

ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 12th April 2017 at Kingston Blount Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs. L. French. P. Hetherington, T. Hill, P. Tinson (In the Chair), D/Cllr. Lynn Lloyd, Tracy Lambourne - Clerk, plus an additional 16 members of the public and representatives of various parish organisations.

Apologies: Cllr. M. Day.

Mr. Peter Tinson, Chairman of the Parish Council, welcomed those present to the Meeting.

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th April 2016, were approved and signed (attached).

2. Matters arising from those Minutes – None.

It was noted however that there have been several changes of personnel since last year and the opportunity was taken to formally thank the following for their services over the years:

- a. Peter Gibbons (former Chairman, resigned)
- b. Andy Green (councillor and former Chairman, resigned)
- c. Stephanie Johns (former Clerk, resigned)
- d. Gordon Crossley (former councillor, deceased)

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Given by Cllr. Peter Tinson (attached)

4. Report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee of the Parish Council. Given by Cllr. Peter Tinson on behalf of Cllr. Matt Day (attached)

5. Statement of Parish Council Accounts to 31st March 2017

Given by the Clerk, Tracy Lambourne (attached)

6. Report from the County Councillor

No report received.

7. Report from the District Councillors

Given by D/Cllr. Lynn Lloyd (attached)

8. Report from Aston Rowant School

No report received.

9. Traffic Calming Report

Given by Cllr. Peter Tinson on behalf of Cllr. Matt Day (attached)

10. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Report

Given by Mark Thackeray, Chairman of Aston Rowant Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (attached)

11. Reports from other organisations within the Parish:

- a. **Footpaths and Amenities Group** presented by Peter Hetherington (attached)
- b. **Hillwerke Trust Committee** presented by Lavinia Martins (attached)
- c. **Poors Hillock Allotments** presented by Stan Riley (attached)
- d. **Parish Notes** presented by Julian Knight on behalf of Sarah Day (attached)
- e. **Aston Rowant Churchyard Group** presented by Tracy Lambourne (attached)
- f. **Aston Rowant School House Education Trust** presented by Peter Lambert (attached)
- g. **Aston Rowant Cricket Club** presented by Rob Holt on behalf of Paul Humphreys, Chairman (attached)
- h. **Thames Valley Police – Thame Sector** presented by PCSO Diane Jackson

12. Open Forum

Questions were asked by parishioners regarding: -

- a. Money available to assist in infrastructure improvements in the light of recent increase in housing being built in Chinnor and Princes Risborough. D/Cllr. Lloyd advised that the previous Section 106 funding has been replaced by the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and approaches now had to be through SODC, not the Developers themselves. It was confirmed that this will be something the Parish Council will be investigating, particularly with regards to increased traffic through the villages.
- b. Traffic Calming. The main focus is in Kingston Blount, specifically along the High Street where several properties have recently been struck by vehicles and where houses are directly adjacent to the road, but other measures will be investigated for minor village roads and the whole length of the B4009 within the Parish.
- c. A formal record of thanks was recorded to Sarah Day, editor of the Parish Notes, who was congratulated for her continued work on the new and refreshed bi-monthly publication. The magazine remains a valid and important means of communication within the Parish and is available to all households, complimenting other digital methods of imparting information.

Peter Tinson

Chairman, Aston Rowant Parish Council.

Aston Rowant Parish Council – Chairman's Annual Report (2017)

A year ago, Andy Green, then chair of the Parish Council, noted in his annual report that the year had seen a lot of change. This past year has been no different - the pace of change has, if anything, picked up. Peter Gibbons and Andy Green both decided to step down from the Council. Both have made significant contributions to the Council and parish life over recent years and I would like to thank them for their contribution. Sadly in February we also lost Gordon Crossley who died after a short illness. As I noted in Gordon's obituary in the last edition of the Parish Notes, he was a stalwart of the village - in addition to being a Parish Councillor he served on the Village Hall Committee for over thirty years. Finally Steph Johns, our Parish Clerk for three and a half years, moved to become Sydenham's Clerk. Our loss is their gain - I would like to thank Steph for her work during her time with us and, in particular, for her support during my first six months as Chair.

