

Issue 499

April 2020

The *Crowmarsh News* is a self-funded publication, and we regret that we are unable to accept unpaid advertising, even from local businesses and societies.

We welcome material for inclusion but do not necessarily endorse the views of contributors. We reserve the right to refuse material or to shorten contributions as may be appropriate: editorial decisions are final.

ADVERTISING RATES

The *Crowmarsh News* is distributed to over 700 households in Crowmarsh Gifford, North Stoke and Mongewell.

Our rates for a one-eighth-page display advertisement (nominal 9cm wide x 7cm tall) are:

1 month — £8.50

3 months — £25.00

6 months — £45.00

Leaflet distribution

For a single sheet loose insert in the *Crowmarsh News* (size up to A4), our current rate is £30 for a single month. Advertisers must supply their own inserts (740 copies please).

Cheques should be made payable to Crowmarsh News Association.

The Crowmarsh News team

The *Crowmarsh News* is run by the Crowmarsh News Association, a group of local volunteers.

Editorial and Layout: James and Toni Taylor

Editorial support: Kirsty Dawson, Amanda Maher, Doug German and John Griffin

What's on listings: Julian Park

Advertising: Pat Shields

Distribution: Frank Sadler and team

Next month's issue

All new advertisements and all copy for the next issue of *Crowmarsh News* must reach us before our **20th April deadline**.

For all items of news, articles or correspondence, please e-mail

crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com

or deliver to the Editors at 57 The Street.

For all advertising, please contact

crowmarshadvertisers@gmail.com

or deliver to The Old School, Benson Lane.

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Your April *Crowmarsh News*

This has been a most unusual issue of the *Crowmarsh News* for the production team. As a result of the Coronavirus threat and the social distancing measures we must all take to prevent the spread of the virus, we have received multiple notifications of the suspension or cancellation of planned events. We have continued to receive them right up to the last minute when this issue had to go to press, and where possible, we have amended our listings to reflect these changes. At one stage we actually considered renaming our regular back-page feature as “What’s Off”.... More seriously, in cases where events may appear to be going ahead, we strongly advise contacting the organisers in advance rather than assuming that everything will happen as planned. The situation will probably evolve rapidly.

On the positive side, we have also received notification of several community groups, mainly based on Facebook, which have been set up to help those who need assistance and support while Coronavirus remains a threat. We have therefore devoted some pages to providing details of these and of other local community initiatives set up in the same spirit.

We aim to continue to produce the *Crowmarsh News* every month for as long as it is possible to do so. We hope that readers and advertisers will bear with us if future issues are rather slimmer than usual because, as events are cancelled, there will be less to write about. Meanwhile, we are sure you will join with us in giving special thanks to the local heroes who distribute the *Crowmarsh News* every month. Without them, you would not be reading this at all.

In the mean time, please do observe the need for social distancing, strange though it may feel. Remember, too, that the telephone and the internet are available to keep in touch with others, and will be increasingly important at a time when face-to-face contact may actually be harmful. Like you, we look forward to resuming normal social contacts when we all emerge at the other end of this difficult period.

The Editorial Team

Changes to local bus services

Government Coronavirus Measures

Revised timetables will be in operation

Following government guidelines advising against unnecessary travel and social contact, Thames Travel is reducing its levels of service to provide a Saturday timetable but no night buses. Concessionary passes can now be used at any time of the day; please see www.thames-travel.co.uk/covid-19/ for further details.

For information about the Going Forward minibus service number 134 that serves North Stoke, please call 07484 605888 or visit www.goingforwardbuses.com/goring-wallingford-the-134.

Useful telephone numbers

Crime Stoppers 0800 555 111
Police non-emergency number 101

NHS telephone numbers

Emergency number 999
NHS non-emergency number 111

Village Support Contacts

If you want to volunteer to support your neighbours who are self-isolating, if you need some support, or just want a source of information, please find contact details below for the various village groups you can join and telephone numbers to call.

