

Issue 502

December 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.

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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: Caroline Campbell and John Griffin

Editorial support: James and Toni Taylor, Amanda Maher and Kirsty Dawson

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 December 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

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There is no obligation to take part and you can withdraw at any time. Patient-facing healthcare workers and people from ethnic minorities are particularly needed to sign up, to help the NHS to ensure vaccines work for everyone.

Past Times

55b The Street, Crowmarsh

The insurance office at 55b The Street has now closed and is about to become a private house. Denis Strange had a greengrocer's shop here for several years in the 1970s and 1980s.

Prior to Denis renting the shop, Anthony Lester ran an art business here. Between 1881 and 1911 Thomas Lovegrove was landlord of The Gardener's Arms. He was also a wheelwright and in the 1880s he used the building as a storeroom and workshop. Mr George Dunsden also used the building as a storeroom for building a business which he ran at least until the First World War.

In this photograph from 1912 the building next door is a three-storey building, the top floor of which was removed sometime in the 1920s. In 1937 this building (55a) was occupied by Joe Lay (Richard Lay's father).

From about 1840 until his death in 1847 John Brant was landlord of the beerhouse called the Coach and Horses (later the name was changed to The Gardener's Arms), and his son Henry who lived at 55a used 55b as his workshop to cast and sell clay pipes. When he married in the 1860s and moved to Wraysbury, his brother Edward took over and ran the clay pipe business until about 1872.

To go further back during lockdown is not easy, so I will finish at that stage.

David Beasley



Survey on use of the former council office site

The District Councils have decided not to rebuild the council offices in Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford. With many staff expected to work from home, they will construct a smaller building on a site they own in Didcot.

This means that another use will need to be found for the empty site in Benson Lane. South Oxfordshire District Council plans to work with the Parish Council and the community to make the best possible use of this site, so we want to know what you think should happen on the site.

Please share your views with the Parish Council by filling in the online form at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZMBCPXB> (**note** the link has been corrected from the November issue), or use the form below and send to Crowmarsh Parish Clerk, 2 Home Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford, OX10 8EL.

1. I would **LIKE** to see the council office site used for:
(please select up to three options)

- Affordable housing
 - Care home / retirement homes
 - Education / school
 - Employment / offices
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 - General housing
 - Health / medical
 - Sport / leisure facilities
 - Any other ideas
-

2. I would **NOT** like to see the site used for:
(please select up to three options)

- Affordable housing
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- Employment / offices
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- General housing
- Health / medical
- Sport / leisure facilities
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3. Any other comments about the use of the site

.....

Henley & District Stamp Club

This year many people have had the time to take up a new hobby or interest or revive one that they previously had. This includes postcards and stamp collecting and Henley & District Stamp Club would be delighted to hear from you if you would like to meet others who share these interests. Please see the website www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk for full details or phone 01491 681739.

Since members cannot currently meet face to face, we have had two 'e-mail meetings'. One was on member's latest acquisitions (which included a classic car and a tractor), and another on pages from members on 'Blue'. In November we planned to hold a Zoom Quiz and also later a display by Zoom.

In December members will show up to eight pages on 'Festivities' by Zoom or email.

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

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

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

<http://crowmarshgifford.org.uk>

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Crowmarsh Gifford CE Primary School

The school community continues to be a richly rewarding environment in which children can learn and grow. They consistently amaze and astound the teachers with their resilience, while accepting the new state of 'normal'.

We have had odd sock and onesie days, giving us a chance to relax the uniform dress code in support of Children in Need as well as embracing our individual uniqueness.

Zoom assemblies are now a regular end-of-the-week highlight and an opportunity to showcase the learning, be that jointly on a whole school theme or within each class. Parents and grandparents are warmly encouraged to 'see' into the school without entering the building.

This year, as things are a little different, the usual Christmas Nativity productions have been put on pause and we are bringing Christmas outside. We are creating a community 'Christmas Tree of Hope' and will be lighting up our massive pine tree at the front of the school.

In the next few days a red post box will appear on our front gate where we would like our neighbours and community from Crowmarsh to come and post their 'hopes' for the future. Children will then write these on decorations that will be hung over the next few weeks.