On the credit side, I am pleased to welcome Lawney Hill as a new Councillor and Tracy Lambourne as the new Parish Clerk. Both took up their new roles in the autumn and are already contributing much to the work of the Council. We do, however, have two vacancies on the Council. The vacancies have been advertised but, in the event that insufficient parishioners petition for an election, the Council will be able to co-opt to fill the two vacancies. If you are interested in joining the Council, please contact Tracy Lambourne or myself.

Much of the work of the Council is reported on elsewhere in these notes so, rather than replicating those reports, I shall highlight a number of other points. Firstly, Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse District Councils have submitted a proposal to the Cabinet Office to establish a unitary authority covering the whole of Oxfordshire except Oxford itself. The new authority, if the proposal is approved, would be active from April 2019. It is anticipated that some elements of authority would be devolved to local area boards to promote greater involvement in decision making by local communities. However, the size of the areas (and hence the level of influence we may have as a parish) are yet to be determined.

The volume and speed of traffic through the parish continues to be an issue, particularly along the B4009. A number of properties on the High Street in Kingston Blount have been damaged in accidents - consequently traffic calming in Kingston Blount will be a major focus for the Council in the coming year. That is not to say that it will be our only focus - we are aware that speeding is an issue along many of the roads in the parish and we will look to take steps to encourage traffic to slow down through our villages. We have a number of signs that can be stuck to the side of wheelie bins for parishioners to use and have written to Oxfordshire County Council requesting that a warning sign alerting drivers to horse riders are installed on Kingston Hill.

The Council kept well within the budget for 2016/17; allowing for committed spending invoiced in March there was an underspend of around £2500. This sum will be transferred to reserves. The cost of any traffic calming measures have to be met by the parish. The Council agreed to commit a sum from reserves to spending on traffic calming but will also investigate other options such as the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Council felt that it would be prudent not to run the reserves too low and so agreed to increase the precept to maintain the reserves at reasonable level.

It is disappointing to report that the Cherry Tree remains closed. There was some initial interest in purchasing the pub as a going concern which did not come to fruition and I understand that there has been some recent interest. However, given the length of time the Cherry Tree has been up for sale, we are not optimistic that it will continue as a pub.

Finally, I should like to thank all the Councillors, volunteers who serve our community, for their work during the course of the year. Volunteers are the lifeblood of communities such as ours and I would like to acknowledge and thank all those that have contributed to parish life by organising events, by helping out at the Cricket Club, or by working on the committees and groups that underpin the various activities. Often this work falls on a dedicated few so it was pleasing to see a number of new faces come forward. I hope the trend continues and others get involved to keep our Parish the place it is.

ARPC Planning Committee Statement - 12th April 2017

Aston Rowant Parish Council planning committee have been consulted on 28 planning applications over the last year. Most of these applications were “householder” applications and are improvements or extensions to existing houses. ARPC always try to support residents modernising and improving their homes and where possible we give advice and support as there is a fair amount of knowledge here on the council. We also try to seek the opinion of neighbours if it looks like it may cause issues. We strongly encourage discussing any plans with neighbours before submitting them as it can save time, money and misunderstandings along the way.

There have also been a few larger applications in the Parish. One was for two new houses on the High Street in Kingston Blount, which was approved and work has begun. There have also been a number of agricultural buildings approved, one at Woodway farm and the other at Parkwood stud, both in Aston Rowant. There has also been a couple of ‘Granny Annexes’ applied for and approved.

The most difficult application we, and the community, have been asked to consider this year was the Cricket Clubs plans for a new club house and nets. The Parish Council wish to do all we can to support the cricket club and we all recognise that new facilities are needed. But, we were asked to consider approving a large building that would have a significant impact on a very special location adjacent to the Moors path that connects the two villages in this parish. After long consideration and reflection of a very large number of objections by local residents we decided to refuse the application and the two further amendments to the plans. SODC have not yet decided on this application but we stand-by ready and willing to work with the cricket club on any further plans or ideas.

It may be worth noting that ARPC are consultants on all planning applications in and around the parish and as an official body the comments we make do have significant weight. But we do not make the decision on the applications we are only consultees. SODC make the decision and they do not always agree with our recommendations or comments. Of the 28 applications over the last year they agreed with us on all but one so far. (the one was SOHA’s application to retain blue roof tiles on the new houses in Bakers Piece, where we said OK and SODC refused them).

