

BOURTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Bourton Parish Annual Assembly will be held on
Tuesday 28 May 2024
at 1930 hrs in the Village Hall

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Minutes of meeting held on 24 May 2023**
- 3. Matters arising**
- 4. Chairman's Report – Nial Ledingham**
- 5. Report from Pinewood School – Neal Bailey**
- 6. Report from Village Hall (if not covered at AGM at 1900 hrs)**
- 7. Report from the Church – to be presented by Simon French**
- 8. Report from the Club – Lisa Machin**
- 9. Accounts for year ending 31 March 2023 - Clerk**
- 10. Report from District Councillors**
- 11. Questions from Parishioners**

Signed:

Dated:

Bourton Parish Council

APPENDIX A

PARISH COUNCIL'S REPORT FOR ANNUAL ASSEMBLY MEETING TUESDAY 28 MAY 2024

A round up of items the Parish Council has been involved in this year.

PLANNING

- Thanks to Carolyn Francis for attending the CPRE meeting to discuss the Joint South Oxon and Vale consultation for the Local Plan from 2025-2041 and for bringing to the attention of the residents of Bourton the opportunity to join the Landscape Character Assessment.
- The Parish Council responded to the consultation on the Joint Local Plan 2041 Preferred Options mainly giving support to the settlement hierarchy and the proposal that Bourton would remain in “open countryside”. This should ensure that strict planning rules are in force which hopefully would protect the village from inappropriate development. It was noted that in the Call for Sites (HELAA) the site between Grange Farm and Cleyfields had been put forward by Guy’s & St Thomas’ Foundation (the Charity). Other parcels of land had also been put forward between Bourton and Shrivenham. We will have to wait to see if any of these are accepted by the Vale after the screening process.
- **Eastern Villages.** Although planning is agreed in principle, this is still largely in the pipeline. In due course, however, work will begin on the construction of several thousand houses on both sides of the A420 between Acorn Bridge and Sainsbury's, with the significant increase on traffic volumes that that will create on the A420. Building at Redlands has already begun. The planning application for Lotmead has gone to appeal for non determination. In connection with the renewal of SBC's Local Plan, there are rumours that landowners are promoting yet further land, to the north of the Eastern Villages, on both sides of the A420, which might bring Swindon even closer to Bourton. Discussions between SBC and landowners are presently at a confidential stage so Nial Ledingham is keeping a watching brief.
- **Grange Farm.** The Parish Council met with Savills on 1 May 2024 at their request so that they could address some of our concerns with their planning application for conversion to nine dwellings. The Parish Council took the opportunity to ask the Foundation to make a financial contribution to the maintenance of village facilities, in view of the increase in the size of the village for which they had so far been responsible. We await hearing from the Foundation on the outcome of this request. A small amount of CIL may be due to the village as a result of the conversion works, assuming that planning permission is granted. Nial Ledingham quizzed them on the outcome of the HELAA and they confirmed that they had promoted the field between Cleyfields and Grange Farm, and the land fronting Townsend Road, from Shrivenham to the A420, for housing development in the new Local Plan, and that this was a strategy for trying to gain planning permission in due course.
- Apart from the proposed development for 9 dwellings at Grange Farm, we have had various planning applications in the village that have been mostly uncontentious. The development at The Piggery has been withdrawn.