WhatsApp groups:

Bellamy Way, Stephens Field and The Street (from the bridge to Colliers)

Crowmarsh Hill (numbers 164 to 206)

Home Farm

Lane End and immediate neighbours in The Street

Murren Croft

Robert Sparrow Gardens

North Stoke

If you want to join a group but don't know how to make contact with them, please contact the *Crowmarsh News* and we will put you in touch.

Facebook groups:

Crowmarsh Parish Council

Crowmarsh Gifford Community

Crowmarsh COVID-19 Response

Local assistance:

Benson Lane

Call 825222 in an emergency. The phone is answered 24/7—but please note that it is also the number for our local undertakers!

Rev Kevin Beer:

Tel: 599873

Crowmarsh News:

Email: Crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com

If you know of any other groups within the *Crowmarsh News* distribution area, please contact the Editorial Team so that we can add them to our list.

SODC also has a list of volunteer support groups (see SODC note in the next column).

Takeaways and Deliveries

Several local businesses have recently introduced additional takeaway or delivery services. The ones we know about are listed below.

Avanti Italian restaurant

The Bell

The Coachmaker's Arms

The Cross Keys

Just Trading

The Keep

Pizza Café

The Queen's Head

Shellfish Cow

Wallingford Book Shop

Wallingford Butchers

Wallingford Tearooms (Lamb Arcade)

Please search online for their websites or social media accounts for details. If you know of any other local businesses who are offering additional services at the moment, please contact the *Crowmarsh News* so that we can add them to our list. Please help to keep these businesses running with your support.

SODC and COVID-19

The SODC web site is keeping its COVID-19 page up to date; please visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/covid19

SODC is endeavouring to maintain all services during this challenging period, but there will inevitably have to be some adjustments as the situation evolves.

The SODC Community Support team is also keeping a register of all the newly-created volunteer support groups across the district. The information is being channelled through the District Councillors who would be grateful to hear about new initiatives. Please contact them by e-mail in the first instance:

andrea.powell@southoxon.gov.uk and sue.cooper@southoxon.gov.uk

Coronavirus and Crowmarsh Playground

The current government message is to stay at home, but that households can walk or cycle together to gain some fresh air and exercise. We want to keep Crowmarsh Rec available for this purpose, but are also concerned that large numbers of people all using the facilities at the same time could force the temporary closure of the Rec.

Please be sensible; include the Rec as part of your household's walking route, but do not linger there unnecessarily. Please keep at least two metres distance away from others, except those from your own household.

In order to help reduce transmission, please wash your hands before and after use of any of the equipment in the playground, gym or pavilion, and more often if there for a long time.

The Parish Council intend to lock the car park gates (except for hirers of the pavilion).

Please note that the current intention is that the toilets at the rear of the Pavilion will normally be open approximately from 9am to 7pm every day. If you have a need for disabled toilet access or nappy changing facilities, please contact Chris Strange on 07711 904252.

As you know, the situation is changing on a daily basis at the moment. As we went to press, it looked very likely that the Parish Council would need to close the playground. This would be consistent with the SODC approach to such issues. In the mean time, thank you for your cooperation in helping keep the playground safe for all.

Crowmarsh Parish Council

***Please use
the parish website for news
and updates about local matters***

<http://crowmarshgifford.org.uk>

Crowmarsh Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Have Your Say

Preparation of the Crowmarsh Parish Neighbourhood Plan has now reached the consultation stage. This means that the Pre-submission Plan and all the current supporting evidence and sustainability analysis reports have been made public on the Crowmarsh Parish website for comment at: <http://crowmarshgifford.org.uk/2017/04/15/local-community-plan/>. In addition, hard copies of the Plan are lodged for you to read at Crowmarsh Gifford and North Stoke Village Halls, the Crowmarsh Gifford Pavilion and Crowmarsh Stores.

Messages are being sent to a considerable number of statutory consultees as well as stakeholders within the Parish, inviting them to submit comments and suggestions that will improve the Plan.

All parishioners are stakeholders. Exhibitions were planned for you to meet with members of the Parish Council and the Plan Steering Group to discuss the plan and to ensure that it represents your own views as to how the parish should develop up to the year 2035. Given the current Public Health crisis these public meetings will not now proceed. However, the posters planned for the exhibitions are available at the community plan web address above.