ASTON ROWANT CHURCHYARD REPORT

The Churchyard continues to be well maintained and looks particularly lovely at this time of year with an abundance of primroses, daffodils and tiny violets. It is an idyllic, peaceful country Churchyard which is enjoyed by many, some using the path as a cut through from Church Lane to the village whilst others are content to sit on one of the wooden seats and quietly enjoy the lovely surroundings.

We are so grateful to the local council for the generous grant which enables us to employ Chris and Helen to cut the grass and trim the hedges on a regular basis; this is in addition to the small army of volunteers who do so much to keep the Churchyard looking neat and tidy at all times – it is an on-going battle maintaining this neat and tidy graveyard whilst providing a safe habitat for wildlife but with so much help, support and encouragement I feel that we do achieve it.

Jenny Flynn (Churchwarden)

ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL FOOTPATH AND AMENITIES GROUP
ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

Parish Councillors

Peter Hetherington (Chairman)

Lynn French

Advisor

Mike Eaton

Co-opted members

Di Eaton

Graham French

Jan Gooders

Tony Hughes

Julian Knight

Peter Gibbons

The group have met twice during the year. They always welcome any proposals from parishioners as to how we might improve the Parish and its environment.

Walks

We organised two parish walks during the year. Only 20 walkers joined us. These events were joint ventures with Thame and Wheatley Ramblers. The one from Kingston Blount Village Hall attracted 14 walkers, mostly from the Parish. It was 7.5 miles. However, the New Year's Day walk from Wendover only had 6 walkers - none from the Parish. It was a horrible rainy day so perhaps not surprising there were not many.

Aston Rowant Discovery Trail

The circular walk Trail remains very popular bringing more trade to the Leathern Bottel.

Peter led Oxford HF (Holiday Fellowship) round the trail in June. We continue to see people from all parts of the country walking the route holding print outs taken off our website Also a group of over 40 Ramblers were seen recently.

The Trail is now on Trip Advisor so if you walk it please post your comments. It all helps with our publicity. You can also get the route map, directions, and points of interest by searching Aston Rowant Discovery Trail on Google.

Update on Five Ways, Church Lane, Aston Rowant.

The Parish Council is managing the area around the stream at Fiveways for Nature. The pathway through the trees has been improved and lengthened. More dead and weak trees have been removed, and hazels pollarded all of which allows light. The willows planted by the stream have grown well and soon the school children will be encouraged to cut them and use the branches for weaving wicker baskets.

Mike Eaton has taken the lead in redesigning the area and in organising the planting of wild flowers, all of which are indigenous species. He has recruited several volunteers to help with this work including Lynn and Graham French but he needs more help please.

More of the ground ivy has also been removed. This has encouraged the snowdrops to spread and aconites and wood anemones have started to flower in the same area along with snowflakes, marsh marigold and a few fritillaries. We have also planted wild daffodil bulbs, both English and Welsh strains, and there has been a good display.

We have planted primroses but we need more so if you have some spare in your garden come and plant them at Fiveways please.

We now appear to have a resident stoat and fish in the stream which has been partially dammed to raise the level of the water. We also have a pair of lesser whitethroat warblers that return every spring.

We are getting increasing numbers of daily visitors to the site and with the help of a donation from a Parishioner are about to install a new seat to add to the rustic bench already in situ.

Please read Mike Eaton's reports in The Parish Notes that appear every other edition and provide much more detail. There is a lot of progress being made and a lot of further activity to come.

**Mike needs more volunteers, so if you are able to help please contact him.
(Mike Eaton Tel 351238)**

Working with Aston Rowant School.

We continued to take a school class round Aston Rowant Village, one afternoon once a year, talking about the history of the area and we led them down to Fiveways to make discoveries of their own, and setting them a quiz. It seems to be very popular and something we would like to continue. Chinnor U3A have also asked us to lead a similar Outing for one of their groups.

Working with Aston Rowant Church.

Snowdrops and Duck Races at Fiveways and Cakes at Aston Rowant Church was repeated in February. It again was a very busy day with more children taking part in the Duck Races this year as we worked more closely with the school in promoting the event. And a lot of cakes were eaten and teas drunk in the church. We have already agreed to repeat it next year on Sunday 11 February.

