



OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting 2021

Chairman's report: 2019/21

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) of Oakley. Every parish in England MUST have such a meeting between 1 March and 1 June each year. The APM is the relatively informal meeting where the Parish Council invite the public (and press) to hear reports from the Parish Council Chairman, District and County Councillors; also reports from any organisation, clubs or charities within the village. There is an opportunity for the public to express their opinions on what the council are doing. No votes taken at this meeting are binding on the Parish Council, although it may wish to consider any comments at the next Parish Council meeting (which is a week today on 1st of June).

Before this meeting, there was the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (AMPC). This is a formal meeting of the Parish Council where it elects the chairman and vice chairman, make other annual appointments and review their insurance, risk management policies, etc.

Our annual funding for 2021-2022, called the Parish precept, has been set at £20,630, this is a 2% increase on the previous year. The increase is due to the envisaged increased expenditure of the community shop project.

The Parish Council sits on the first Tuesday of each month. Last year the average meeting lasted an hour and fifty minutes, and on average there are 40 minuted items per month. Whilst that does sound a lot, we have many less 'crusty' items, we are managing to move things forward. However, some things are out of our control as some of our most commonly contacted departments, that is Transport for Bucks (i.e. Highways) and the Planning department at Buckinghamshire Council, often do not share our urgency and often do not have the resources to satisfy our requirements.

Over the last two years, we have seen many changes in the village: the MUGA (2019), the Acorn Trail lighting (2020), the External Gym (2020), the Village Bus service (2019/2020). We have also seen the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway become dormant. We have got through the Coronavirus (so far!). We have seen the MUGA, the play area and the village hall closing and opening in line with legislation. The Parish Council has been involved in the Community Book and DVD Exchange, School swimming pool refurbishment, as well as the Oakley Home Front. It has been a tough year for us all!

Over the last year, the most frequent minuted item has been Flooding (perhaps a sign of the times). Bicester Road, Brill Road, Little London Green, College Crescent, Worminghall Road, School Lane and the MUGA have had multiple flooding events in the last 18 months. There have also been drain and culvert issues around the village. We have been working with Transport for Bucks on these problems and Oakley has joined the Flood Working Group (which is a collection of other Parish Councils, with similar flooding issues and Bucks Council)

Other very frequent items are: road issues (such as potholes, resurfacing, kerbs and even prison transport crashing into ditches); non-road issues (such as pavements and replacement of railings and posts); hedges (growing across paths) and street-lights (either they are not working, been demolished and or taken down by the service provider).

We are now looking forward to a Community Shop, although this has recently been overshadowed by last month's bombshell of the possible de-licensing of the Chandos Arms. Other things that are happening in the village are the superfast fibre connection to all Oakley properties and the multi-million-pound development of Cavway at Oakley Airfield.

Over the next year our focus will be on getting the Shop up and running and saving the pub, both are seen as vital assets to the community. I can see it being another tough year.

Finally, I'd like to extend thanks to my fellow members of the Parish Council, for all the support and work they have done in the last two years. A special mention to the two A's who have stood down Andy with 16 years' experience and Anne with 4 years, their contributions will be sorely missed. However I extend a warm welcome to our new councillor Jo Grey.

Also, a thanks for the sterling work done by Trish Pointer, the Parish Clerk. One should not underestimate the amount of stuff that comes her way every month from the various local Councils and agencies. She must filter all the important bits out from the dross, to save us all being overloaded.

I would like to give special to Unitary Councillors Michael Rand and Angela MacPherson for all their help and support they have given over the two last years.