

HORSPATH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 30th April 2007 at 7.30pm in Horspath Village Hall.

Present: Mr Dobson
Mr C Goss
Ms S Gray
Mr M Harris
Mr D Horsley
Mr A Martin
Mr B Mayling
Mrs H Palmer
Mrs H Kogel, Clerk
Mr R Bell (District Councillor)
Mrs A Purse (County Councillor)

Apologies: Mrs L Bushnell
Mr R Hamlet
Mr C Whitlock

Public: 44

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Apologies given for Mrs Bushnell, Mr Hamlet and Mr Whitlock.
2. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**
Mr Donald Gray proposed that the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 8 May 2006 be approved, seconded by Mrs Ena Tasker, all in favour. The minutes were signed as correct.
3. **STATEMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS 2006/07 – Un-audited.**
A statement of un-audited accounts for 2006/07 was circulated. The statement of accounts had not at this point been reconciled with end of year bank statements. A resident asked about the repayments on the Burial Ground loan. The Clerk explained that payments are made twice a year, and Mr Horsley added that there is also an income received by the Parish Council for burials that take place.
4. **STATEMENT OF PAROCHIAL CHARITIES ACCOUNTS 2006.**
A statement of accounts for the year ending 31.12.06 was circulated. No comments made.
5. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – Mr Martin Harris**
After nearly 10 years as a Horspath Parish Councillor, including 5 years as Vice Chairman and the past 2 years as the Council’s Chairman, I will retire from the Council in May, so this will also be the last issue of the Horspath Parish Council Newsletter which I will edit. I therefore firstly wish to express my own sincere thanks to all of those Councillors and other village volunteers who have made it possible for this village to achieve so much progress in these recent years.

This issue of the Newsletter, and any other recent issues saved in colour in electronic form, will be posted on the newly established Horspath Village website, (www.horspath.org.uk) by our professional, but entirely voluntary webmaster, Councillor Heather Palmer, to whom very special thanks are due for achieving in a very short time something which no one else has been able to do for us during some years of talking about it! The website is still in its infancy, but it is already really worth looking at, if for nothing else, just to see all the village photos in colour, and to find answers to many frequently asked questions about the Council and the village. This will become the electronic notice board and archive for the Council, and whenever in the future we have a real village crisis requiring the help of every resident, as we did when someone tried to demolish the Bridge against our wishes, this is where the information will be posted first, before leaflets can be printed for door-to-door delivery, and where further quickly updated information will be found, as well as on the notice board on the Green.

The most important current project for the future of Horspath is the development of a Parish Plan, which despite its name, is not just about the Parish surrounding our famous church, but it concerns the future of the whole village community. The Plan will be a written statement of the hopes and priorities of our village community, including an Action Plan listing what has to be done to achieve these aims, which when completed, will be distributed free of charge to every household as a well-presented booklet. This is a community initiative, supported by the Council, which should involve every resident in Horspath contributing their own views on what should be done to protect and improve Horspath, and it will involve everyone at least answering a fairly long questionnaire later this summer, which is explained more fully in the Newsletter, and will be discussed by anyone who can attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 30th April. Horspath is a village where the majority of residents take a very positive pride and pleasure in living here, and want to protect the village community and improve the general quality of life, and when we have produced a Parish Plan, the Council will know that it is representing the majority views of all residents when it follows the priorities agreed in the Plan, and fights its various planning battles to keep Horspath as a village separate from Oxford.

