

5. Chair's Report

It's a complicated time for Parish Councils, and our work is no exception. With the hard work of the Clerk and each of the Councillors, our finances are in good shape with great work from the Finance group led by the work of Tracy and Jane. One of our development goals is going forward (more from Ben later). Our planning work is exceptional, and Susan is fearless when it comes to challenging errors and requesting further action on projects: Planning Enforcement must have her on speed dial. What other village could muster the support for Works that need to be done, ideas to save us money, John is a quiet star. Yes, we do need more councillors and that has been a frustration but sunny days and some increased social inter-action with new people might help in that regard.

There are concerns: we have learned today that Cherwell's positive housing number has been challenged at appeal by an Inspector and as a result Heyford Park is getting 230 more houses.

Note: Appeal Decision

81. The appellant has argued that the Council's Regulation 18 consultation does not include a policies map as defined in the Regulations and therefore the Council must demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land. Both main parties provided copies of legal advice they had received on this matter.

82. However, as I have stated above, the Council has less than a four-year supply irrespective of whether this is assessed on their own supply figures or that of the appellant. It is therefore unnecessary for me to determine whether paragraph 226 of the Framework is applicable, ie. whether a five year or a four-year supply should be demonstrated. It is also not necessary for me to assess each of the disputed sites.

83. Accordingly, I conclude that the Council has less than a four year supply of deliverable housing land and this shortfall is significant.

This could be significant for our village or the expectation could fall on the towns as CDC stated in the Draft Local Plan. However, developers will see this as a window to apply for developments.

This matter was discussed at length at the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plan Alliance meeting today. We were able to share four recent Inspectorate decisions within Oxfordshire challenging Housing data. It feels like our area of the country is going to be strongly pushed for more housing.

The ground re: planning feels like it is shifting - with our Local Plan in draft form, a new NPPF to wrap our heads around with further changes expected any day, Inspectorate decisions shredding what we thought we knew. How do we keep abreast of all of this? The answer is teamwork and networking. At the same time we need to understand our village, the views of the residents and act as guardians of a long and special history.

Can I ask you to circle April 26th in your diary. The Village Hall committee is having a bit of a welcome event and hopefully will give committees and groups the chance to meet newcomers and chat with those we have fallen out of touch with.

A quick note that our concerns about the Neighbourhood Watch programme are being sorted out. Patsy will take over as an interim measure and a meeting with the regional liaison person will be taking place shortly. We need volunteers for this and hope to recruit people for their street. I would like this work to be connected into the Parish Council so we can liaise between the NWatch team and our Emergency Plan, if the need arises. Also, it is important that the village has a successful programme in place as more families move in.

Thank you

Diane Bohm
Chair