OTHER ISSUES

- Local Community Transport Scheme (known as West Vale Mobility). David Swann and Bob Stanton had both volunteered to help with this. Funding had been secured for a disabled minibus and they were still looking for volunteer drivers and people to help run the scheme.
- Simon was thanked for pulling together the Xmas Newsletter.
- Issues in village – rats near Sewage Works finally dealt with by Environmental Officer. Thanks to the parishioners at The Meadows for reporting this.
- Large water leak and pothole finally fixed in Lower Bourton.
- Andy was thanked for liaising with the local farm manager on various issues around the village.
- We have had two visits from OCC Deep Cleanse teams who have concentrated on clearing the path from Grange Farm to Cleyfields and tackling moss and weeds on the paths on The Hill, in the centre of the village and down to the Church. The road sweeper also visited around a month ago and made a good job of sweeping the gutters (apart from where cars were parked).
- The grant from our Oxfordshire County Councillor's Priority Fund has been allocated to the Church to help towards the removal of the Scots Pine tree (further information in report from the Church).
- The Parish Council continues to fund the website on behalf of the whole community and thanks go to David Swann who willingly gives up his time to organise this. Last year we paid for a necessary website upgrade at a cost of £200 and the yearly costs are around £350. David Swann repeated his appeal for someone to help with the running of the website who could integrate it with social media.
- Reporting of pot holes and flytipping are on-going activities for the parish council in an attempt to keep the roads safe to use. Parishioners are also encouraged to use Fixmystreet to report potholes in their area. Nial Ledingham continues to conduct a regular litter pick from The Wharf to the top of the village and along the Avenue and thanks are extended to him for making the village a cleaner and more attractive place to live.
- The Parish Council had successfully volunteered Bourton village for the Oxon CPRE Rooftop Solar Audits funding bid. CPRE National will be compiling this with similar expressions of interest from other CPRE branches around England and then submitting it to the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund.
- The village and churchyard extension are kept tidy with the help of Jack Webster who does an excellent job and thanks are extended to him.

It was reported that our longstanding and very active County Councillor, Yvonne Constance, has had to stand down for health reasons. She has given excellent service to all here in Bourton over many years and we record our thanks and send her our very best wishes.

Appendix B

REPORT FROM NEAL BAILEY, HEADMASTER OF PINWOOD SCHOOL
28 MAY 2024

- another busy year, 412 families = roughly 250 families.
- very mindful of the political challenges ahead but going into them with a quiet degree of optimism
- importance of vehicle movement on and off site is still of great importance and we are doing all we can to remind parents of how to conduct themselves when arriving, leaving and parking for Pinewood events.
- we are making plans for some more on site parking to alleviate problems
- half way through swimming pool project which will include an enclosure - disruption should be minimal to the village as vehicles arrive for works in school summer holidays
- site security - damaged front gate being repaired in summer holidays
- fundraising - through all the school events a substantial amount of money has been raised for local charities - as well as raising funds for the village hall roof appeal
- we have worked to improve the soak away of local flooding
- we always love having use of St James' Church
- there is an eagerly anticipated cricket match between the village XI and a Pinewood team which is always great fun
- next year marks our 150th as a school and we look forward to sharing these celebrations with the local residents where appropriate and possible
- we are delighted to have installed a kitchen garden in the old walled garden where children will help grow and harvest vegetables that will be enjoyed in the school dining room.

Village Hall Chair's Notes:

My thanks to all our loyal committee members for their time and energy in what has been a busy and rather frustrating year in some respects.

I'd specially like to thank Sue Hayes, who's stepping down from doing the very successful 50/50 club on behalf of the village hall after many years. We are so very grateful for your time and dedication it's so very much appreciated.

Much of the work for the village hall goes on behind the scenes and while, to some not a lot is being done visibly, I assure you, like an iceberg, there is so much more happening than what you can see.

The fund raising for the roof is a slow and rather pains taking process of finding the right people with the right knowledge to give us best advice and a lot of time waiting for responses. One of the more frustrating elements is finding out that the Hall's Land Registry is not to be found, in fact it predates the registry, since the hall was purchased off the previous owners back in the early 1950s, so we are having to put all that place as part of the requirements for obtaining grants.

With ever increasing heating and lighting costs we are also looking into solar panels and battery cells, to fitted in conjunction with the roof, as heating and electricity costs being our main expenditure, anything to better run the hall economically in the future can only be a good thing. Specialist knowledge, as I mentioned earlier, is crucial in getting the right equipment to make this realistically work for the future.

