

next meeting

The next meeting of the *Parish Council* will be held on *Thursday 11th January* starting at 7.30 in Hagbourne School

tell everybody



Would you like the Newsletter to include a section on personal events or activities?

You may have a family occasion, such as a special birthday or wedding anniversary, you'd like to celebrate via the Newsletter.

You may be deciding which University you'd like to attend, be planning an exciting gap year, or thinking about your first job. You may have musical or sporting achievements you'd like to share with the rest of the village

Please send items for the February Newsletter to janet@jcockburn.plus.com before 30 January.

book exchange

A small book exchange is held by Marion Judd at Broomsticks. If you are short of reading material, or if you have a book to exchange, please come along and see what there is. A fee of 20p is being charged for Village Association funds. Please phone Marion first on 850 434

skip in January

There will be a skip for green waste provided in early January on Greengate Lane. *Watch notice boards for date!*

green recycling boxes

Using these to recycle your newspapers, food packaging and cardboard wrappers is easy - the boxes are free and every little helps. Get in the habit now, before they start increasing tax for rubbish removal! Boxes are available from Bridget Pickup at 12 Manor Close

mobile library

Starting from Friday 12th January the library will be stopping outside Little Acorns Day Nursery at 9.20 as well as the present stop at The Square on 15 Dec between 09.00-09:15am

skill swap

There is now a feature on the website, so if you'd like to offer to do some ironing in return for someone to clear your gutters, or two hours dog walking in return for a trip to the dump -

contact Janet and she'll put it in this new slot in the next newsletter.

Please send the details of any items to be included in the next edition to the Parish Council or mail

janet@jcockburn.plus.com

parish plan nears publication

Early in the new year, the Steering Group are planning a launch event for West Hagbourne's Parish Plan.

The views and aspirations of villagers have been distilled into a document that sets out goals for the next 5 years covering improvements to the appearance of the village, the setting up of a volunteers' register and a traffic lobby group. The steering group is currently seeking the Parish Council's endorsement of the plan.

Of course, life does not stand still, and the plan will be discussed and revised annually at the Parish Meeting. However, if you have any projects or ideas that you would like to propose, please do not wait until then, the steering group would be delighted to hear from you at any time. You can contact them via Sue Totterdell on 850080.

village appearance group

A group of volunteers dedicated to projects improving the appearance of West Hagbourne recently carried out an audit to identify possible projects. On discovering that there was potential funding for improvements to footpaths, they successfully applied for a grant to *replace the stiles on the footpath to Upton with kissing gates*. These will hopefully be in place next year. Other projects include identifying sites for more planting and hopefully obtaining funding where possible. If you have identified an eyesore that you think Village Appearance Group might be able to deal with, please get in touch via Marion Judd.

conversation group

A small group of villagers meet once a month to try to improve their French by practising conversation in an informal atmosphere. Topics covered have included 'A Journey' and 'My favourite city'. This month thoughts turn to the festive season with 'Christmas Past'. If you want to join this friendly group, please contact Sue Totterdell who can give you the date and venue for the next meeting.

Harwell secrets published

A recently published book *Harwell: the Enigma Revealed* might prove a welcome present this Christmas to anyone who has been connected with the site: It's a 350 page hardback edition with 300 rarely seen pictures. "The true and astonishing story of Britain's secret nuclear science programme and its spin-offs".

Available for only £20 + £5 p&p from Nick Hance, The Vicarage, Buckland, Oxfordshire, SN7 8QN

record of collisions

Can we ask you to give feedback on any collisions, accidents and near misses that happen within the village - especially Main Street. The Parish Council needs residents to report any accidents or near misses that they have either seen or been involved in. It is very important that we collect this information so we can use it as evidence about the real safety issues for all of us in the village. Please, please, pass any information on to the Clerk or to a Parish Councillor.

West Hagbourne newsletter



December 2006

Vol 2006 Issue 73

recent *spate of vandalism* and burglary

Take Care! There have been some instances of vandalism and opportunistic thefts recently and this sort of activity highlights how vulnerable our property can be.

Over the weekend of 10th / 11th November night visitors to the village resulted in 4 cars damaged, one gate post and one footbridge damaged and a camper van broken into plus evidence of trespass.

Residents need to remain on alert and use car alarms wherever

possible.

Disabled badge holders need to be aware that stolen disabled badges are fetching high prices on the black market. Ensure that your badges are kept in a safe place at all times.

Also, make sure front door keys are safe from burglars. Please don't keep keys anywhere near your front door or where they can be seen through a letterbox. In particular PVC doors should be kept locked, as they are especially vulnerable to

intruders gaining easy entry to a property. In Didcot there has recently been a *spate of break in* through gaining access to keys by extracting them through letterboxes.

With Christmas almost upon us, don't leave presents in full view of windows, and take great care when shopping - don't leave your car unlocked when returning to leave parcels in the boot!

opposing *yet further growth* of Didcot

Plans for locating the next phase of Didcot's expansion are about to take another step closer.

The consultation was started with very little time to make views known, or sufficient concrete information on which to form opinions. The questionnaire circulated by SODC did appear to have been designed to mislead and divide people affected by the most recent proposals.