Rights of Way

Oxfordshire County Council Countryside Services gave us one free cut of path vegetation in the centre of the villages. We understand that this will continue as will their seasonal request to farmers to reinstate footpaths after ploughing.

Grants and donations of £15,000 have been promised for upgrading part of the surface of the Footpath AR7 which is the Moors footpath between Kingston Blount and Aston Rowant. The grant is from TOE2, Oxfordshire's Trust for the Environment with donations from Kingston Blount Brook Street Fair, Hillwerke Trust, and a land owner and funding from Aston Rowant Parish Council. Another grant has been applied for and further private donations sort. A total of £21,048 is required and it is hoped we will be able to complete the work in school holidays either at the end of May or this summer.

ARPC are urgently seeking donations please. We all love using this path and we need to improve the surface for walking in the wetter weather.

Please contact me if you are willing to donate.

Entrances to the Villages

Once again, the Parish Council warmly thanks Simon Coulon who continues to plant, maintain and water the flower tubs in the villages. He gives his time, the plants and materials free of charge and the results are there for us all to appreciate. Thanks, Simon.

Litter and Fly Tipping

Litter and fly tipping is a constant problem along the roads and we are regularly in touch with SODC and their contractor, Biffa, to have this cleared.

We joined the National Great Litter Pick in March. 8 Parishioners helped fill 18 sacks of litter collected from the A40 lay by at the top of Aston Hill and from Kingston Hill road verges! Litter is a huge problem across the whole country.

I'd also like to thank our Parish litter picker, Robyn Leinster, as well as Tony Hughes and Kate for volunteering to litter pick on the sides of the busy roads in the parish.

Peter Hetherington
Tel 01844 353296

ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE REPORT 2016/2017

The precept this year was £20,500.

We received further grants / donations as follows:

- **£427** from SODC towards the cost of celebrations for the Queen's 90th Birthday (Part of the 2016 KB Street Fayre)
- **£1,400** from the KB Street Fayre Committee – contribution towards the cost of upgrading the Moors Footpath between the villages.
- **£250** donation from an anonymous parishioner towards the cost of a bench seat at Fiveways (to be installed in spring 2017).
- **£226.29** from SODC which was put towards the costs of street cleaning which are no longer borne by SODC, and which we are now responsible for.
- **£450** from SSE to pay for the WW1 memorial plaque at the village hall.

The final figures show that we were £3,130 under budget, but we still have invoices from 2016/7 that have yet to be paid, totalling £570.92.

The previously negotiated four-year payment plan with SODC (to cover the cost of the 2015 election) has had 3 payments made so far, with the final £393.42 due from the 2017/8 budget.

The precept for 2017/18 is £22,500, an increase of £2,000 on the 2016/2017 figure.

This represents a 9.75% increase overall, for band D households this equates to an increase of £4.88 to £52.94.

Continued increases in grass cutting & litter picking which have been withdrawn from OCC funding

£2,000 allocation towards traffic calming measures in the villages, the rest to be borne from general reserves.

Grants were allocated as follows:

- Chinnor Village Centre £555
- Aston Rowant Churchyard £896
- Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance £110
- South & Vale Carers £58
- CAB £115
- M40 Group £200
- Chinnor Community Pool £50

RESERVES

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|-------------------|--------|
| Village Hall | £690 |
| Play Area | £5,636 |
| Parish Notes | £1,000 |
| Trees & Footpaths | £6,466 |

(expenditure less than the incomings but £1,400 of the incomings are earmarked for improvements to the Moors Path.

District Councillors' Report (Chinnor Ward) 2016 / 2017

We have continued with the monthly report to our Ward Parish Councils on our activities and we hope that this has been useful and we also ensure that there is a report in Chinnor's Pump news magazine. In addition to that Ian now produces a monthly newsletter for all Parish Councils in the District, setting out what the District Council is doing.

Dealing with Issues - We have actively supported our Parish Councils and residents with questions and issues concerning development ranging from questions about fences and hedges up to issues around new major developments, The Judicial Review that the District Council mounted in May 2016 went against us, and in light of Planning Appeals across the Country, it has been clear that the only defence against predatory developers is Neighbourhood Planning. Lynn has actively supported the team developing this and in getting additional funding from SODC. We have also dealt with a number of housing and benefit issues for residents.