You are invited to send comments regarding the Plan to the Parish Clerk or any member of the Parish Council in writing or by email to crowmarshparishclerk@gmail.com. Please note that your name may be published against your comment in the Consultation Statement which has yet to be drafted. The deadline for submission of your comments is 29th May.

This is your chance to influence the future for the Parish and its villages of Crowmarsh Gifford, North Stoke and Mongewell. Please don't miss it.



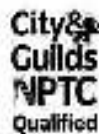
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Past Times

Fiery tales from the Crowmarsh area

Over the years there have been many large fires in the neighbourhood of Crowmarsh. In 1868 and 1873 there were two large fires in South Stoke.

The 1868 fire resulted in the loss of six cottages; the occupants lost all their possessions and were homeless. Two farm workers, who occupied the cottages with their families, were working in the bring in the harvest. One man's son was sent home to boil some water for making tea, he had the fire too high and sparks went up the chimney and set light to the thatch of his home. The fire quickly spread to all six of the cottages in the row.

The 1873 fire was of a similar nature, but only three cottages were lost that time. The fire was started by hot ash being emptied too near a wooden shed.

In 1905 South Stoke again had another very large fire, which destroyed many farm buildings and lots of agricultural machinery. Luckily no animals or humans were killed or injured.

On the 9th February 1757 between two and three in the morning, the Manor House at Howbery along with all of its contents were destroyed by fire. Howbery at that time was the seat of Robert Needham, who was married to Catherine Pitt. She was the sister of William Pitt the Elder, who often visited his sister at Howbery Park.

North Stoke in March 1739 had a terrible fire which destroyed 10 cottages, several barns and stables. The fire started at Thomas Johnson's cottage and because the wind was so high it took no more than half an hour to destroy the 10 cottages.

In August 1735 Wallingford had five fires break out at the same time. These fires were arson and were started by a Mr Maxey, who took the precaution of damaging all the Town pumps so they couldn't be used to fight the fires. The

fires were extinguished by townspeople using buckets of water. It was thought he had taken offence at something his brother had said!

Newnham Croft, which stood opposite Crowmarsh Church had its thatch roof badly damaged in 1909 and it had to be retiled.

In 2015 Crowmarsh experienced the large fire at the SODC Offices which destroyed over half the building. As can be seen above the fire was not unique in our area's history.

Parking on Grass Verges

The Parish Council has received a number of complaints of vehicles parking on the grass verges in The Street. These vehicles have already caused deep ruts in the grass and have damaged the roadside kerbs. Please remember that if you own a motor vehicle you are responsible for its storage. If for some reason you do not park the vehicle on your own property you should either use a designated parking space or a safe location on a road that does not have any parking restrictions and where the vehicle is not causing an unnecessary obstruction.

The Council will have to pay for the damage to be repaired so the registration numbers of any vehicles parking on the verges will be passed to the police for whatever enforcement action they deem to be appropriate. Your support in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Parish Council

To book the Pavilion or Hardcourt area in Crowmarsh Gifford ...

Phone Chris Strange on 07711 904252, or email chrisstrange47@gmail.com

To book Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall

Call Chris Strange on 07711 904252 or email cvhbookings@gmail.com

Wallingford U3A

George Verdon, our March speaker, one of our own members, went to New Mexico to what has to be one of the most extraordinary festivals on Earth, the Hot Air Balloon World Championships.

His lecture began with a swift illustrated history of Hot Air balloons from Pierre Blanchard in 1785 to Richard Branson in 1987. He then transported us to Albuquerque in October 2019. These amazing Championships are held in Albuquerque because of the "Flying Box". Apparently, there, the wind reliably blows from North to South at between 500 and 800 feet from dawn till noon, and then reverses to blow South to North at between 100 and 1500 feet from noon till dusk, so these huge wind-driven, graceful, beautiful and expensive machines can finish a day's race at their starting gate.

There is a competition for "Shapes": cathedrals, ocean liners, birds; surreal, difficult to inflate and to fly; and a "Distance" competition, where the record is 2000 miles. The trophy for this is presented the following year. The stadium is purpose built for up to 15,000 people who enjoy food, pipe bands, chaos and expertise, and the show ground has room for 1,000 fully inflated balloons. Only in America!