In short - SEERA have put forward a plan which allocates another huge chunk of housing to Didcot. The Town Council is against this, and we should be too. *It may be found that Didcot is not the right place!*

The public consultation is short and inadequate and is followed by an Examination in Public EIP which is selective about which objectors are called to put their case. It is not being managed in a very democratic way but is being pushed through by central government, bypassing local government and the normal planning process.

The expansion aims to create massive housing growth and economic growth around Didcot. Current problems of overcrowded roads and trains, expensive and scarce housing, and overstretched public services can only be made worse. It would be far better to put this massive investment into regenerating regions of the UK

where people are desperate for work and thousands of houses lie empty.

Central government, via SEERA, have dictated these expansion plans, making a nonsense of the several years of effort that have just been put into drawing up, consulting, and revising the Local Plan.

The expansion plan repeats the illusion that Didcot has access to a good transport infrastructure. Limited improvements to access to the A34 will not solve the congestion on the road itself. Congestion at the station forecourt may ultimately be solved but congestion on the trains due to limitations at Reading will require investment from Network Rail. We have been given no idea when or if this will happen.

Almost all of the expansion in Didcot will go on greenfield sites. This is contrary to government policy which is for the bulk of new development to go on 'brownfield', previously-used land, such as derelict industrial sites.

Didcot's expansion is likely to impact heavily on existing villages. The Hagbournes, Harwell, the Moretons, Appleford and Milton are all threatened by the proximity of thousands of new houses. Didcot is already due to expand by 5000 houses. Local communities will be swamped by additional housing, almost all of which will be built

within the parishes of surrounding villages. *Great Western Park is already going to be built on a large area of our Parish - how much more will they take?*

The impact of more traffic has been grossly underestimated, assuming that there will be a substantial shift to public transport.

The expansion plan describes itself as 'sustainable development', which is grossly misleading. Sustainable new housing must have minimal impact on the landscape, be constructed from renewable materials, should be energy and water efficient, have fewer cars with many residents working from home. We have been given no evidence at all for the sustainability of these plans.

Although Didcot's expansion will provide new houses for new commuters, it will not necessarily solve local housing problems.

Public services in Didcot are already overstretched. We want more schools, health centres, sports and leisure facilities, better access to arts and music for the existing population, not just for the proposed new residents.

We do not want more housing *until we know that an adequate infrastructure is in place* and for West Hagbourne that means we should have a well defined strategic gap and a bypass - first!

in this issue

Harwell's book

skill swop

farming news

village assoc

parish plan

kissing gates

Parish Council report

western villages alliance formed

The Parish Council met on *Thursday* the 9th November at Hagbourne School.

General forum Before the meeting the Council was shown the exhibition on possible locations for the next 3,000 houses Didcot is required to provide as allocated under the South East Plan. This was also displayed at Hagbourne Village Hall on 16th November.

This consultation was the sole topic discussed at the extended general forum which was attended by eleven very vocal members of the public in the presence of Councillor Patrick Greene and a planning consultant who is advising SODC.

Additional housing for Didcot Councillors discussed the SODC consultation and decided to reject any of the proposed sites on the grounds that there is insufficient information on which to base any decision. Until the district councils have had time to assess the impact of Great Western Park and also the additional 1,500 Growth Point houses on the local economy and infrastructure, the Council maintained that it would be irresponsible for them to go ahead with any further building plans on this scale.

The Council also agreed to participate in the *Western Village Alliance* that is being set up to fight these proposals.

Planning applications

The Council decided to 'recommend' approval of an application for a new vehicle access to the front garden of 11 York Road .

Hagbourne Village Hall

The Council decided in principle to provide some financial support for the extension to the hall if it could contain suitable storage space for the Council's archived documents.

CPRE Tranquillity Campaign

It was agreed to ask Cllr Greene to press SODC and the County Council to adopt the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England's principles of tranquillity. The CPRE point out that local authorities have a great deal of influence in protecting and enhancing the tranquillity of an area, and it encourage them to use that influence when formulating policies, making decisions about planning applications and in general when working toward sustainable development.

Oxfordshire County Council's Casualty Report and Road Safety Plan

The Council agreed to seek more information from the County Council on reasons for the high fatality rate for South Oxfordshire, as was shown in the County's recently published Casualty Report and Road Safety Plan.

Travel Tokens—proposed changes

SODC are proposing to take over responsibility for distributing travel tokens and have asked the Parish Council for comments. Councillors decided to inform SODC of their preference for continuing with the current system of personally delivering the tokens as this provides a personal service to the residents.

Parish Plan

Sue Totterdell reported that the Plan is almost ready to be sent to the designer, with the aim of distribution early in the new year.

The Parish Council agreed to manage any interim payments to cover the replacement kissing gate on the path toward Upton, which the village improvement group have obtained a grant for from OCC.

Village Maintenance

Chestnut tree in The Square The Council will ask SODC to inspect the Chestnut tree in The Square as Dave Carter raised some concern that it may be affected by disease or attack.

Grassed banks that are encroaching on footpaths The Council decided to draw this problem to the attention of Oxfordshire Highways.