Unlike the successful 'Battle to Save Horspath Bridge', the latest of the 'planning battles' fought by the Parish Council to protect Horspath as a Green Belt village has not been fought in Horspath at all, but at the Examination in Public (EiP) of the draft South East Plan (SEP), where I represented the village at the public debates held in Woking and Reading by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA), which is the organisation which now takes over the future structure planning of Oxfordshire from Oxfordshire County Council. Horspath was one of the very few Oxfordshire Parish Councils which were able to have their say in this EiP about the importance to us of remaining a village surrounded by the open countryside of the Green Belt, as proposed and supported by SODC, by the County Council, and by SEERA itself. At the EiP our views were opposed by a vast consortium of professional planners and lawyers representing builders and property developers supporting the claim by Oxford City Council that it needs space in the Green Belt to build a new "urban extension" to Oxford on the south or south-east side of the Oxford Ring Road – which could mean right here in Horspath - if some local landowners are allowed to have their own way. I produced all the written statements of case for the village as we simply could not afford a lawyer for Horspath for the long duration of this EiP, and I strongly opposed the scheme proposed by the City of Oxford to build in the Oxford Green Belt. I made the case that Oxford still has land within the City boundaries, designated as "Safeguarded Land", which it could develop if it needs housing for some of its 'key workers', that even if the Green Belt was abolished, there would still be people who, provided that a rural village environment could be maintained, would prefer to live in a nice village like Horspath rather than in Oxford City, and would choose to commute into Oxford or elsewhere to work. I also made the point as often as possible that our efforts to preserve the rural environment and independence of our Green Belt village and prevent it from being overwhelmed by any future expansion of Oxford does not represent any selfish "nimbyism" on our part, but is a more responsible longer term way of protecting not only the local environment, but also the economy of the whole central Oxfordshire sub-region. The developers are in these big planning battles simply for money, very big money, on the scale of millions of pounds of profit for every single acre of Green Belt land which they might succeed in removing from the protection of the present Green Belt policy in the draft South East Plan. We will not know how well our viewpoint was received by the government Planning Inspectors at the EiP until they report in July, and then the final decisions about any possible changes to the Oxford Green Belt will be taken by the government in Westminster, where we will have to depend on our MP, Boris Johnson, to fight our case. So it is quite fortunate that Boris Johnson is visiting the village on the afternoon of July 13th and will take a short tea break in the Village Hall. It will be the next Council's decision on how best to exploit this opportunity to lobby him, and to decide whether or not we need to mount a further campaign to protect the village.

The successful campaign to Save the Bridge showed that we can protect our rural community when we have such a crisis, and although the Bridge cannot now be legally demolished and remains there to slow down the traffic and prevent the largest heavy goods vehicles coming through Horspath, we have not yet been able to buy it for the quoted price of £1. The owners (BRB) still have to offer it for sale to Mr. Kelly at this price, even

though it cannot now be legally demolished, and if he bought it, he would quickly face very expensive bridge engineering maintenance costs because it crosses over a public road. If the Parish Council is able to purchase the Bridge for £1 and convert it into a public footbridge across this increasingly busy road, it is likely that the funds necessary for the necessary building work could be obtained from various grants which only the Parish Council could apply for, so the Council is still waiting for an opportunity to make sure that the Bridge not only remains there, for all the reasons expressed by Horspath residents at the Public Inquiry in 2005, but that it can be put to a good future use at no great financial cost to the village community.

Delivered along with this Newsletter is a special questionnaire – a HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY- for every household to fill in and return by revised date of Friday 18th May using the FREEPOST envelope also supplied, whether or not there is anyone in the household in actual housing need. This survey is a necessary and obligatory first step in the Parish Council's on-going project to establish a 3rd Affordable Housing Scheme in Horspath to provide for the needs of people with strong personal connections to Horspath who cannot otherwise afford to buy a house here now that housing on the open market has become so expensive. This survey is supported by both SODC and ORCC who will analyse the results, and then inform the Parish Council of these results, to confirm the needs of the village, in general terms, and anonymously - so that there is absolutely no reference to any residents' names. The general results will be posted on the website.

The Parish Council, together with the Horspath Village Hall charity and the Horspath Village Sports Association, are proposing a major £1.6 million development of the facilities for sport and recreation in the village, which can only happen if it is supported by such funds as the Lottery. This project would involve the eventual demolition of the Scout Hut and the building of a state-of-the-art, purpose-built, energy-efficient double-sided sports pavilion with changing rooms, and the establishment of a new sports field on the Oxford side of the Village Hall. The details of this evolving plan are explained elsewhere in the Newsletter, but a low-cost beginning has been made by the planting of 120 new trees in the Bowley Field, and a further 300 trees have been requested from SODC for planting there next winter.