Committees - Ian is a member of the District Council's Planning Committee, the Licensing and Scrutiny Committees, and the Police & Crime Commissioners Panel which includes oversight of the Community Safety Partnership. Even with the major cuts of funding, our Police Commissioner has continued initiatives cementing TV Police Force's position as one of the most effective and innovative. An example of this innovation is the roll out of defibrillators in patrol vehicles.

Lynn was re-appointed to the Cabinet as Portfolio member for IT, HR, Customer Services, Corporate Services Project. Lynn is also a member of the Joint Staff Committee and a Board member at the Chiltern Conservation Board.

Waste And Recycling - For the third year SODC has been awarded top place in the Recycling League Table in the country. Further initiatives are being introduced to gain even more efficiencies in this process.

Finances - South Oxfordshire remains a financially sound council. Despite increasing financial restrictions, having decreased our part of the Council Tax in 2015, we are able to maintain it at the same level for the second year running. We have maintained our Grants schemes which helped support the up-grade to the Conigre Play Area, provided the funding for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebration on White's Field and a number of other projects locally.

We also both support and attend the Community Leaders Meetings initiated and run by our Rector Maggie Thorne.

That's our summary of 2016/2017. Fuller details are in our Monthly Reports which are provided to the Parish Councils and printed in the Chinnor Pump.

Traffic Calming Report - Aston Rowant Parish Council Annual General Meeting 12 April 2017

Speeding and road safety is a major concern for local residents, it has been for a long time, and I was appointed by Aston Rowant Parish Council to work on this issue. In order to do things properly I first had to gather data to prove to Oxfordshire County Council Highways department that speeding is an issue. It was decided that ARPC would fund a speed survey at 3 locations on the B4009 in KB.

The results (how speeding is assessed) are as follows:

Opposite Icknield Close the average speed was 35mph.

(Actual Results)

- *Eastbound – 34.5mph*
- *Westbound – 35.6mph*

Top of Pleck Lane crossing the average speed was 28mph.

(Actual Results)

- *Eastbound – 29.2mph*
- *Westbound – 25.4mph*

West Entrance to Kingston Blount near Stert road junction the average speed was 41mph.

(Actual Results)

- *Eastbound – 40.8mph*
- *Westbound – 41.3mph*

OCC now do agree that speeding is an issue, in particular at the west entrance to KB where average speeds are over 40mph. OCC also confirmed that due to a lack of fatal accidents and the B4009 not being a hot spot they would not fund any traffic calming measures and advised that if we want traffic calming then we will have to fund the whole thing ourselves.

Last year ARPC funded an independent highways engineer to visit the villages, walk the roads and meet with 2 engineers from OCC with a brief of developing a draft plan of suitable traffic calming measures and have been the basis for consultation to date. (which has been advertised in the Notes, on the website and KBAR)

I met the three of them and we discussed all the options available to us, the process for designing and gaining approval for road works and what options were available to us in KB and AR. We were advised that speed cameras would not be available as they only used them where there have been multiple fatal accidents and all cameras are now fully controlled by the Police. They have confirmed that the B4009 is not a location they would police.

Earlier this year ARPC asked the OCC highways engineers to produce a detailed plan for traffic calming at the entrance to KB next to the cricket pitch. The solution that is being pursued is a double style chicane that will encourage drivers to slow down even with no oncoming traffic as you have to drive through a chicane and not just pull out into the other lane. This style works very well and can be seen at the entrance to Benson. We are not pursuing the use of speed bumps as no one likes them and they can cause real noise issues.

The next steps are:

1. OCC to produce detailed plans for the chicane.
2. ARPC to review and agree the plans.
3. OCC issue the plans for comments to all local residents, stakeholders and statutory bodies such as the ambulance service and police.
4. We and OCC submit plans to contractors for prices for the works.
5. OCC undertake formal safety audit.
6. OCC approve the plans and the works can go ahead.

Residents and anyone who wants to comment on these plans can do so when OCC issue them for comment in the next few months, we will ensure that all residents are informed via the usual channels.

It is expected to have approval by the end of the year.

