting it was requested that they were circulated in advance.

This years meeting will be held on *Saturday 16th May at 3pm* at Broomsticks.

Parish Council

These pages aim to summarise what your Parish Council and representatives have done during the past year, and includes individual reports from representatives of The Village Association, South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the William Tyrrell Trust, the Parish Plan Steering Group and the Village History Group.

This past year has involved an enormous amount of interaction between South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the Parish Council. In particular the publication of the South Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy (Scots report) laid bare the need to establish effective plans for transport infrastructure, in particular to address present and future road transport needs. The draft preparation of SODC's Core Strategy also revealed the intentions of the District Council to continue expanding Didcot as it attempts to meet the demands of central Government, and its well publicised house building targets. The impact of the Vale of White Horse's own intentions to allocate its share of housing to the tranche of land that lies between the A34 and the Great Western Park brings the threat even closer. Their proposals take housing almost to the north eastern parish boundary where it meets the Driftway.

The Parish Council raised deep concerns over a set of developers plans submitted to the Vale and SODC which offered to underpin the next stage of this growth with funding for the much requested 'Harwell bypass' and it became evident that this document had been kept out of the public domain, for much longer than was appropriate. This concern has been raised with your District and County Councillor.

Our voice does seem to have been heard when we objected to any more land in the Parish being built on, insomuch as SODC favours the next stage of Didcot to go towards the North East; this is also supported by Didcot Town Council.

The Parish Council were consulted on several

minor planning applications within the Parish itself this year, affecting buildings from Down Farm to Hagbourne Hill and many small building works were considered in the village. Only one was completely dismissed by SODC, and at appeal their decision to not grant re-development at Ivy Farm was upheld, which was disappointing. But please remember, the Parish Council is only 'consulted' on planning matters, and we are only entitled to give a view, as all final 'decisions' to grant or refuse planning, are actually made by South Oxfordshire District Council. Often their reasoning will appear to lack common sense and can contradict even the most recent 'similar' decisions.

The Parish Council met with the Head of Planning and once again raised the inconsistency of their decisions, as well as asking why no material gains were offered to the village to reflect the impact of SODC's plans for GWP on the Parish. We were told things would change in relation to any further expansion of Didcot if it affected the Parish.

The Parish Council has engaged with the Great Western Park Community Forum, which allowed us to bring issues such as light pollution, urbanisation of green space, cycle tracks, solar street lighting and other design considerations onto the agenda, including shared parking for community facilities. We have constantly and repeatedly asked for the road network of the GWP and any future growth, to be done in such a way that it relieves traffic in the villages AND works those who live in Didcot. To that end we have also met with planners and transport executives, to try to make them understand that their computer predicted 'models' are no substitute for local on-the- ground knowledge of through traffic problems in the village.

More importantly, suggestions for a more effective road to link the A34/A417/Wantage Road and the Milton Link Road have taken a new direction, where the County's consultants have at

reports
PARISH COUNCIL
TYRRELL TRUST
HISTORY GROUP
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE
VILLAGE ASSOCIATION
COUNTY COUNCIL
PARISH PLAN

last talked with and listened to the local community. The route for what would provide a Harwell/Hagbourne bypass is very much on the agenda for discussion in 2009.

We know that at some time there is likely to be a review of parish boundaries, which would consider re-drawing the line which divides Didcot town from West Hagbourne; this however has been delayed. Currently the Parish Council believes we should initially oppose any boundary change, as there has been no gain offered to the Parish.

We have not been successful in making progress towards purchasing the land at the Horse & Harrow despite many phone calls, emails and conversations. We still hope that in due course Greene King will implement the necessary process for this transfer to take place, but until which time all we can do is wait.

At the Annual meeting of the Parish Council on May 14th, we reported how we had spent the precept, (this is the part of the Council Tax which is given to the Parish to spend) which is used to cover all the paid maintenance in the Parish. Our biggest expenditure is the salary for the clerk, followed by the grass-cutting contract and the remainder is spent on general maintenance items and any village planting. It should be noted that volunteers are always needed for additional maintenance jobs in order to keep the precept at its present level. This year the newsletter accepted advertising for the first time and is now self-funding. Full copies of the accounts are available from the clerk if you wish to see them.