Also, children will then write their 'hopes' for the future on a slip of paper that will be joined with all the other children's to create a chain that will be hung on the church lychgate on Christmas Eve.

Let's make this a Christmas of Hope. Think about all we have learnt this past year and let's make changes for the good while focusing on hope for the future.

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas.

Ms Barton,
Headteacher

Wallingford Country Market

As our regular customers will know, the Wallingford Country Market (usually held in St Mary-le-More Church each Friday morning) has been closed during spring and summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The church remains closed, but we were very grateful at the end of September to have permission to use their pathway outside to set up a few stalls, selling home baked goods, preserves, honey, plants and eggs, while the weather was still fairly mild. The intention was then to move to Centre 70 off Goldsmiths Lane in November until the church re-opened.

We have traded very successfully from this prominent position outside the church for six weeks, but with another lockdown we felt we had to close again for November in order to keep both our producers and customers safe.

It is hoped that we will be able to trade from Centre 70, or the church if opened, for three weeks from Friday 4th December.

However, to keep in touch with some of our customers, we have a system for Christmas and other orders during December. If you would like to place an order, please contact one of the committee (listed below), who will pass your requirements on to the producers.

Items that can be ordered are: home-baked goods, preserves, local honey, home-grown winter bedding, flowering bulbs, hand-made Christmas wreaths and table decorations, home-crafted Christmas gifts and cards.

The producer will then get in touch with you to discuss your requirements and arrange collection. A small charge will be made if your order has to be delivered to you. The people to contact are: Alison Broadbridge (01491 681596), Gwen Strong (873338), Shirley Joy (281338) or Sandra Halstead (836527).

We are living in uncertain times and can no longer plan too far ahead, but our producers will be pleased to perhaps ease things a little for our customers as Christmas approaches.

Keep safe, keep well and a Happy Christmas to you all.



Wallingford Museum

Wallingford Museum's dedicated team of researchers are

working with an architectural model maker, Ben Taggart, to create a 1:300 scale model (1.5m x1.6m) of Wallingford's Royal Castle as it may have been in the mid-14th century.

This amazing collaboration draws on 15 years of research, unravelling the castle's history, using archaeology, geophysical surveys, LiDAR, maps, and transcription, translation and analysis of many documentary records. Some of these records, from the 12th to 19th centuries, also contain surveys with measurements, which greatly help the study.

Virtual meetings with Ben use all the available evidence to try to accurately position the walls, drawbridges, moats and buildings, such as the great hall, kitchens and stables, as they would once have looked.

The culmination of all this research will be a magnificent model of the castle at the height of its power, to share with everyone once the museum reopens in 2021.

In 2021 the museum will celebrate its 40th anniversary – created and entirely run by volunteers since 1981. We look forward to reopening in 2021.

Sue Wright

What's on at The Corn Exchange

Cinema

All regular performances normally start at 7:30pm unless stated otherwise. Tickets £8, £5 for under-15s, unless otherwise stated.

The Corn Exchange was closed again on Thursday 5 November under new government guidelines: the current advice is that the lockdown will be lifted on Thursday 3 December. This is uncertain, but our view is that we should seek to rebuild our programme in December as best we can, given the tight

timescale and the availability of suitable films. There are some cinema bookings available below and we will be adding more films in the next few weeks.

Please check on www.cornexchange.org.uk for programme updates.

Tuesday 8 December, 7:30pm *Military Wives*

Friday 11 December, 7:30pm *A Gift from Bob*

Sunday 13 December, 2:30pm *A Gift from Bob* (all 12A)

Wednesday 23 December, 7:30pm *A Christmas Carol* (PG)

Live screening from the National Theatre

Saturday 19 December, 7:30pm *War Horse* (12A), based on the novel by Michael Morpurgo, adapted by Nick Stafford, with astonishing life-size puppets by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, who bring breathing, galloping, charging horses to thrilling life on stage. Tickets £10 (adults) £8 (seniors) £5 (under 16s).

Live theatre

Saturday 12 December, 7:45pm *A Solo Christmas Carol* with Guy Masterson.