The budgets are as follows:

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| • Detailed design for issue to OCC | £2,500 +VAT |
| • Road Safety Audits 1/2, 3 and 4 Stages | £2,500 +VAT |
| • Build and Install the Chicane | £15,000 (estimate only) |

HILLWERKE RECREATIONAL TRUST ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PARISH MEETING
MAY 2017

We were saddened by the unexpected death of Gordon Crossley in February. Gordon had been a Trustee for many years and was approaching the end of his second term as Chairman. His contribution to the success of the Village Hall cannot be overestimated. We are currently without a Chairperson but hope to appoint someone shortly.

Hirings

The Montessori Pre-School continues to be the main source of our income stream and we enjoy a good relationship with them. We make a point of dealing in a timely manner with any issues they flag up relating to the hall.

We continue to have regular hirers, currently, yoga, Zumba and kettlebell sessions weekly and a monthly flower arranging group. Two caravan clubs regularly hire the facilities for weekends and I believe a third group may also be interested.

The hall remains a popular venue for parties, both for children and adults. We have been able to hold our hire rates at their 2016 level this year.

Expenditure

Gordon mentioned in his report last year two issues that were then being dealt with, firstly, the installation of a new sewage pump and, secondly, repairs to the car park. We were grateful to the Parish Council for releasing the funds they were holding in the Hillwerke Trust Reserve Account to go towards the cost of the replacement pump and also for commissioning the work which enabled VAT to be reclaimed.

Repairs were undertaken to improve the state of the car park and the bays were re-painted. A few new potholes have recently appeared, which will need to be dealt with. Ideally, the car park needs re-surfacing but this is a very expensive job indeed.

A project which Gordon oversaw and which was completed to his satisfaction not long before he died was that of new signage, both on the outside of the hall and on the approach to it.

The hall is beginning to feel its age and, in order to maintain its attractiveness to existing and potential hirers, the committee has embarked on a refurbishment programme. To date, this has involved replacing the night storage heaters in the committee room with efficient, wall-mounted convectors, which will make this a more welcoming space.

We have also decided to replace the hall lighting entirely with LED lights which will not only eventually save on electricity costs but also on the cost of frequent electrician callouts to replace the fluorescent tubes. Committee room and kitchen lights have already been replaced and we are looking at having the main hall done in the summer holidays. Re-decoration of the committee room has also been carried out, and new blinds, if they are not already fitted, will be shortly. Re-decoration of the entrance lobby and cloakroom areas is also planned for the summer holidays.

As regards the Playing Field, we took expert advice on the issue of rabbit damage but the problem was not deemed serious enough at present to warrant action, though this will be monitored.

Bookings System

Thanks to a considerable amount of work by Andrea Tinson, our Bookings Secretary, and Liz Riley, Treasurer, we have now gone fully over to online bookings via our website using the Hallmaster system, which is also used to generate invoices. BACS payments are being encouraged wherever possible to minimise the handling of cash and cheques, however, good oversight is needed to ensure payments have been made prior to the hall being used and we can rely on Liz to provide this. We do also publish a dedicated mobile phone number for anyone who does not wish to use the internet.

Following the difficulty/impossibility of recruiting anyone willing to act as keyholder on a regular basis, the decision was taken to mount a keysafe on the outside wall. Hirers will be given the code (which will be changed monthly) to gain access to the hall. We're hoping they will replace the key when they leave!

One project which did not go ahead was that of providing a broadband connection. This had been requested by the Montessori Pre-School who would contribute both towards its installation and ongoing costs, as the Hillwerke Trust had only identified it as possibly desirable but by no means essential. Rob Holt spent many time-consuming and frustrating months dealing with BT on the installation initially of a phone line, but ultimately the cost proved too great. The School were happy with this decision and thanked us for our efforts.

Events

The main event was the inaugural Christmas Fayre held at the beginning of December. With a lot of competition for this kind of event, we were pleased with the outcome, a profit of around £500, and are currently looking to repeat the event in 2017 with, it is hoped, more support from the local community. Dick Ewen organised this event more or less singlehandedly on behalf of the committee.

On 1st July, we have a Summer Music Event scheduled, details of which are currently being finalised. The entertainment is being provided by Howden Jones, a duet who perform all around the country in village halls and community centres and are very highly regarded. Tickets will be on sale shortly and we hope they will be snapped up.

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As you can see, the committee has been busy this year and while we do have a good number of members at the moment, they are also very busy people, with many demands on their time; however, I would like to thank them for the contribution they have made over the past year and hope they can be persuaded to carry on with the good work.