As reported in previous years, we have continued to develop important links between us and local stakeholders, allied organisations, neighbouring councils and campaigners. We have also continued to build on established alliances with neighbouring parishes and other relevant agencies. We do this in the interests of the village to build on West Hagbourne's visibility within the wider community, to influence matters of mutual concern, and to try and ensure we are not overlooked, as often happens. Because the Parish population is so small, it is extremely easy for larger organisations to use their louder voices to greater effect.

Following the sad loss of Monica Lawson, the Parish Council has suggested to East Hagbourne that some sort of joint memorial should be initiated – possibly a tree where the two parish boundaries meet, or even consideration of re-building the cross at Coscote, which is also on the boundary between the Hagbournes. Any other ideas would be welcome.

We gratefully thank all of you who do bother to pick up litter as you walk the footpaths and byways, pull weeds and maintain areas adjacent to your own property boundaries. Specific thanks go to the following:

- Tim Lightfoot for being volunteered into fetching and carrying, re-positioning HGV signs and removing debris.
- Dave Totterdell for bringing the garden by the bus shelter under control and his work in Moor Lane.
- Ken Bishop for keeping the shrubs by the entrance signs clipped, and for manhandling the village sign so it once again faced in the right direction. Also for occasionally clipping the verge at Coscote corner making it safer for all road users to negotiate this part of the road.
- John Baile + Roger Sweet for their efforts on the web site.
- Chris Lay for work on footpaths and in clearing Moor Lane
- Mary Ann Le May for her work on the new planter by the pond, which has looked fabulous since it was installed.
- Terry Pritchard and Hugh Lewis for their work on the bench in the square.

- Tracey Anderson for printing the newsletter and always meeting deadlines.
- Hugh Lewis for keeping the bus shelter tidy
- Robert Griffiths and Hazel Rack for filling the water butt during dry spells
- Jeff Powell for use of trailer and truck whenever needed.
- The landowners who allow us to leave the green skips on their land each year.
- Keith Little and Ruth Webb for representing West Hagbourne on the Hagbourne Village Hall committee

And on behalf of us all thanks should go to The Village History Group for their work in ensuring we know and understand more about where the historical roots of our settlement stem from and to The Village Association for bringing us together more in their social events.

Thanks also to the Village Association for this year's launch of what many will hope becomes an annual event with the Dragon Competition; and for both organisations' efforts to bring West Hagbourne into the public eye.

However, I would ask that more of you participate in the volunteer village maintenance activities which are held two or three times each year, as Parish Councillors do far more than their fair share of community work in their administrative duties, and should not be expected to also become the sole unpaid ancillary manual workers.

The village maintenance programme continued this year. The condition of the grass verges this year have been very badly affected mainly by the increased size of vehicles coming through the village. The grass cutting has now been expanded to include all parts of the village. A team of Oxfordshire Conservation Volunteers will spend a day in Moor Lane this September when clearance of debris and more hedge & tree planting will take place. Additional tree planting will continue along the parish boundary if suggestions and new sites are agreed.

We hope the much improved pavement between York Road and the Horse & Harrow will make it safer and more comfortable for pedestrians using this part of the village. We had discussed the encroachment of HGV's with Trading Standards and their help has been offered by increasing their visibility at peak times especially when the A34 is affected.

There have been several serious collisions in the Parish this past year, though thankfully nobody was hurt too badly. The sight of the Air Ambulance landing by the A417 is not something any of us want to see happening too often.

Finally I should take this opportunity to formally thank my fellow Councillors for sharing the responsibility of taking part in other Committees, tirelessly attending meetings with other organisations and for their input into the many consultation processes which form the basis of so much of what we are expected to do. Sadly John Thornhill felt he had to step down, but I hope that he will still feel able to contribute on traffic issues.

I also must thank our Clerk – Michelle Lightfoot, who as a result of her own business taking off so successfully, has had to resign from the position. We wish her well with her hard won contracts, but trust she will continue to occasionally exercise her influence with the Highways department.

Please come along to the Annual Parish Meeting and tell us if anything is bothering you, or if you have suggestions for things you would like done in the future.

Phil Taylor - Chair May 11th 2009

the *History Group* 2008 - 09

May 2008 – April 2009

This has been a quiet twelve months as our numbers have been reduced through the sad loss of two founder members in the previous year and another member on maternity leave this past year. However, we have been able to support the Parish Council (PC) with local projects and also given the Council advice on historical matters as required.