Horspath won the Best Kept Village Competition and was then chosen as the Winner of the Winners Class in the Best Kept Village Competition last year. We did not enter this year, partly because the competition format has now been changed, and partly because we had only recently won all we could possibly win, due in part to the continued efforts made by everyone in the village to look after their own property, partly by the Council's own programme for the maintenance of the public areas, and especially due to Mr. & Mrs Tasker who have shown the way by their own example of how everyone can help to keep litter to a minimum.

In the new Burial Ground, the path of concrete slabs to the area used most recently for burials became unstable and the Council received complaints that the unevenly settling slabs constituted a 'trip hazard.' Very reluctantly the Council, recognising that it had a legal responsibility to remove a hazard to public Health & Safety, arranged for a large section of these recently laid slabs to be removed and stacked in the Burial Ground pending use elsewhere. The grass has since been restored and re-seeded by Robert Gray.

The Wildlife Conservation Area is now in its 8th year as a very successful and popular village project, supported by the Parish Council and by a team of volunteers who have used their various skills to make this Area a very pleasant place for an interesting walk in the heart of the village. The 2-year drought not only dried out the ponds last summer, but also the clay which is underneath them, but they are now replenished with enough water to see this year's crop of many thousands of tadpoles come through to maturity and leave the pond as little frogs in July. The population of bats hibernating in the tunnel continues to grow, and some more 'bat furniture' was installed by Bob Hamlet and many other volunteers. The Area now attracts several thousand visits by local people every year, particularly dog-walkers, and in the recent wet winter, the top section of the 'circular path' became too slippery for most of them, and so it will be re-surfaced this spring with about 10 tonnes of gravel bought by the Parish Council.

The renovated Village Hall Children's Play Area continues to be heavily used, to the great delight of many young children and their families in the village, but the costs to the community of repairing mindless criminal vandalism by a few rather older people to the adjacent Village Hall building have again amounted to £5,000. The actual bills were kept low because Brian Mayling and Bob Hamlet organised some volunteer working parties to do some of the repairs and maintenance, but it is inevitable that the Police will now need to be more involved in identifying and bringing to court those responsible for causing the criminal damage.

The Village Green is maintained as an attractive public open space by the Council, acting under clear obligations as Trustees of the charity supervising it. Many complaints were made to the Council about the way in which some motor vehicles were being parked on the grass of the Green near the Village Stores & Post Office, turning this area into a quagmire in wet weather. The Council tried in vain to persuade some vehicle owners politely not to park on this piece of grass, which Mr. & Mrs Patel have volunteered to maintain to a higher standard than the rest of the Green which is mown by the Council. Persuasion produced only verbal abuse, so Councillors reluctantly had to install the wooden bollards to physically keep the motor vehicles off this grass, using some money which was already set aside from the payments received in the past for the ('way leave') rights of some householders to drive across other parts of the Green to reach their private garages. The Council has yet to take further action to eliminate encroachment onto the Green by other illegally parked vehicles, an unlawful fence, and other items left without permission on the grass areas.

The traffic problems in Horspath were very severe, and frustration high, when the volume of through traffic doubled during the Green Road 'hamburger roundabout' construction before Christmas, but the volume quickly fell back to its normal level except at the peak rush hours. The chicanes and the road humps, which were installed in 1999 in response to the popular demand by 500 Horspath residents for a Traffic Calming Scheme to make the village streets safer, remain in place as the County Council's best solution to the persistent speeding problem. The Parish Council has asked the County Council to replace the chicanes by any other approved device which will slow the traffic without obstructing 2-way traffic flow, but these requests have been refused, as it has been proved by speed surveys that, although the chicanes do not slow down all the extreme lunatics on the road, they do slow most of the more responsible drivers very considerably. Keith Brooks' photos below might cause one to wonder just how fast that car must have been going to demolish an electricity pole and then continue another 50 yards off the road into private property before turning over? Bad driving caused this accident, not the traffic calming scheme.