As ever, much of what we do is reliant on the few committee members we have and the time they can afford to push all these changes along and that is on top of their own challenges outside the hall interests. We hope and encourage people to come forward so we can arrange more events in the future. It really helps to have more ideas and spread the load.

I'd also like to thank many of those who have helped the hall in any small way as it does really make a difference. Pinewood school have also been generous along with some fundraising through the school auspices which is wonderful.

The secretaries report will elucidate further on many of the points I've made.

The popular village hall quiz is being held on the 7th of June so we are hoping for a good turnout on the night. And of course, the Prime Minister has helped in his own small way, by announcing an election in July, which means a bit more income for hosting the polling station... damned decent of him!

Secretaries Notes:

We have invested a huge amount of time and effort researching, seeking advice and getting quotes for various sustainability options. The aims are to transform the hall into a welcoming space which is warm and usable all year round, and to minimise our overall energy costs to allow us to be financially self-sustaining.

We have settled on a plan to replace the roof, incorporating between 26 and 32 in-line PV panels, with a large battery to store both our own solar-generated electricity and (in the winter) cheaper off-peak electricity to be used when needed. The heating will be replaced by more effective and efficient infra-red heating, and the lights replaced with LED lighting.

The PV array with batteries is estimated at around £27,000. Heating and lighting are estimated at around £15,000. We are still awaiting the final design and therefore costing for the roof but we estimate around the £40-£50,000 mark.

We are in the process of starting a Crowdfunding page for which we have pledges of £3,500-£4,000 (from Pinewood and others). We have set aside (not sure – check with Bob) of our own reserves. The remainder will entail grant applications for which we are doing much research but cannot be actioned until we have firm quotes.

We hope to be in a position to carry out the project over summer 2025.

APPENDIX D

Church Report for the Parish Council Assembly on 28 May 2024

St James has continued with regular services twice a month throughout the year and has a loyal congregation of up to about 15 people. A big thank you to all who come and take services for us and to Chris Field for continuing to play our organ despite his move to Shrivenham!

The church continues to be well used by Pinewood School and we are hugely grateful for their generosity in donations from school fundraising events when they often include the church as a recipient of funds raised. Currently, a small group of children is helping at the church once a week as part of the Pinewood SKILLS Project. They are undertaking various tasks in the church and the churchyard.

This year has seen more refurbishment to the church as the inside of the West Wall was repaired. There had been considerable damage over the years due to damp and all the old paint and plaster needed to be stripped off and the wall re-plastered with the appropriate material. Thanks to Stuart and Albert Anger as ever, for their fantastic work.

The churchyard has also had work done with invasive conifers being cut down and a truly Herculean effort from a group of villagers to cut back greenery and weeds.

Sarah Howell, our church warden and her family left us in August to head to the USA for 2 years and left the church in the capable hands of Sue Hayes, Vanessa Swann, Tim Russell and Simon French. Our thanks to them for continuing to ensure that St James remains an active part of village life.

Services continued following Sarah's departure, with Norma, Patrick, Richard and Julian all taking turns to lead the services and Simon French volunteering to attend monthly PCC meetings.

At the Christmas Eve service, we enjoyed a visit from a real donkey and a Shetland pony, who starred in the retelling of the Christmas story. In April, there was a special service at which we said a fond farewell to Norma, who is retiring in May.

In addition to singing at three of the services, the newly formed Village Voices Choir held two concerts at which money was raised to help fund the ongoing repair work required for the church building.

Until a new vicar is found, following Norma's retirement, services will continue to be held twice a month, although the Sunday services will be at the later time of 11.00.

The large but old Scots Pine in the churchyard has been inspected by two tree surgeons who both confirm there is a large rotten section in the trunk and also one of the main limbs. Unfortunately the recommendation is that the tree is removed on Health & Safety grounds. Two quotes have been received, the cheapest being £1,570 + VAT + permission costs estimated at £35. The work is likely to be undertaken in the summer and we are applying for a grant from OCC to contribute towards the cost.