Moor Lane: The History Group has worked with the Chairman of the PC to ensure that the clearing of Moor Lane is done with due regard for wildlife and the limitation of possible environmental damage. An environmental strategy has now been formalised. The Group also provided historical background and local folklore concerning the “growing stone” which was uncovered in Moor Lane last year. An article was written for the village newsletter.

Village planter: The Group was asked by the PC to suggest suitable replacements for the planter by the pond, which was destroyed during the winter of 2007/2008. We worked with Mary Ann le May who has taken responsibility for the planter to find something of a suitable size and in keeping with the rural setting of the pond. A cattle trough was chosen and agreed by the PC. The History Group contributed £50 towards the trough.

Upkeep of memorial garden: The History Group raised concerns about the upkeep of the garden beside the bus shelter with the PC. As a result, new volunteers have come forward to take responsibility for its upkeep.

Communications: The Group continues to provide copy for the village website and the West Hagbourne news (newsletter). We worked with the webmaster on a revamp of the History Group's pages. A new book order form was created to reflect changes in postage and also to cater for the increasing number of orders from overseas. The Group continues to receive and answer enquiries via the website, particularly from abroad and other parts of Britain. These

enquiries have increased alongside the development of the website.

Map board: Water damage to the map was reported to the board suppliers but without satisfaction. It was decided that damage was caused by condensation. A new map was commissioned from Mary Ann le May (ex member of the History Group) who produced the original map. The new map has been encapsulated in the hope that it will not be so prone to damage. The new map has been produced electronically, which will make it easier to replace or update in the future. The History Group paid for the new map and wrote the historical text.

St. George's Day: The History Group assisted the Village Association with events for the celebration of St. George's Day. A quiz was devised based on local village history. The hope was that this would encourage people to become more interested in local history and perhaps join the History Group. The quiz was circulated with the newsletter but unfortunately the response was disappointing – perhaps the dragon-making fervour left no time for the quiz. A member of the Group did considerable research into the myths and legends of St George and produced a wide-ranging presentation for the supper. Illustrated answers to the quiz were also displayed. Articles about St George were published in the Parish Magazine and also in the village newsletter.

Archives: The Group continues to collect press cuttings, news reports and photos of village events. The archives, in the form of folders, are made available for viewing at village events.

Future: the Group is concerned that without some new members to provide vigour, enthusiasm and perhaps a new approach to village history, the Group may not be able to continue in its present form. Various ideas have been mooted, including involvement with neighbouring villages and some shared meetings with guest speakers. These ideas will be discussed further at the AGM – date to be announced.

the *William Tyrrell Trust* 2007—08

The William Tyrrell Trust was originally set up in 1662 for the benefit of the residents of West Hagbourne and continues to be managed by Trustees appointed by the Parish Council.

Tenancy - Tyrrell Trust land

Rent has been received for 2009/10.

The lease for tenancy of the former allotment land is about to be signed.

Thanks are again due to Mike Butler for setting up the formal tenancy agreements.

Dispersment of Charity funds

No grant applications were received during 2008/09.

The Trustees would like to encourage young people and others resident in the village to apply for small grants during 2009/019.

Grants are available to any resident, particularly young people, for funding to assist them with worthwhile initiatives and pursuits.

Anyone wishing to apply for a grant should contact one of the Trustees

Accounts for 2008/09

The annual Charity Commission returns were submitted in March 2009.

Thanks once more to Bridget Pickup for preparing the accounts for the year and to Ian Thompson for auditing the accounts which are available for inspection.

the current Trustees of the charity are:

Mike Butler
Marion Judd
Bridget Pickup

Village Association

Minutes of the AGM of the West Hagbourne Village Association held on Tuesday 24 March 2009

Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported that there were three meetings held during the last twelve months with an average of seven members at each. There was one event, a lunch on the 27th July.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked the committee and particularly Marion for the use of her lovely garden and house.

The Pimms, Pate and Puddings lunch took place on Sunday 27th July at Broomsticks by kind invitation of Marion Judd. The committee provided delicious food and those who came told us it was one of the most enjoyable events held in recent times.

The West Hagbourne Best Front Garden Competition was held and the Madge Trophy Cup awarded to the winner.