The Bridge is still the best traffic calming tool, cutting the speed of 85% of the traffic down to less than 31 mph, and at the same time making it impossible for articulated high sided HGV's to pass through the village. However, some very big HGVs still do occasionally still arrive in Horspath to cause damage and confusion when they need to turn around, mostly driven by non-English speaking drivers following the faulty instructions of their satellite navigation systems while trying to reach the M40 at Wheatley from the Oxford Ring Road. BMW Group has been very co-operative in briefing all the drivers of HGVs which deliver to their Cowley factory not to attempt to go through Horspath, and the HGVs which have continued to cause the problems do not appear to have any connection with BMW. The County Council has agreed to erect new weight limit signs and low bridge warning signs on both sides of the road near the Stagecoach bus garage, in an attempt to make the warning signs more conspicuous to HGV drivers who should not then risk coming to Horspath except to deliver here. Horspath residents are asked to note the registration numbers of any very large HGVs defying the new signs, and communicate these to the Council as soon as possible.

Wherever possible, the Parish Council has attempted to avoid unnecessary expenses, and so as a result of economies in some areas, there is now £5,000 available for a necessary upgrade of the Village Hall kitchen, and

it has even been possible to make a small reduction in the Parish Council share of the Council Tax to be paid this year.

It remains only for me to sincerely thank the very large number of volunteers in Horspath who do unpaid voluntary work to make the village a better place to live in, and whose efforts have made my job as Chairman of the Council during the past two years more enjoyable and manageable.

The local Police Constable reported that there have recently been burglaries in Manor Drive where keys to three vehicles were stolen. If anyone has any information, please report to the Police as soon as possible. Thanks were passed to Councillors and residents for all help and support given to the Police.

Mr Horsley passed thanks to Mr Harris for his time spent as both Councillor and Chairman of Horspath Parish Council and for his enormous efforts with projects including the Bridge, the Conservation Area and many other major plans and projects.

6. EXPLANATION OF WHY HORSPATH NEEDS EVERY RESIDENT'S HELP IN WRITING A NEW PARISH PLAN.

Mr Harris reported that the Parish Council is made up of voluntary members that often have to comment on plans/projects from local government. Some of the major decisions on Countryside are not considered as high priority which presents a problem when the residents of Horspath want Horspath to remain a village, when villages do not have a large enough say in the planning procedures.

Horspath was one of the few villages present to represent their views at the South East Plan's Examination in Public. Mr Harris represented Horspath in opposing the proposed housing developments along with help from Dr Ian Scargill – OGBN. Residents need to be aware and ready to challenge developers wanting to build on the Green Belt.

This is why Horspath needs a Parish Plan which represents the views and priorities of the residents. Any future grant applications made by the Parish Council will be asked what kind of Parish Plan/Survey has been conducted, and will help the success of the funding. Mr Harris circulated an initial sheet for the Parish Plan for residents to complete which will be followed by a questionnaire and a public meeting. Once the results of the questionnaire are available then a plan will be drawn up to implement the requirements of the residents. The Horspath Village Sports Association has major plans in the pipeline.

7. CHAIRMAN OF VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS – MR BRIAN MAYLING.

Before I submit my report I would ask you to accept that it is almost impossible to segregate the Village Hall affairs and aspirations from that of the Sports Association, and I believe that is only right and proper. So where my report strays from one to the other I trust you will bear with me.

On the day-to-day running of the Hall's use, it remains a popular venue for meetings and conferences. However we have experienced some difficulties with some of the functions we were attracting, particularly those that required bars. We were finding that they were rowdy, unruly, did not respect the people who live in neighbouring properties, the Hall, or indeed the booking conditions. If we incurred costs for any damages together with paid bar staff, lettings were becoming unprofitable. In view of this we have currently restricted function bookings with bars to people that are sponsored by individuals who are prepared to vouch for them that in turn are known to the village organisations. Going forward we need to review this arrangement and possibly get back to the situation we had when we started with voluntary bar staff. We did organise another Goats evening in September which was again very popular and raised a considerable amount of money.