Report from The Club for the Parish Council Assembly on 28 May 2024

The winter months and rising fuel and power costs have made it a tough year for The Club, but with the tireless help of volunteers and committee members, we are working through it.

We have seen many successful events already this year including a wedding, a christening, several baby showers, a gender reveal, birthday celebrations, a few large family get togethers and, more sadly, several wakes. We host monthly and sometimes weekly food pup up evenings which prove very popular with the villagers, monthly quiz nights, family skittles evenings, live music events and our popular summer and Christmas craft fairs. These all contribute to raising the much needed funds to enable us to continue.

We are the base for the Village Voices Choir, Watchfield and Faringdon racing pigeons club and the village book club. In addition we have darts and dominoes teams who play in the local leagues.

We currently have 200 plus paid members on the books and 4 new committee members this year.

We have a full diary for the rest of this year which includes a mini food festival, a karaoke evening and a Christmas craft fair being amongst a few of the events planned.

The Committee endeavour to continue to work hard to bring the village together during these events to enable us to continue to provide a warm and welcoming village hub.

Cllrs Katherine Foxhall and Viral Patel
Watchfield and Shrivenham ward
Vale of White Horse District Council

Annual Report for 2023 - 2024

Introduction

Since our election last May, it has been a privilege to begin our work representing the parishes and residents of our ward. It has been a challenge and a huge learning curve to start to understand how the council works, the organisation of the different teams, and the most appropriate ways of being effective. It has also been a joy to start to get to know the characters of our different communities and to speak up for this unique and special part of the Vale.

Local Case work

We have worked hard to make sure that residents know who we are and how to contact us, including residents' newsletters, proactive contact through social media where residents raise issues. Thank you particularly to the disseminators of our monthly reports through your contact lists. Often residents have questions related to planning, housing, bins need to report flytipping or want help accessing council services.

We have been working on a varied body of local case work, including:

- **Poor Quality Housing and Maintenance** – Katherine is supporting residents in Shrivenham to get action on inadequate maintenance, poor construction standards and environmental health issues.
- **Flooding** – our part of the county often feels forgotten. Officers have met Katherine on site in Buscot and Shrivenham to see flooding issues for themselves, help establish responsibility and to secure future improvements.
- **Afghan Relocation and Assistance Programme** – Following feedback from parish councils Viral engaged with officers and the cabinet at the Vale to improve transparency and clarity with parishes where Afghan nationals are being welcomed into local military accommodation. There are three separate schemes in place to settle these families, with only one under the direct management of the Vale, however all schemes involve differing responsibilities across government departments, MoD, District and County councils, health, education and police. We are very pleased to see the flow of information has improved with regular update meetings, and Watchfield and Shrivenham parish councillors are able to continue doing their excellent work in supporting these families settle into their new homes.
- **Enforcement** – Viral is supporting residents and parishes with enforcement issues related to listed buildings, noise and disturbance from holiday lets, and boundary disputes. Katherine has been working with officers to get a waste drainage plans resolved on a development in Shrivenham; she will continue to push for a resolution that does not allow sewage to be released into the field behind.

- **Sewage Pollution** – the treatment works at Shrivenham remains a huge cause of concern. Katherine has been working with Windrush Against Sewage Pollution, the Parish council and senior officers to find ways to raise this issue, and seek commitment from Thames Water to upgrade the works.
- **Tuckmill Meadow** – Katherine is working with Friends of Tuckmill to help the group access the S106 funds and management support that the council committed early in 2023.
- **Little Coxwell Playing field** – Viral has been working with officers and the Parish council to secure a long-awaited lease for the village playing field, to ensure there is certainty to any investment proposed, and to minimise costs to the parish.
- **Elm Tree Surgery** - We met with partners from the surgery and will continue to support local efforts in any way that we can to try and secure a new site for Elm Tree surgery.
- **Planning** - we continue to scrutinise planning applications, taking care to determine whether they are to the benefit of our residents, responding to resident queries and consultations to highlight and re-enforce material planning matters. Some major cases - including Wicklesham Quarry and the Steeds Farm development - are just outside the ward but nevertheless have an impact on our residents.