Rubbish skip

It was decided to provide a skip for garden rubbish in January 2007 in Greengate Lane .

Budget and precept for 2007/08: The Council approved its budget for 2007/08 and decided that the Council Tax precept would be *unchanged* at £3,950, which is the same as for the current year.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on *Thursday 11th January 2007* at 7.30pm at Hagbourne School.

Note: all Meetings will now start prompt at 7.30pm not 8.00 as previously. Open forum time will be allocated depending on attendance.

Parish Council

Chair

Phil Taylor 850 182
phil@philtaylor.demon.co.uk

Vice-Chair

Marion Judd 850 434
mbjudd@supanet.com

Keith Little 850 094

Bernard Mead 850 783
bernardmead@westhagbourne.org

Sue Totterdell 850 080
susan.totterdell@pharm.ox.ac.uk

the Parish Clerk

Roger Sweet 850 492
parishclerk@westhagbourne.org

planning applications

new planning applications have been received for

- Vehicle access 11 York Road

planning permission was granted by SODC for

- Listed building improvements at Wycherts

newsletter deadlines

February Issue 30 January 2007

please e-mail copy for inclusion to
parishclerk@westhagbourne.org



The Parish Council extends Festive Greetings to everyone in the Parish this forthcoming Christmas. Thank you all your encouragement and support through this past year.

*have a Merry Christmas
and a truly happy New Year*

farming and the countryside



Harvest – What was that? It was finished before the third week of August - we didn't expect that. Although completely manic around the farm for a few weeks, what a wonderful run we had.

Conditions have been tinder dry and there have been a few fires around the area, but fortunately we have been fine. We have had our fair share of mechanical breakdowns though, when only using certain pieces of equipment during the summer season. Working them hard and continuously does tend to take its toll.

in preparation for starting harvest we desiccated the winter oil seed rape ready to begin combining a couple of weeks later, only to be greeted by the equivalent of an Australian summer, totally unprepared. The rape seed pods ripened really quickly leaving the stalks tough, so we had to

begin cutting or we would have lost the seed onto the ground. For a good sale price, the moisture content needed to be at least 7% so we had to continue cutting right through the night to prevent the crop from being too dry. The heat saps the oil content and reduces the quality.

The rape has been replanted using a lower seed rate per hectare. This prevents it from growing too thick and it encourages the formation of more seed pods because of the extra light. It is also easier to harvest.

By the beginning of October all the wheat crop for next year was planted and the compound fertilisers applied throughout the month.

October is a good time to proceed with hedgerow cutting. Through the ELS (entry level scheme) we are restricted with what to cut, how high and how often and this has to be monitored. What fun!

There are plenty of berries for the birds this autumn, hopefully enough to last them through the winter. As the weather becomes colder though, don't forget to put out nuts, seeds and water in your garden to help them through the cold spell.

Water reserves are still extremely low, but the pond has more water at the moment and the stream at the back is no longer dry. We rely upon the rainfall in these autumn months to build up the water table. We have had about 7inches during the last two months and there still remains a need for the hose pipe ban.

According to the RSPB ¾ of the barn owl population have died during this summer due to the lack of availability of small vermin, their main staple diet. If anyone sees one locally do please let me know. The Tawny and Little owls are definitely about; they can be heard in the late evening.

We've added a new Indian Runner mate to the lone Duck on the pond - who may now stop pretending to be a moorhen.

The English are renowned for talking about the weather, hardly surprising considering the dramatic changes and unpredictability of the forecast. But I do wonder what else we have in store for us this winter!

Sue Lay
Hagbourne Farm Partners

western villages alliance

West Hagbourne Parish Council has joined with other parishes to the West of Didcot to fight against the next allocation of housing to Didcot for the period 2016-2026 as outlined in the South East Plan put forward by SEERA.

At a recent inaugural meeting it was agreed that the villages would present a united front at the forthcoming Examination in Public that will take place in Reading on February 27th and 28th 2007.

Prompt action by Harwell Parish Council secured a seat for the alliance at the Examination to speak on Didcot's Housing allocation.

A written document arguing the case against this further expansion towards the surrounding villages is also to be submitted before the end of January 2007.

village association

The AGM on the 7th November was held at Broomsticks

In his Chairman's report Peter Mitchell spoke of the sad death during the year of Steve Gore, a committee member.

cancelled events

He commented on the cancellation of a number of events in recent years but that the Association's tenth year was fast approaching and hoped for a memorable year.

The Madge Trophy

this was again claimed by Joyce and Bob Beacroft.

Judging for the 2007 award will be in July.

accounts

The Treasurer reported an end of year balance £1253.84

the new committee

Peter Mitchell (Chair)
Keith Walton (Treasurer)
Hazel Rack (Secretary)
Committee Members:
Simon Ford, Marion Judd, Betty Kendrick, June Little, Mike Parker, Bridget Pickup, Roger Sweet and Val Walton.

Future events

There was some discussions about various suggestions, which have been put forward. These included a mystery trail and lunch, visits to various houses and gardens, theatre, trips and a weekend of art, music and open gardens. Please continue to forward ideas and feedback to committee members. Events will be publicised in the newsletter and on the village website.