There have been numerous ongoing maintenance issues, all of which have been remedied with the assistance of Bob Hamlet. For some reason somebody took issue with 3 of the seats in the Ladies toilets and they were replaced. A water miser was fitted to the Gents urinals because we were receiving some ridiculously high water bills to run the previous drip system. A new fridge was fitted in the kitchen. There are still items that need attention. The boiler either needs replacing or we need to find a maintenance engineer who can still maintain it. And the kitchen is in need of refurbishing. The Parish Council has very generously approved a sum to assist with these items.

As everyone who cares to take an interest will know, the Village Hall came in for a lot of unwanted attention once again from the local yobs. A tremendous amount of work had to be undertaken just trying to keep pace with repairs of the damage and destruction these idiots caused. At one point we had so much damage to repair we set-up a working party, again under the guidance of Bob Hamlet. To repair/replace guttering and down-pipes, fit anti-climb protective shields, and apply anti-climb paint and warning signs. Steel sheets were fitted to most of the exterior wooden doors and the new doors on the old Scout Hut. Within hours of the working party finishing their work the idiots once again demonstrated their mindless determination to destroy whatever we try to achieve by smashing off the waste pipes from the kitchen.

The general protection of the area and the Bowley Field from unauthorised access by motorcycles and travellers is now good. Although it was discovered that two young girls had obtained the gate combination as they were caught letting in some of their young friends on motorcycles/motorcars.

Underage drinkers still regularly frequent the recreation area in the summer months, considerable caches of discarded bottles/cans of alcohol have been found on several occasions and the amount of broken glass around the area causes considerable concern. I am sure many of you will know, despite concerted efforts to report these incidents, we have been unable to generate any meaningful response to our plight.

2006/2007 saw the development of the Green Mile. It would be remiss at this point not to thank Keith Brooks for all the magnificent work he did, not only on the Green-mile but the numerous other items he assisted with, especially the clearing-up of the whole area, the work he did in clearing the dead trees in the Bowley Field, the rubbish at the back of the cricket pitch and of course the clearance of the ragwort.

The Occupancy License has now been finalised and signed between the Village Hall and the Sports Association. This provides complete protection for the Sports Association, or should I say more precisely, the cricket club at this point in time, to any challenge to their tenancy of the premises under the Charities Commission regulations. On the subject of the Sports Association a tremendous amount of groundwork has been put in by Martin Harris who has supported me and the various committees in getting this up and running. The Scout Hut, which is integral to our plans, had already been secured. The second phase was to draw up a provisional plan that would include the basic requirements of the sporting facilities but to also be flexible enough to accommodate any other facilities that would be required by any other group or sporting activity that may be required in the future. A lot of different plans were considered and a lot of meetings took place with representatives of various sporting and planning departments. There were many considerations, investigating pitch sizes and requirements changing room sizes, first aid and referees/umpires facilities. We believe the current plan that was reproduced in the Newsletter embodies all the advice and best use of the available area.

117 trees of various types have already been planted which delineate the border alongside the planned new cricket and football pitches. Amongst the people we have met and consulted with were Gabby Powell, the Sports development Officer – South Oxford District Council. Gavin Hawkey, County

Development Officer – Oxfordshire Football Association. Rupert Evans, Cricket Development Officer and Jane Randle of the Planning Department plus a representative from the Playing Fields Association. All of these individuals were very impressed with our plans and very supportive of what we are trying to achieve. In fact, in many ways we believe we are pushing against an open door.

However we, or perhaps more particularly myself, have met considerable skepticism - in fact, I would go further and say opposition - to what we are trying to achieve. We have also an element that is hell bent on destroying everything we do or try to develop. I have encountered considerable abuse from individuals that, in my mind, I have simply tried to assist. And the destructive elements we have encountered cause us to spend all our time and energy trying to keep up repairing the damage that they cause. In this sense we are simply treading water. As far as resolving the obstructive attitudes and skepticisms, hopefully the Village Plan will indicate the path we should follow. I would hope that it indicates that there is a nucleus of people in the village that want to see sporting and recreational facilities for young people.