The judging took place on Tuesday 5th August. The judge was Mr Roger Phipps. The judge's overall view was that many gardens were well tended using a variety of plants and shrubs.

The Best garden was judged to be 5 Manor Close. "A typical village cottage garden, well kept, beautifully designed and full of flowers."

In second place: 11, York Road, "Well kept and a riot of colour. Full of flowers, in baskets and containers."

In third place: Green Thatch, "A garden whose overall shape blends in so well with the cottage buildings. Full of flowers and outstanding box hedges."

The competition has been held for many years. The judge was thanked and a small token of our gratitude presented to him. The Madge trophy Cup is held by the winner for twelve months. Thank you to all gardeners who help to make West Hagbourne such an attractive village.

Treasurer's Report

The balance at the start of the year was £1131.33 and £1210.76 at the end. The lunch made a profit of £119.26. Expenses of £39.83 covered the following items: the annual audit, printing, Madge trophy engraving, voucher for judge and the repair of a marquee pole.

Election of officers and members of committee

The following were elected to the committee:

Hazel Rack, Keith Walton, Val Walton, Peter Mitchell, June Little, Betty Kendrick, Mike Parker, Bridget Pickup, Marion Judd

There being no other nominations these nine members were elected. Peter, Keith and Hazel agreed to continue in their roles as Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Betty agreed to be Vice Chair.

St George's Day Celebration

Discussions took place about celebrating St George's Day. The committee decided to try to persuade as many villagers as possible to make and display dragons and in doing so raise the profile of West Hagbourne.

The committee felt that this would provide an opportunity to raise the plight of our village and help us persuade the planners to insist on a buffer zone with trees around the edge of the village. This might prevent West Hagbourne being swamped by the planned expansion of Didcot.

The landlord at The George and Dragon, Upton was approached and agreed to judge the dragon competition. Judging will take place on 23 April. The prize will be a £25 gift voucher towards a meal for two at the George and Dragon. A piece about the dragon competition will go in the Parish newsletter. Committee members agreed to take responsibility for widely publicising the event contacting newspapers, radio and television.

A village supper is planned for Saturday 25 April to celebrate St George and at which the name of the winner will be announced.

Full details of the very successful Dragon competition which attracted 28 entries will be published in the next News Letter.

Peter Mitchell

Oxfordshire County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council

Conservative controlled that provides around 80% of the county's local authority services. These include social care, schools & children's services, waste management, trading standards, roads, transport planning, land use, countryside, the registration service, the fire and rescue service, countryside service, libraries, museums, emergency planning, public health (jointly with the Primary Care Trust) and Youth services.

Management Team

Joanna Simons - Chief Executive, Directors:- John Parry – Community Safety and Chief Fire Officer, Huw Jones – Environment & Economy, Janet Tomlinson – Children, Young People & Families, John Jackson – Social & Community Services, Stephen Capaldi – Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy), Sue Scane – Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Financial Officer, Jonathan McWilliam – Public Health (ex officio). The County Council Management Team (CCMT) meets on a weekly basis and takes a strategic approach to the management of the council. Each directorate comprises of a number of services, each of which is led by a head of service.

Medium Term Corporate Plan 2009/10 – 2013/14

This plan provides a medium-term focus on achieving the Council's priorities. It establishes the context in which the Council operates and the strategic challenges that it faces. The Council's vision is to deliver prosperity and security for the people of Oxfordshire by encouraging economic growth while improving the quality of life and the environment for those living and working in the County. Success will be measured by continuous improvement in services and working in partnership with other public, communities, voluntary & business organizations to seek greater benefit for the taxpayer. It is underpinned by our key aims To deliver low taxes, real choice & value for money in all that we do. See the Council's website for further details.

Partnership Working

The Oxfordshire 2030 is a partnership plan for improving quality of life in Oxfordshire. It identifies how we will respond to the challenges facing Oxfordshire over the next 20+ years. It sets out a long-term vision for Oxfordshire's future. By 2030 Oxfordshire should be recognized for its economic success, outstanding environment and quality of life. A place where everyone can realize their potential, contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity and where people are actively involved in their local communities. Oxfordshire 2030 is a Sustainable Community Strategy to ensure all this happens through the Oxfordshire Partnership being the over-arching strategic partnership for the county, bringing together organizations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to focus their efforts on those matters that are important to people who live, work and visit the county and, more importantly, to do something about it.

Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The Council has negotiated a new three year LAA with government in 2008 setting out how the council with local partners will deliver key national and local priorities having

the following targets: > A clean and green environment > Adult health and well-being > Children and young people > Climate change > Educational attainment > Housing > Safer Communities > Skills and work > Transport > Value for money > Volunteering. Details of the LAA can be found at www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk. The Council has the lead role in brokering the LAA allowing it to work collaboratively with other public sector and voluntary organizations by pooling resources and achieving joint delivery. The importance of the LAA is that it 1). Gives the opportunity to deliver more effective local action 2). Allows better use of resources and 3). Provides more funding for local services.

Budget Highlights

Despite a poor local government settlement of 1.75% less than the rate of inflation, the Council approved the Conservative budget giving a Council tax rise over last year's rise of 3.875% of 3.75% on the 10th February. The Conservative manifesto pledge was to bring the tax rise down from 4.5% in 2005/6 to 4% by 2009/10. However, this was achieved in the first two years of their office due to tighter and stricter controls with good financial management.

Funding

In 2009/10 the council plans to spend £958m in revenue expenditure before adjusting for recharges. This compares with a 2008/09 gross budget of £932m. Of this planned expenditure 63% comes from the government in one form or another; 31% comes from the Council Tax and the remaining 6% from a variety of elements including income from charges. The Revenue and Capital Budget for 2009/10 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2009/10 to 2013/14 delivers Low Taxes, Real Choice and Value for Money in a prudent and sustainable form against a background of a national economic and banking crisis.

Primary Schools

Your Councillor with Joanna Simons – Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council visited all four primary schools in the Moreton Division on Friday 23rd January'09. The visits were very much appreciated by all and gave the opportunity for the Chief Executive to meet with Head Teachers, staff and pupils.

Your local councillor serves on the Environmental & Economy Scrutiny (Vice-Chairman) and Audit Committees. Of local matters, he has pressed for more road safety measures particularly along the A4130 in support of a 40mph speed limit. He continues to press for better and a quicker response to road repairs. He is a member of the 'Wallingford' - Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG). He has pressed for speed checks and enforcement in 30mph limits within the Moreton Division and many have resulted in the police issuing fines etc.

Your Division member thanks the West Hagbourne Parish Councillors for their co-operation during the year.

Cllr Patrick Greene - Moreton Division – Oxfordshire County Council – May 2009

South Oxfordshire *District Council*

Shared Management

The council has shared services of Finance and Benefit services with the Vale of the White Horse District Council for more than two years, so it made sense to have a shared management structure in place. David Buckle has been appointed as the shared Chief Executive. Steve Bishop, Matt Prosser and Anna Robinson are the Strategic Directors, a reduction of four to three. Eight Heads of Services have just been appointed, this is an overall reduction of fourteen to eight and they took up their new roles on the 3rd March. This shared management initiative is due to save both councils more than £750,000 a year. The councils political objectives are for each council to decide. Our council will continue to make savings at every possible opportunity without reducing services.

Top council

South Oxfordshire District Council is officially one of the best councils to work for in the country, according to the "Times Best Council to Work For awards 2008". It came in at number 11, ranking amongst the top 25 councils out of the 95 entries. There was a tough competition, which involved a searching examination of the work of staff and how they feel about working at the council. The judges particularly praised the council for its commitment to providing a healthy work-life balance for staff, as well as offering excellent training opportunities and supporting staff social events.

Waste Update

New waste collection services – start on 8th June 2009. In January 2009 Verdant was selected as the company to run South Oxfordshire District Council's new waste collection and street cleansing services, which it's providing jointly with the Vale of White Horse District Council. The new service should lead to a big increase in recycling. The aim is to increase our current recycling rate from 43% to over 50%.

The new service will include:-

Weekly food waste collections in a kerb-side wheelie bin of 23 litre capacity. A 7 litre kitchen caddy will also be provided

Recyclables - fortnightly collections in a 240 litre green wheelie bin

Residual waste - alternative fortnightly collections in a 180 litre grey wheelie bin

Continuing with the opt in garden waste fortnightly service in brown wheelie bins (charged for service, £30 per year)

Under the new scheme food waste, which currently goes to landfill, will be collected separately every week for composting and residents will be able to recycle more items than ever before. Verdant will collect more recyclables including glass, food and drink cartons (Tetra Paks), aerosols and aluminium foil, as well as the usual materials like paper, cardboard, tins, cans and plastics.