"Scrooge's journey of redemption, the perfect Christmas treat." Tickets £15, £10 under-16s

The Sinodun Players

The Sinodun Players will present "A Daughter's A Daughter" by Agatha Christie at the Corn Exchange Wallingford from 20 to 23 January 2021 (subject to Government restrictions relating to COVID-19). Tickets £12.

Agatha Christie's 1956 play, written under the name Mary Westmacott, bubbles with suppressed emotion and has the extra frisson of perhaps being inspired by Christie's difficult relationship with her own daughter, Rosalind.

Ann Prentice, a widow on the cusp of remarriage, is made to choose between her only daughter and the man she loves. What follows is a remarkable exploration of the aftermath of sacrifice, as love turns to hatred and mother and daughter struggle to understand what has happened to them.

Air quality in Crowmarsh

Letter received from a reader by email

Dear Editor

Have any of your readers noticed a significant deterioration in Crowmarsh air quality recently? It is very noticeable on still days (and evenings) when residents light their wood- or coal-burning stoves.

The imperfect combustion associated with such stoves releases toxic compounds into the air, including dioxins and polyaromatic hydrocarbons. These are compounds that make cigarette smoke carcinogenic. They can also trigger asthma attacks.

So please, Crowmarsh residents:

- If you intend to burn solid fuel in a wood-burning stove, remember only do so when a strong breeze is blowing,
- Also take care to use only seasoned wood, or high-grade coal, to prevent thick smoke from hanging over the neighbourhood.

Please think of the environment and the health of your neighbours.

(Name withheld)

COVID-19 — plans for mass testing and mass vaccination

District Council officers are working intensively with other public sector colleagues from Oxfordshire County Council, Public Health England and the NHS to plan for mass testing and mass vaccination of the local population.

The situation remains fluid, with news about vaccines hitting our screens every day, but there is no scenario that does NOT involve local council staff playing a key role. Venues must be identified and secured, supply chain logistics resolved and resources engaged in order to carry out this huge effort if we are to meet the Government's targets.

When this preparatory work is added to the responsibilities of the Community Hub (see below), it is inevitable that some of SODC's "business as usual" activities will be

affected. All these new tasks are being taken on by existing staff, so if you have a query or a problem to raise with the Council it may take longer than usual to respond or resolve. Thank you for your patience, understanding and cooperation!

The Community Hub is still the main point of contact for individuals and families in need if local neighbourhood groups have not already provided support. They can put you in touch with a network of volunteer groups and organisations who can help with food and essential supplies. The Community Hub team is available from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Fridays. Call 01235 422600 or email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk.

Crowmarsh playground

The Parish Council's Environment and Recreation Committee asks for your patience as they attempt to negotiate the ever-changing government guidelines on enclosed spaces, play areas and outdoor gyms. As of now our understanding is that the play area can stay open with social distancing and hygiene, but the outdoor gym has had to close during lockdown and will only open if government restrictions allow after 2 December. The pavilion remains closed, but the playing field is available for outdoor exercise.

As well as providing hand sanitisers, every 25 days we have the play area and outdoor gym items fully sanitised with a surface protection understood to be effective against pathogens, viruses and bacteria.

The Committee would like to reassure residents that in the meantime they are doing their utmost to get the carousel and walker repaired and reopened.

Please note that 9am-10 am every day is reserved for shielding and vulnerable families. These could be vulnerable children with a parent/guardian, or a shielding/vulnerable adult with children.

The playground opens to everyone at 10am.



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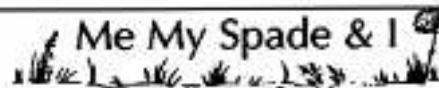
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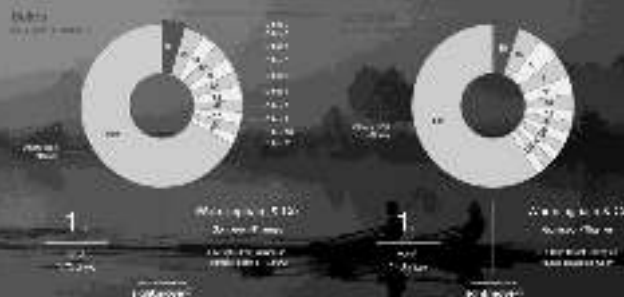
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Email: teamvicar@wallingfordcofe.org.uk

Churchwardens:

Margaret Foster, tel: 836076

Eva Thompson, tel: 201675

Services and events for December

Saturday 12th	11.00-11.40	Crowmarsh Virtual Community Café (on Zoom)
Friday 25th	11 am	Christmas Day Festival Communion
Sunday 27th	10 am	Service at St Mary-le-More, Wallingford

Morning Prayer every Friday at 9am Evening Prayer every Sunday at 4pm

Full details at www.wallingfordcofe.org.uk/calendar



The Vicar writes...