Lavinia Martins
Hon Secretary
April 2017

April 2017 Parish Notes Annual Report - Sarah Day

I have now produced a full year of Parish Notes after taking over from Susan Greenhalgh. The process seems to be running well and I receive text and photos for inclusion each issue. Although we thought we may need a small subsidy from the Council last year when printing costs increased, we didn't have resort to using it, as the advertising revenue has also risen to cover these costs. The Parish Notes are produced and distributed entirely by volunteers. They come out six times a year, every two months. Copy is always due on the 15th of the month before the first month on the cover. (So copy for the June/July issue will be due 15th May.)

Julian Knight manages the advertising. Jenny Jackson organises the distribution. Hew Reid proofreads the issue before printing. Tracy Lambourne has stepped down from managing the accounts and (I understand) Peter Lambert will now be helping us with that.

There are six issues a year, and the cost of printing each issue ranges from about £175-265 depending on the page count of the issue. As we hoped, the new format and better quality of ads has increased local interest in the Notes and attracted new advertisers.

The Parish Notes are now organised into clear sections including a Contents page, and Diary on the back, a Noticeboard section and a listing for things to do with young children. I have introduced several regular features: A letter from the Head Teacher of Aston Rowant School, Maggie's Rector's letter, Dick Ewen's allotment tips, Tessa Wyatt's country diary and Eliza Day's diary of what it's like to be a girl in Kingston Blount (though I'm not sure how much longer she will continue!) I welcome editorial content from anyone who would like to share their passions or interests in the Notes.

A dog sharing scheme was less successful, and I have found that asking readers to participate often meets with little interest.

Many people tell me that they read the Parish Notes and that it provides valuable local information, for which there isn't an equivalent source available online. There are still many local people who aren't on Facebook, or who don't feel safe or comfortable on such a public forum. Also, because of the team of distribution volunteers, the Notes can be printed and delivered to every house in the village within a matter of a few days. For these reasons, even in such a digital age, they continue to be a valuable and useful resource for many who live here.

Neighbourhood Plan - Steering Group Report to Parish Council on 12 April 2017

The Steering Group was set up following the public meeting in February 2016 and the subsequent decision of the Parish Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The group currently comprises five members, plus interested parties. There is always room for more and, when we get to the hard work, there will be a need for greater local involvement.

The first step was to define the area to be covered by the plan, and, following local precedent, the Parish Boundary was agreed upon by the PC and duly submitted to SODC for approval in September 2016. It was duly confirmed and registered by the district council on 21 December 2016.

Meanwhile the Steering Group prepared the Terms of Reference under which it would operate within the legislative procedures, themselves constantly changing at central government level. These were confirmed by the PC on 14 December 2016. At the same time the Steering Group produced a set of Goals and Objectives to guide the preparation of the NP. Approved by the PC, also in December 2016, the Goals and Objectives have been published in the Parish Notices, reported to SODC for recording on the NP website, re-issued as a consultation, again through the Parish Notices, and set down for inclusion in the newly-created NP website page.

In line with established practice, the Steering Group produced a Project Planner, setting down a provisional timetable for the production of the NP.

The dates set out to guide the process include:

- Developing and refining the issues, evidence gathering, draft policies and assessing conformity with the local plan – June to October 2017.
- Draft plan – November 2017
- Sign-off of draft plan – December 2017
- Pre-submission consultation – January 2018
- Review of consultation and amendments to plan – February/March 2018
- Basic conditions statement – April 2018
- Consultation statement – May 2018
- Plan submission to SODC – June 2018

SODC then pick up the baton to arrange the examination of the NP, leading to a local referendum towards the end of 2018. The aim is to see the Neighbourhood Plan “made” by March 2019.

Over the summer of 2017 there will be extensive local consultation, and, hopefully, involvement in identifying the content of the NP. It should be noted that, in South Oxfordshire, the NP is, to some extent, a defence mechanism prompted by a) the emerging SODC policy to spread the supply of new housing sites on a pro-rata basis throughout all settlements in the district, and b) the established policy in SODC not to draw local plan boundaries to define settlement areas within which, in principle, new development would be acceptable. This means that Aston Rowant Parish will be asked, if the emerging policy is confirmed, to identify potential housing sites in the defined area for new housing, as a minimum, to contribute growth to 2032/33 and, by the same token, to identify those areas which, following public consultation and local plan-compliant justification, should not be developed.