However if it does not I am sure that there is enough drive and energy to assist the cricket club in achieving their aspirations of new pavilion, clubroom and additional pitch. I cannot speak highly enough about the support and attitude the cricket club have demonstrated. They have assisted in every proposal the Village Hall and Sports Association have made. They have assisted in the purchase of the gang-mower, not for any benefit to themselves but to assist in the preparation of the ground and development of the Bowley field and football areas. They also assisted in the purchase of the very expensive goalposts, again to facilitate football development, which have also been so badly vandalised by mindless idiots.

This other problem of the vandalism and damage is a very serious one indeed and I honestly believe that it could be the undoing of all our plans. If you spend a lot of time working in the area as I have, it is inevitable that you have confrontations with these individuals who deliberately and defiantly initiate actions to demonstrate their contempt for everything we try to do. The ordeal that one of our greatest supporters was subjected to has taught us not to challenge them, to avoid confronting them at all cost, effectively turning a blind eye to what they are doing. Even as we speak I am aware that this last weekend a very great number of the new trees that were so lovingly and painstakingly planted have been ripped up and destroyed.

I am sorry that I close my report on such a sad note but I'm afraid that I see this as the biggest problem; in fact it is probably the only real problem that stands in the way of us completing our plans. Finally can I thank all of those who have assisted me, by giving up so much of their valuable time on the various committees and initiatives?

8. **SOUTH OX'SHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILOR'S REPORT – Ms Sarah Gray/Mr Roger Bell**

Over the past twelve months a number of things have taken place or decisions made at SODC which have affected Horspath. Below are some of the more interesting points.

Garden Waste - The new system of collecting garden waste by the provision of brown wheelie bins seems to be very popular judging by the number seen around on alternate Mondays in spite of the fact that residents have had to pay up to £29.00 extra over and above their council tax in order to get this service. About 20% of residents have taken up the offer. However we have lost our bi-weekly community green waste vehicle and the facility for those with small gardens to have brown paper sacks.

Call Centre - Earlier in April SODC transferred their telephone reception to a call centre based in Coventry. The rationale for this move, which will cost in excess of one million pounds, is not clear to

many Councillors. The decision was made by the Cabinet, not by Councillors. Sarah phoned in this morning and waited until eventually being cut off by BT. Hopefully this was a teething problem but the staff at the centre later denied that there was a problem in answering calls.

Sheltered Housing - The long awaited report on housing and housing for the elderly was issued in September and, in particular, this showed what we had expected, namely that our rapidly ageing population will require more facilities, and of a much higher standard than at present. An extract from the report highlights the situation. –“Most of the rented sheltered housing in South Oxfordshire was built in the 1960s/1970s. The location, design and amenities of many schemes no longer meet the needs and expectations of older people. When most of the schemes were built, sheltered tenants were predominantly in their 60s and 70s. Older and frailer tenants moved on to institutional care. The trend is now to support older people in their own homes wherever possible, and consequently the age and frailty profile of sheltered tenants has increased considerably. Schemes which were designed for fit and active newly retired people are very unlikely to meet the needs of older tenants with mobility and health problems. In addition, tenants’ and applicants’ expectations have risen, schemes that would have been “state of the art” 30 or 40 years ago are now no longer attractive or even acceptable to older people. For some years, bedsit sheltered flats have been hard to let.” This explains the decision to redevelop Windows Court in Wheatley to provide affordable rented accommodation for all age groups.