George's photographs of this kaleidoscope were breath-taking, the colours unbelievable, the balloons majestic. His audience wanted a repeat there and then, but there wasn't time.

For information on who we are and what we do please visit our website: u3asites.org.uk/Wallingford, or, for a human voice, phone Jill on 835994. For information about outings phone Hermione on 01865 858024.

Henley Grammar Reunion

Did you go to Henley Grammar School? We'd love to invite you to our Reunion, planned for 18 July! Please register your interest now and we will send more details in time.

Email: lynn@harttoheart.co.uk or write to Sandra Wickens, The Henley College, Deanfield Site, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 1UH.

Remember the old Village Hall?

Readers will probably know that Planning Permission has been obtained to add a smaller hall as an extension to the main Hall. This will cost a lot of money and the Hall Committee is preparing plans to raise the funds.

In due time we will introduce a 'Build a Brick' scheme amongst other ideas, but at present we are concentrating on the content of applications for grants from funding bodies. To support these applications, we would like to include details of the Hall's history.

We understand that during the War, on the east side of Benson Lane there was an anti-aircraft gun and searchlight, with Nissen huts to accommodate their crews. Afterwards, it seems that the huts became emergency housing and then an unofficial adventure playground for local children before the Parish Council turned them into a community centre.

We know several people who have stories about the huts and we would like to talk to many more. Especially, we would value finding photographs of the huts at those times.

Also, can you tell us the full story of the Parish Council's marvellous work in turning the huts into a community centre and then creating the present Village Hall later?

Please help us, dear friends, because we are looking at raising a six-figure sum and funding bodies do not part with such large sums without receiving very detailed applications.

Best wishes to all – keep calm while carrying on!

Anyone with information / photographs / documents etc is asked to contact:

John Grosse (F/R sub-committee),
45 Thames Mead,
Crowmarsh Gifford

Concerts@Cholsey

After two sell-out events, Concerts@Cholsey seems set to brighten local lives with high-quality music for the foreseeable future. Although squeezebox star John Kirkpatrick was forced to cancel his eagerly expected appearance last October, Three Pressed Men rose to the occasion with a programme of polished folk song that was extremely well received. On 1st February, four-piece band, Crows, showed off their many talents, again delighting a capacity audience with strong vocal harmony and instrumental virtuosity.

Concert information and tickets from concerts@cholsey.com, or phone 652295 or 651350 for personal service. You can also ask to be added to the Concerts@Cholsey emailing list, which will send you news of future Cholsey concerts and many other live musical events within easy reach. Please bear in mind that some events may have to be postponed during the current Public Health Emergency.

You can hire the Dance Studio, the Sports Hall or the Astroturf at Wallingford School.

Call Wilson Chong on 829762, or email Leisure-centre@wallingfordschool.com

From our local MP

When constituents approach me with individual issues and concerns I always try to get information for them, and when appropriate I raise things directly with Ministers. With the turmoil of last year and ongoing uncertainty it seemed to become increasingly difficult to get responses. Now that the long-anticipated Government reshuffle has been done, and Ministers either confirmed in their posts or new appointments made it seemed we were in for a more stable period with greater opportunity to discuss issues with Ministers. Then Coronavirus hit. It is in the midst of concern over the virus in early March that I write.

There is a fine balance in deciding what best to do in these situations and I am pleased that there has been cross-party support for the ways in which the Government has been handling the issue. By the time my newsletter is published the situation will have changed again. I share the concern of many at fake news which adds to unnecessary fear. The panic buying by some has also triggered a concerned response. I can understand that people worry about the virus but, whilst those who can afford to fill their cupboards do so, they add to the vulnerability of those who are unable to shop other than little and often. This is a time for testing our shared compassion.

John Howell



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Eva Thompson, tel: 201675

Please note that all regular church services have been suspended on government advice until further notice. There will still be Morning Prayers on Fridays (see below.)