Greens in Opposition

After the May 2023 elections, the political composition of Vale of White Horse made the four members of the Green group the only opposition to a Liberal Democrat group who strengthened their already large majority. In many ways Greens and Liberal Democrats do share many political values, and while we also benefit from an excellent officer team at the Vale, and the council's financial situation is significantly better than in many other authorities, our role at the Vale is to hold the Liberal Democrat group to account. Katherine was appointed Chair of Scrutiny, and this is proving a vital mechanism to hold executive decisions to account. Through council motions we have secured commitments to foreground nature recovery and to ensure that council contractors pay the Real Living Wage. We have amended Liberal Democrat motions regarding sewage pollution to make sure that the council takes responsibility for its own actions where it can. We monitor, regularly attend and speak at Cabinet, planning, climate, and audit and governance meetings.

The Year Ahead

As a group we will respond carefully to the development of Vale's new corporate plan (a public consultation has just started on Tuesday 16 April). We will also work to make sure that the next phases of the Joint Local Plan, as well as other strategies and policies, represent our residents' needs and priorities. We will continue to highlight issues of flooding, overdevelopment, and lack of infrastructure and to respond to major planning applications both within and outside the ward, and any other applications that are contentious in nature. Most importantly, we will work to support all our residents to be able to access council services when they need it. Please get in touch with us at any point if there are issues that we can help you with, and we look forward to working with all our parishes in the year ahead.

Katherine and Viral

15 April 2024

Katherine.foxhall@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Viral.patel@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE BOURTON PARISH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HELD
TUESDAY 28 MAY 2024 AT 1930 HRS IN THE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT

Cllr David Swann (Chairman), Cllr Simon French, Cllr Carolyn Francis and Cllr Andy Knapp. 3 parishioners were in attendance in addition to Mr Neal Bailey, Mrs Yvonne Machin and Mrs Lisa Machin

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from District Councillors Katherine Foxhall and Viral Patel, Councillor Nial Ledingham and Sue Hayes.

2 and 3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2023 AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting on 24 May 2023 were approved and signed. There were no matters arising.

4. PARISH COUNCIL'S REPORT

David Swann gave the report from the Parish Council in Nial Ledingham's absence. Details can be found at Appendix A.

5. REPORT FROM THE HEADMASTER OF PINWOOD SCHOOL

Bullet points from Neal Bailey's report are attached as Appendix B. He was warmly thanked for his presentation.

6. REPORT FROM THE VILLAGE HALL

Simon French gave a report on behalf of the Village Hall and this is attached as Appendix C. Simon was thanked for his presentation.

7. REPORT FROM THE CHURCH

Sue Hayes, Vanessa Swann and Tim Russell were thanked for providing an update on the church and this report was read by Simon French. It is attached as Appendix D.

8. REPORT FROM THE CLUB

Yvonne Constance and Lisa Machin provided an update from the Club which is attached at Appendix E. They were thanked for attending and for all their hard work in keeping the Club open as a warm and welcoming venue within the village.

9. ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 2023

Copies of the last audited accounts for the year ending March 2023 were circulated. The Clerk was currently working on the accounts to year end March 2024 and these would be available on the website at the end of June. Although the bank balance at the end of the year to March 2023 stands at £9535.31 it needed to be borne in mind that there were some large unbudgeted items to be taken into account including election fees, grant to the coronation tea party and upgrade to the website. The precept had remained at £3850.00 for the year to March 2024.

10. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

District Councillors Katherine Foxhall and Viral Patel had been very busy on behalf of the Parish and were thanked in their absence. Their annual update is attached as Appendix F.

11. QUESTION FROM PARISHIONERS

There were no questions. The Chairman thanked parishioners for attending.

Signed:

Date: