

Chair's Report. Parish Council February 4th, 2026

Councillors

I believe I start most meetings with “it’s been a very busy month”! So yes January has been very full. There has been a succession of meetings on the topics put forward this evening plus I have been doing some online training of the new planning framework. The consultation on the Mid-Cherwell’s Modified Neighbourhood Plan ends on February 19th – so there is more to be done. The Hearing CDC’s Local Plan has occurred and so we are moving further towards a ruling, the results of which will affect our village.

I came across an archive file labelled *Greens and Verges*, which detailed a contentious issue from around 50 years ago concerning an elm tree on North Lane and whether the surrounding land was legally a village green. The county solicitor’s report confirmed it was not, allowing a fence to be erected; the unprotected tree was later felled. This prompted me to work with Paula Hessian, our historian and archivist, to search the village hall archives for the Parish Council minutes from 1896 relating to greens and verges. It was a needle in a haystack search and two hours later Paula saw two ledgers and a type of document bound together with elastic bands. We opened them and discovered minutes from the 1890’s including the minute we were looking for. I pieced together that information with the county solicitor’s ruling and found without a doubt why there have been issues regarding the greens and the verges.

Most importantly, I found tangible evidence of our village history. I brought the binders with me so you could have a look back at 132 years ago – that this parish council has been doing its best to serve the village.

Secondly, several years ago, a new councillor joined our team – Colin Rosser. His speciality was publishing and he was able to help with the development of the Village News as we see it today. Upon his resignation and sad death, Alex Reid became Editor and has further developed the magazine until we have the fabulous Village News we have today. You will be aware that Alex has resigned and will do one more edition. The question is: what is the way forward? If anyone would like to be part of a wider discussion of the way ahead, could you please let either Tracy or myself know after tonight’s meeting.

I have reached out to two villagers regarding putting themselves forward to sit on the parish council. There will be further discussions next week.

Thank you,
Diane