We are living through unprecedented times and, as the situation develops, it is important that we all look out for one another and our neighbours. A number of informal initiatives are already under way to set up support groups of close neighbours, so please get involved or perhaps initiate one of your own. Make sure that everyone is included, remembering that those who are most likely to need help may not use smart phones and social media! Continued support for the Food Bank will be very important in the weeks to come, so please leave any donations in the box under the Welcome Desk in the church.

As I write, the Church of England is just beginning to respond both nationally and locally to these challenging circumstances. Our usual pattern of Sunday services at St Mary Magdalene's and our Community Café have all been suspended until further notice. However, the church building will remain open for those who wish to use it for private prayer. Many people value this and find it a great source of comfort. Prayer resources are available at the welcome desk, and you may take these home if you wish. You are also welcome to leave the names of any you wish to be included in the church's intercessions (with their permission).

I shall continue to say Morning Prayer at 9am on Fridays and will pray particularly for our local community, our nation and our world. The church is big enough for others to join me whilst avoiding close contact.

You may find helpful the online prayer resources which are available on the Church of

England website at www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-liturgy-and-prayer-resources. It is likely that this will be expanded considerably over the coming days and weeks. These will be especially helpful to those self-isolating.

Please stay in touch via our website www.wallingfordcofe.org.uk notices and calendar and the Village Facebook group. Do feel free to contact me via teamvicar@wallingfordcofe.org.uk or by phone 599873.

As our Archbishops said: "Please, therefore, join us in this great challenge; and pray for our Government and nation, for each other, and especially for those who work in our health and emergency services."

Keep the faith,

Rev Kev

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from
your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Crafting Club

Whilst we are staying at home in the coming weeks, we may find that we have some extra time on our hands.

Would you like to learn a new craft or could you help someone to learn one? Knitting, dress making, embroidery, crochet, wood carving, drawing, painting?

So many of us now have the technology to use video conferencing, with apps and software such as Facetime, Skype, Google Handouts and many others. Contact the Crowmarsh News and we will put you in touch. Or search YouTube for "how to" videos. Patterns and materials are all available to buy online.

Here are some tips for dressmaking beginners which were sent in by a Crowmarsh resident.

1. Choose a 'Very easy' pattern. Forget designer, pin tucks etc, go for a simple pattern with a simple neckline and importantly without set in sleeves.

2. Make sure you buy the fabric which the pattern recommends – do not attempt to mix stretch and non-stretch fabrics!

3. Buy the amount of fabric suggested on the pattern.

4. You will see lines on the pattern, the one with the arrow means that it goes straight down the fabric. Make sure it does, sometimes it looks wrong, but the hang of the garment relies on this line.

5. Carefully mark each little side triangle. I give each one a small nick. These are necessary to put your pieces together. Now pin your pattern onto the fabric and cut it out.

6. This next tip to me is very important. When you sit down to watch another repeat of Mid-somer Murders, that you know by heart, this is the time to tack your garment together. Forget what your teacher told you about tacking, just get a colourful thread (which shows up well in contrast to your garment fabric) and a needle and do giant running stitches as you tack the pieces together. Don't be tempted to sew the

pieces together on the machine before doing this. It saves hours of unpicking! We all make mistakes and this at least cuts them in half.

7. Now machine sew. Jersey needs a larger stitch to stop it ruckling.

8. A few tips on pattern choice. Choose a patterned fabric to start with, it won't show mistakes. Leave out pockets on your first try, they can be fiddly, any way when the first turns out well you will be making lots and can experiment with pockets then. Fabric is important, choose carefully. Zips are a devil, try a wrap dress or a jersey slip on. Tack your hem before sewing.

Just have fun and make another. I look forward to seeing a glamorous line of lovely clothes once we are all out and about again.

Short Mat Bowls normally takes place at the Pavilion on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2pm. For more information about current plans, please call Don on 202543

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District Councillors' Report

Local Plan

Oxfordshire County Council voted to take over the SODC emerging local plan, should it be asked to do so by the Secretary of State, at its last Council meeting. Immediately after this vote, Sue wrote to Mr Jenrick and we sent this letter to all Parish Councils. At the time of writing, we have had no direct response to this letter, but nor has the SoS asked OCC to take over our Plan-Making powers, so we remain in suspense! Rest assured that there is a lot of behind-the-scenes activity going on to reach a positive outcome and hopefully we will be able to move on before too long.