Separate arrangements will be made for people in flats or

households where it is difficult to store wheelie bins, but the intention is to ensure the same level of service for all residents. Assisted collections for people with mobility problems will continue.

Verdant will start to deliver the wheelie bins week commencing 30 March, they plan to deliver to 1,250 properties per day over a 10 week roll out period. Council staff will be available during the roll-out to address any questions from residents.

Communication Plan

A communications strategy and timetable has been developed which includes;

Pre-service communication – Frequently Asked Questions will be on the website and given to all administration staff. An introductory leaflet will be sent to all residents about two weeks before the bins arrive. This leaflet is being tested by focus groups. Posters will be sent out to Town and Parish Councils, housing associations, libraries & leisure centres and a series of advertisements will also be in the local press. An instructional pack will be delivered with the bins (inside the food waste bin). This will include a booklet detailing the service (what goes in each bin etc) calendars and container stickers.

Service launch – approximately two weeks before the service starts a reminder leaflet will be sent out to all residents.

Events/road shows – a series of road shows will be held (from April onwards) in the four main towns and larger villages, where possible these will tie up with planned events and national campaigns i.e. national recycling week and real nappy week.

All of the above will be complimented through media advertising including local press radio and outdoor adverts.

Leisure

As from the 1st April 2009 a new contract has been agreed with Greenwich Leisure Ltd and with Nexus. Nexus being responsible for running the leisure and sport centres in the district replacing SOLL Leisure. The upgraded Henley Sports Centre has seen an increase in usage with excellent facilities.

HRH The Princess Royal recently opened Cornerstone, the new Arts Centre in Didcot. This is a wonderful centre for live performances, dance classes, art lessons. There is also a bar and restaurant.

Your Place Your Future

We need you to play your part

South Oxfordshire District Council will be consulting on the next stage of our Core Strategy document 'the Preferred Options' in March that concluded on the 1st May'09. The Core Strategy will play a major role in shaping the future of our district over the next 20 years. The strategy will identify where significant areas of housing and employment growth will take place in the district up until 2026.

The 'Preferred Options' takes us a step further from the previous consultation of the 'Issues and Options'. After listening to comments from the previous consultation, as well as supporting information from our evidence bases, we are able to put forward a preferred approach to a variety of different important topics. These include areas such as:-

For our towns - Identifying which preferred directions of growth should take substantial development;

For our rural areas - Showing what approach should be taken to help them sustain and thrive.

Local residents and parish councils should let us know if the council has these and many other preferred approaches right. To find out more and how you can get involved visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/corestrategy or phone planning policy on 01491 823725.

Market Towns

In autumn 2008, South Oxfordshire District Council ran a series of consultation events in Henley, Thame and Wallingford entitled 'shaping South Oxfordshire's market towns future'. The views gathered have been used to inform individual market towns action plans.

The plans aim to highlight the priorities that the council will take the lead on addressing each of the towns in the next three years (April 2009 to March 2012), as well as identifying areas where the council will work in partnership with other bodies to deliver its objectives. The plans focus on the specific actions to be delivered in the financial year 2009/10. These will be reviewed annually. The action plans will also form a key part of the council's economic development strategy, which will be produced in 2009.

Housing

The South Oxfordshire Homechoice scheme (choice based lettings) was successfully launched on 23 July 2008. Since that time the council has run sixteen two weekly lettings cycles. This means that properties becoming vacant through our housing association partners have been advertised both on the Homechoice website and in the Homechoice newsletter. At the same time the Joint Common Housing Register was also launched successfully amalgamating the Council's waiting list with SOHA Housing's waiting list. This means that people now only have to join one list and the process is less confusing for them.

It is expected that the Oxfordshire Homechoice scheme will be launched this summer. Oxfordshire Homechoice also includes Cherwell District, Oxford City and the Vale of White Horse District Councils and is known as a sub-regional scheme. This will enable each Council to advertise particular properties across the sub-region providing an opportunity for mobility for those people who need to move within Oxfordshire. This will help people who need to move, for example, to be closer to family or support networks.

Our Housing Strategy Report 2008-2011 was published in October 2008, identifying strategic priorities for the district. Our five priority aims are to:-

> Increase the overall supply of housing, especially

affordable housing

> Improving the quality of the existing housing stock

> Prevent homelessness and improve housing options

> Developing sustainable communities

> Meeting the housing need of vulnerable groups, including older people and young people leaving care.

A series of workshops held at the recent 'Citizens Panel' Day strongly endorsed these priorities as the way ahead for the Council's housing service.

The local Housing Needs Assessment on behalf of South Oxfordshire District and the Vale of White Horse District Councils has recently been completed. The findings of this major piece of work have influenced the council's Local Development Framework that is going out to public consultation.

Housing Services have embraced the 'Fit for the Future' programme by reducing bureaucracy in its administrative procedures and merging its development and private sector teams.

One of the districts latest affordable housing schemes at Blue Mountain in Wallingford is now nearing completion and will provide some 80 new homes for rent and low cost home ownership. It must be noted that 'the credit crunch' has had a detrimental effect on any new developments being built.

Concessionary Fares

The concessionary fares take up has been greater than was expected and the latest estimates indicate an overspend for 2008/9 in excess of £40,000.

Flooding

The council has worked in partnership with other authorities and riparian owners to assist in flood alleviation projects

Planning

A total of 1887 planning applications were received last year of which 1656 were approved and 231 refused. The percentage of all appeals won by appellants (including partially allowed decisions) was 28.49%

Enforcement cases have reduced from 600 to 500 over the last year and the council has served 20 enforcement notices, which is the highest number since 2002. With the present financial and economic climate, the number of planning applications are expected to fall.

Council Tax

Despite the current economic problems and the poor government settlement, the council has set a council tax below inflation, an increase of 2.9%. This tax rise is one of the lowest in the South East.

Your Ward member thanks the West Hagbourne Parish Councillors for their co-operation during the year.

Cllr Patrick Greene May 2009

South Oxfordshire District Council – Hagbourne Ward

the issues for *2009/10*

This list is informed by the input and opinions gathered at the Annual Parish Meeting and from residents throughout the year.

Ongoing main issues in order of priority

1. Continue to represent the best interests of the Parish in consultations and other relevant opportunities, especially in relation to plans for new housing surrounding Didcot; with particular reference to maintaining strategic gaps and the need to address road infrastructure issues including a Harwell/Hagbourne relief road.
2. Sustain and build on relationships with neighbouring Parish Councils in the interests of all affected villages; jointly pursuing issues of common concern through mutually agreed collaborative initiatives.
3. Continue to pursue implementation of a traffic strategy, calming and speed control.
4. Achieve some tangible planning gain from the next stage of development of Didcot should it take any more of the Parish of West Hagbourne for housing development
5. Monitor and comment on proposed Parish Boundary changes and achieve maximum result from any change
6. Support implementation of the Parish Plan:
 - Provision of a Village meeting place
 - Provision of a children's play area
 - Encourage participation in activities such as litter picking, maintenance, rights of way clearance, and planting
 - Continue to maintain flower and tree planting
 - Village improvement group
7. Continue to provide twice yearly skips, for green waste collection in larger volumes
8. Lobby for a Cycle track between York Road and Didcot Wheatfields
9. Monitor and react to waste and foul water issues
10. Encourage the Newsletter and Website
11. Produce a guide for living in the conservation area
12. Erect old notice board in Foxglove Lane
13. Improve / maintain School Path
14. Continue to monitor local transport issues and integrated bus services
15. Propose a planted buffer zone (consecrated woodland) between Great Western Park which would ultimately help create a visual and physical division along the Parish Boundary

Parish Council

Phil Taylor Chair 850 182
phil.taylor@westhagbourne.org

Marion Judd Vice-Chair 850 434
marion.judd@westhagbourne.org

Tom Barker 850 858
tom.barker@westhagbourne.org

Sue Totterdell 850 080
susan.totterdell@westhagbourne.org

vacancy for a Councillor

Parish Clerk

Michelle Lightfoot 851 875
parishclerk@westhagbourne.org



previous minutes and newsletters are available at
www.westhagbourne.org

District Councillor and

County Councillor

Patrick Greene 813 396
patrick.greene@southoxon.gov.uk