Council Tax - SODC has again been very fortunate this year to have a generous increase in government grant towards its expenditure. This means that no increase in the SODC portion of council tax is needed. The budget for SODC expenditure is rising from £13.6m to £14.1m. A band D property will pay £116.17 for District Council services. (For comparison, band D tax in the VOWHDC will be £102.07)

Staffing - SODC continues to have problems in the recruitment and retention of senior staff. This may be related to the level of salaries compared to the very high cost of living in South Oxfordshire. As a result, the Planning Dept, has been understaffed and this is adversely affecting its ability to respond to cases where contravention of planning law requires enforcement action. Currently only cases considered to be high priority are being fully pursued by officers and even then considerable delays are evidenced.

Parish Plan – Mr Bell reported that Wheatley Parish Council completed their Parish Plan a couple of years ago and are now working through the different ideas.

9. OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – Mrs Anne Purse.

Waste Collections – Mrs Purse reported that either the City or District Council is responsible for the collection of waste in the area, but it is Ox’shire County Council that is responsible for disposal. OCC has a lot of pressure from the Government not to put rottable waste such as kitchen waste into landfill but to arrange a separate collection. The Ox’shire Waste Partnership has stated that the volume of waste has to be reduced in the future. The rising cost of waste disposal will have an effect on local Council Tax.

Green Road Roundabout – General reports are that the roads around this area are much quicker.

Cycle Track – Ann Purse will discuss the frequency of sweeping the cycle track with OCC as there are reports that there is often glass, stones and litter on the track.

Local Councils – Mrs Purse reported that the Governments decision to keep the two tiers of local councils has been welcomed. There are many occasions when OCC and SODC work together.

Pavement – Oxford Road – The repairs to this pavement are at the top of the repair scheme.

Mrs Lewis reported that there are no white road markings as you come off the A40 coming from London which is very dangerous. Mrs Purse will take this matter up with OCC Highways.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Mr Horsley informed members of the public that there are several Councillors that will not be standing for re-election this year, so there is an urgent need for new members to join the Parish Council to assist with the planned projects.
- b. A resident asked about the procedure of allocating the affordable homes in the village, and if a property becomes empty will it be allocated to another resident of Horspath.

If a resident of Horspath qualifies for Affordable Housing the property would be allocated to them. If not people from neighbouring villages will be considered.

c. A resident asked about the traffic calming chicanes in Oxford Road.

Mr Harris reported that in 1999, 500 residents signed a petition to reduce the traffic speeds in the village. The chicanes that were installed were paid for by the Parish Council and maintained by Oxfordshire County Council and traffic surveys show that they do reduce the speed of traffic. OCC has advised the Parish Council not to remove the chicanes. The Parish Council has reported all accidents in Cuddesdon Road to Oxfordshire County Council and a record of these will stay on file. OCC will only fund new traffic calming measures if there is a high accident rate, and to date fortunately none of the accidents in Cuddesdon Road have been major. The Parish Council is not able to fund any further measures.

d. Mrs Tasker commented that the chicanes on Oxford Road are very dangerous.

Mr Harris explained that the accident rate is not high enough for OCC to take any further action. The Parish Council agrees with the concerns that have been raised and all information has been passed to OCC.

Another suggestion was for speed humps to be installed on the bend of the Green.

e. A resident raised concern on the high level of vandalism that is occurring in the village, and stated that this should not stop the future development of additional facilities as the more facilities that are available, the more people will use them which will hopefully reduce the vandalism.

Mr Mayling stated that as an example, tables and chairs have been purchased for the play area to encourage more people to visit the area. Unfortunately these now provide seating for underage drinkers. The vandalism that is taking place will not affect future plans, but how long can the anti-social behaviour of certain youths be tolerated?

Mr Harris commented that he is very disappointed with the amount of vandalism that is taking place, especially as most of the projects are carried out by volunteers. Hopefully, future funding will include the provision for CCTV camera's to be put in place to help catch the offending youths, with the addition of more assistance from the Police. Mr Harris called for more volunteers to assist with village projects, as there were very few volunteers to assist with the refurbishment of the play area.

Mr Harris thanked everybody for attending the Annual Parish Meeting.

11. REFRESHMENTS

Thanks to Gill Gray and Shirley Woodcock for organizing the refreshments.