Council Budget and Council Tax

Council met twice during February to approve the budget for 2020/21 and to set the Council Tax (this latter process was delayed by the Police & Crime Commissioners not setting their rates in time, once again due to a delay from central Government).

Young care-leavers up to the age of 25 will now receive a 100% discount on Council Tax to help them adjust to independent living.

Motions passed at Council Meeting on 20th February

Four motions were passed at the most recent Council meeting, covering the rules on 5-yr housing land supply, safety for people hiring taxis, the rules on permitted development (i.e. conversion of office buildings into residential accommodation) and a motion to condemn all racially or religiously motivated hate crimes and to adopt accepted definitions of anti-semitism and islamophobia.

New Crowmarsh building - exhibition and feedback day

We had a great turnout for the exhibition at Milton Park on 13th February, and lots of useful feedback on the proposed design, features and name for the new building. We have set up a project website at

<https://southoxfordshirehq.wordpress.com/>
which will be updated as the project rolls out.

Some people have questioned the need to build a new Council office at all, so it's worth pointing out that we currently spend several hundreds of thousands of pounds each year renting, heating, lighting and maintaining 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park. Any homeowner will appreciate that it's more financially sensible to own your own home and to invest in making it as cheap to run as possible.

Some have also queried the increase in the overall budget for this project, following a leak to the press. The original budget was set back in 2017 before any design work or consideration of environmentally sustainable construction methods had been taken into account. These days, the original budget would not even cover the costs of rebuilding the pretty inefficient building that was burned down.

So while we accept that the budget has increased, we're also very confident that this is a prudent investment in the future financial stability of the Council (even if we merge with Vale, since they will be sharing the offices as before).

Capital Grants

The Community Grants Panel met on 18th February and after a lengthy meeting considering the many applications, it agreed to award nearly £320k to 11 organisations which had applied for funding. The total value of the 19 bids submitted was nearly £760k, so it was inevitable that some applicants were going to be disappointed.

This was the first time using the new Capital Grants policy, which required applicants to indicate how their project would include carbon-reducing or energy-saving measures to support the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration. There were no submissions from Crowmarsh this year.

Recycling centres closing for deep clean

Oxfordshire County Council will be closing their recycling centre at Oakley Wood on 31st March and 1st April to carry out a deep clean. You can find out more information on the closures of the waste recycling centres on the county council's website.

Crowmarsh Parish Council News

Chairman: John Griffin, 29 Thames Mead, Crowmarsh Gifford, OX10 8EX

tel. 838523, email johngriffin@phonecoop.coop

Clerk: Sue Rance, 2 Home Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford, email crowmarshparishclerk@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.crowmarshgifford.org.uk/index.php>

In the current pandemic, the Parish Council is planning how to conduct essential business without meeting together, but we will be guided by government advice and local government legislation.

Our main objective must be to do what we can to support the whole community to stay safe and help each other through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We encourage everyone who can to follow Public Health England advice and keep physically apart, but keep close to our neighbours in other ways, by telephone, email, social media and (if able to) join others in volunteer effort to deliver shopping and other essentials to those who cannot go out, and support NHS and other key workers who are working flat out. And don't deprive others by buying more food and supplies than you need.

See the Village Contacts for ways of keeping in touch if you need any help or just want to talk to someone.

The Parish Council met at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall on Thursday 5th March 2020

Present: Councillors John Griffin (Chair), Stephen Sherbourne, Stuart Soames, David Rowley, Ken McCrea, Julian Park and Andrew Johnson, Sue Rance (Clerk), Yvonne Peet (Finance Officer). SODC Cllrs Andrea Powell and Sue Cooper, OCC Cllr Mark Gray and two members of the public for part of the meeting.

Apologies: Liz Ryall, Fleur Stevenson, Gaynor Hopkins and David Topliss.

Resignation: Mr Jon Grove has resigned as a councillor due to family commitments. The chairman expressed thanks for his contribution.