This is the next task and the one in which all residents and interested parties will need to take part in the next few months. It will form the core of the NP, that part which distinguishes the ARNP from others or from the district-wide local plan.

The Project Planner has enabled the Steering Group to apply to SODC for funds to cover the survey work and plan preparation, and central government funds may also be available. Liaison with SODC has commenced over the need for Environmental and Habitat Assessments. Hopefully, SODC and the Environment Agency will agree that they are not needed. Given the scale of the NP, such studies would eat into the limited funds available. The Steering Group is also reviewing the census and survey data provided by SODC. The funds will be needed to fill any gaps in the local knowledge.

Consultation will be a major exercise over the coming months, and the justification of plans and policies, based on full public awareness and acceptance, is fundamental to the completion of the NP process.

Mark Thackeray

Chairman – Aston Rowant Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

HILLOCK GARDENS ALLOTMENTS' REPORT TO THE PARISH MEETING

12th APRIL 2017

This is the annual report from the Trustees and Managers of the Hillock Gardens Allotments since our last report in April 2016.

First we wish to announce changes that have been made regarding the trustees following the resignation in September of Wendy Hawkins and Ray Hipkins who are now replaced by myself, Stan Riley, and Les Martins, at the request of Angela Murray, Lady of the Manor and ex officio chair of trustees. This is in line with the latest Charity Commission Guidelines as we are both beneficiaries of the charity. Together with Harry Sheppard this brings the total number of trustees back to four. Since the new appointments, arrears of rent on the allotments spare land dating from 2013 onwards have been collected and the financial reports to the Charity Commission brought up-to date.

Our allotment year starts at the beginning of October each year. The allotment managers, who were re-elected at the AGM in November are Stan Riley, Chair, Les Martins, Treasurer, and Lavinia Martins, Secretary.

We are pleased to report another successful year with currently all 45 plots being occupied by a total of 34 tenants, 9 of whom qualify for rent-free plots as they are in receipt of state pensions.

Plot rents remain unchanged at £11.00 per 10 pole plot and £5.50 for a 5-pole plot. Non village tenants, of whom there are currently 4, are charged double to comply with the terms of the charity

In addition there are:-

Water charges at £5.00 per 10 pole or £2.50 per 5 pole plot

Insurance is charged at £4.00 per tenant.

In addition to the rental income we received £95 in Gift Aid donations on which we were able to re-coup a further £24 in tax.

We continue to promote the allotments regularly via the PC website, village noticeboard, and in the parish notes.

Risk assessments continue to be carried out. Currently no risks have been identified.

No major maintenance was required this past year except that the main gate had again to be rehung this time due to sagging of the gate post thought to be due to ground shrinkage. Although the gate is currently serviceable it is planned that the single field gate will be replaced by a double pedestrian/ field gate for ease of access. At the same time the posts will also be renewed.

Minor maintenance on the allotments will continue to be carried out by the tenants in 2017 as necessary. Again we have to thank Ernie Foster for the time he gives with strimming and mowing grass in the main thoroughfares. In the future we may have to consider contractors for this work as modern trends seem to be going away from 'self-help'.

Lastly at the Street Fayre the allotment plant and produce stall raised £168 for charity, thanks to donations from members, and particularly Hew Reid and Cate Andreopoulos, who organised and manned the stall.

This completes my report for this year.

SJ Riley April 12th 2017

Here are the figures you requested from PCSO Diane Jackson.

Kingston Blount 14 offences

4 sus circumstances
Theft from vehicle 1
Theft of vehicle 2
Traffic hazard 1
Drink driver intel 1
Dangerous driving 2
Parking obstruction 1
Abandoned vehicle 1
Forthcoming advent notification 1

Aston Rowant 15 offences

3 loose dogs
1 plane crash.
Abandoned vehicle 1
Missing person 1
Fear for welfare 3
Parking obstruction 1
Address check 1
Bilking taxi fare 1
Hare coursing 1
Sus person 1
Going through skip 1

Lewknor 3 offences

Accident road traffic 1
2 dead deer in the road.

Kingston Stert 1 offence

1 vehicle sus looking for scrap.