Public comment: Mr and Mrs McNeill reported ongoing problems with the sewage system affecting Winters Field and the adjoining district council offices site. Thames Water had reported that there are three holding tanks on the SODC site that have been filled in with gravel. On 14th February effluent was pouring out of the drains and the riverside car park was flooded with raw sewage. District Councillor Cooper will discuss this matter with the SODC officer, John Backley.

Finance

Payments made in February included £1,810 to Slade Legal for the land registration of North Stoke Village Hall, £1,920 to Carroll and Partners for drawing up plans for the pavilion reconfiguration and £594 to Arrow Fencing for a new pedestrian gate at the recreation ground.

The Finance Officer reported that a BACs transfer had been successfully made for an online salary payment. Cllr Griffin will register for internet banking.

Accounts for the year to date showed February income of £1,730, including £210 from the solar feed-in tariff. Expenditure was £5,836 including grass cutting by Mr Cottrell at Newnham Church.

It was agreed to ask SODC to pay the 15% Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to the parish council. This money comes from developments and we have to spend it on infrastructure projects and report annually on what we use it for.

The schedule of fixed assets has been updated to include the three speed indicator devices and the new gate at the recreation ground.

Items of value less than £100 have been removed from the schedule. The total value of fixed assets has increased from £816,154 to £820,266.

Contracts of employment for the Finance Officer and Clerk have now been completed and signed, ready for the auditor.

Grants and donations were agreed to Citizens' Advice (£500) and to Home-Start South Oxon (£200). A request from Clean Slate was deferred until May, as a grant of £100 had already been made during the current financial year. Parish councils can make grants and donations under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, based on the number of electors in the parish. The rate is £8.12, increasing to £8.32 for next year. We never get close to that limit.

It was agreed to keep the annual rental for an allotment at the Botany Allotments to £15. This is the same rate as the Emery and Owen Trust allotments near Thames Mead.

County Councillor's report

£500,000 of government money has been allocated for 2020-21 to support local bus services.

Recommendations locally include Sunday services on the 136 (RAF Benson) and X38 (Henley) routes, which would help the local communities, walkers in the Chilterns and visitors to HM Prison Huntercombe.

We hope that support for these services will last for more than one year. County Councillor Gray would also like to see a dial-a-ride service set up locally, run by a third party.

£70,000 has been allocated to Oxfordshire Youth to support youth clubs. £200,000 has been reserved for youth services, and consideration will be given to what could be provided.

The proposed Oxford City zero emissions zone will be introduced next year. Only 14% of the public responses were opposed to it.

The Oxfordshire County Council recycling centre at Oakley Wood will be closed on 31st March and 1st April for a deep clean.

Planning

Decisions by SODC

P19/S4548/LB The Mill House The Street North Stoke OX10 6BL Retention of consent for internal works to Grade II Listed Building including general refurbishment.

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

P19/S4659/HH 10 Wallingford Road North Stoke Wallingford OX10 6BB Ground and first-floor side extension and ground floor rear extension.

PLANNING PERMISSION

Consultation on applications

P20/S0545/FUL The Woodyard Constitution Hill Mongewell. Construction of a single detached dwelling that will re-use the existing building as an ancillary garage / outbuilding; amenity space provision and associated works. RECOMMEND REFUSAL: Mongewell has no public services and is not a sustainable settlement for new house building. The recent applications nearby are not comparable. Loss of green site/trees. Access near the blind corner at the bottom of Constitution Hill is potentially dangerous, especially given that 166 more dwellings permitted on the Carmel College site will need to use this access road.

P20/S0550/HH 1 Park View Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8BJ Demolition of existing summer house, erection of new summer house.

NO OBJECTION.

P19/S4673/FUL New lodge house adjacent to plot 5 Mongewell Park Mongewell OX10 8DA (amendment).

RECOMMEND REFUSAL for reasons given previously (excessive size, height, intrusive position in front of the wall, forward of the line of the other houses, and lack of parking provision). This is still too large a house on a cramped plot and out of character with the

neighbourhood.

Discharge of conditions

The village hall committee is strongly opposed to a gate between the Benson Lane (Bloor) development and the village hall. The parish council agreed that connectivity through to The Street is much more important: we want to maximise the integration of the development to make it part of the village. We strongly support safe traffic management on Benson Lane, where we have installed a SID, and this will become even more important when the council offices are rebuilt and occupied.

Strategic priorities

A Toucan crossing at Portway is part of the Newnham Manor housing development. Cllr Sherbourne hopes to obtain funding from SODC for a pedestrian crossing in Benson Lane. A crossing outside The Bell could possibly be funded from CIL money received (see Finance above). It is hoped to obtain two speed indicator devices for North Stoke, one north and the other southbound. Rights of way surfaces need repair/improvement including Watery Lane and the footpath into North Stoke village from the main road. Crowmarsh Village Hall intends to apply to the parish council for a grant towards the planned extension. There was a discussion on the damage caused by cyclists using the Ridgeway Path and it was noted that plans are in hand to provide an alternative route for cyclists where the Ridgeway is only a footpath.

Environment and recreation ground committee

Carroll and Partners have been commissioned to draw up plans for toilets and improvements to the pavilion. The architect has been asked for costings and the council will need to apply for grants to fund this, which may be available from SODC for the toilets. Cllrs Sherbourne and Griffin expressed concern that the draft plan included provision for a vending machine: this is not part of the design.

The architect, Michael Simpson, has been asked for costings for all the improvements. The estimate was £100,000 so the council will need to apply for grants to fund this.

Shutters in the kitchen at the pavilion have been replaced and water-saving taps have been fitted.

Tree planting is to take place on SODC land at the riverside in consultation with Zak Etheridge of Wallingford Wildlife Group. County Councillor Gray will pay £350 towards this and it was proposed to fund £370 from parish council funds. This was agreed. It is planned to increase the number of trees by 5-10% as part of the climate emergency measures. Trees will be selected to suit the location. Zak Etheridge is looking for a location to plant black poplars and discussions are being held on this.

Cllr Johnson reported that the family of Mr John Bellamy would like to plant a memorial tree near the pavilion on the recreation ground with a plaque. The family will pay for the tree and the parish council will provide the plaque.

Cllr Rowley has had a meeting with Eibe about items requiring attention in the new playground. About £6,000 was kept back for twelve months following completion. There are a number of items requiring attention, including some benches.

Green and Tidy have made some improvements to the soft landscaping and have been asked to add mulch to the planted beds after weeding.

The Smart lock is to be fitted in the next few days. The door will not go back at right angles because of the smart lock so may not be compliant with disabled access requirements, but this will be discussed with Building Control.

Next meetings

The next meeting of the Parish Council was to be held at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall on Thursday 2nd April, starting at 7.30pm, but will now not take place. The May Parish Council meeting was rescheduled to Thursday 14th May at North Stoke Village Hall (subject to availability) because of Police Commissioner elections on 7th May (now cancelled). Cllr McCrea tendered his apologies for this meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting for all electors was arranged for Monday 11th May, including a presentation to Mr Nigel Hannigan. More details in the May *Crowmarsh News*.

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Postponements and cancellations of local events

Please note that other planned events may also have been cancelled or postponed. In all cases, it is advisable to contact the organisers of an event before making plans to attend.

Organisation or Event	Status
Corn Exchange	Closed until further notice
CTC Rides	Rides programme cancelled for the next few months
Nearly New Clothes Swap	Postponed, new date to be confirmed
Oxfordshire public libraries	Closed until further notice. Online library is open – see www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries All loan periods will be extended – there will be no fines or hire charges during the closure period
Petanque Wallingford	Closed until further notice – see website for updates: pet.wal.co.uk
Wallingford Country Market	Closed until further notice
Wallingford Museum	Closed until further notice
Wallingford Photography Club	Remainder of 2019-20 season cancelled
Wallingford Vehicle Rally and Parade	May date postponed, new date is Sunday 2nd August
Woodcote Steam Rally – July 2020	Cancelled

STOP PRESS

Please note that this issue of Crowmarsh News was prepared to meet a print deadline immediately before the Government announcement of stricter Coronavirus countermeasures.

All public gatherings are now cancelled until further notice.
Please ensure that you follow the latest Government guidelines at all times.