Christmas is coming and nothing can stop it, so let us remember our hope as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amid all the uncertainties and

challenges of this year, our God remains constant and the Incarnation reminds us that God chose to be with us in our humanity with all the problems of this life. This brings us comfort and joy as it did to those facing different challenges 2000 years ago.

This year has been tough in many ways for so many people. Even our Sunday worship hasn't quite looked the same, but we hope to return to our COVID-safe worship again in December, including the 11am Christmas Day Festival Communion. On Sunday 27th December we will join the Wallingford Team at St Mary's 10am service to celebrate the feast day of St John the Apostle and Evangelist.

We are currently looking at alternatives to our traditional Carol Service and Crib Service, as congregational singing, close proximity and mixing of family bubbles must be avoided.

A pre-recorded Crib Service with contributions from children in Nativity costumes, readings and carols is looking favourite, so please

contact me if your children would like to submit re-enactment video footage, with words from a provided script. We will need Mary, Joseph, inn-keeper, shepherds, angels, wise men, and also donkey, ox, sheep and camel.

Churches Together in the Wallingford Area hope to host "drive In" carol services in the car park of the Lidl supermarket after they close on Sunday evening 13th December, ideally with a family-friendly service first followed by a more traditional format, to make full use of the big screen. A booking system will be in place once we know that we can definitely go ahead.

Although we can't have our usual Crib Service, an Advent Trail around the village will have a new display each day, ending at the church lychgate on Christmas Eve. Thanks to all those decorating windows or creating a display in their front garden. The lychgate will also be decorated with a chain of hopes from children at Crowmarsh School, to complement our community's hopes made into decorations for the Christmas Tree at the school.

Whether we manage to worship together at some point or not, I pray that you and your families will be able to share a blessed and peaceful Christmas as we reflect once again on Emmanuel – "God with Us" and open ourselves to his comfort and joy.

Blessings, Rev Kev

John Howell MP writes...

So many different issues affect our health and well-being, as individuals and collectively, and we are acutely aware of this in our current circumstances. One of the key issues is our environment.

I have been very grateful this year to live in the rural setting that this constituency offers and have been particularly mindful of those who live in over-crowded urban situations. Being able to get out and walk in the countryside has been important to me in keeping fit and well. As I have walked over the months, I have enjoyed watching the changes in the landscape and been perhaps more conscious than in other years of the cycle of work for our farmers.

It is good news that the Agriculture Bill which has been progressing through Parliament this year has now passed into law. During the passage of the Bill some important changes were made particularly to tighten up on issues around the recognition of our farmers in food production and also on food security.

I believe that the Act is a good robust piece of legislation that sets the way forward, ensuring that our farmers are not undercut, and that the high quality of our food is maintained. It also sets out how farmers and land managers will be rewarded for the work they do towards protecting and encouraging wildlife, better air and water quality, and measures to reduce flooding. All of this contributes towards achieving the goals of the 25-Year Environment Plan.

I now look forward to the Environment Bill coming back to the House. This Bill is currently at the Committee Stage which is where a cross Party group of MPs scrutinise the Bill line by line. The Committee is due to report back by the beginning of December. The Agriculture Act has a specific focus on farming and land management and as such contributes towards wider environmental issues. The Environment Bill will put the environment at the heart of all policy making ensuring that this and future Governments are held to account on their wider environmental duties.

Just as the Agriculture Act set the Trade and Agriculture Commission in statute so the Environment Bill will establish the Office for Environmental protection. This will be an independent regulator which will scrutinise environmental policy and law, investigate complaints and take enforcement action when necessary.

The Government's 25-Year Environment Plan will also be placed on a statutory footing, and a set of environmental principles will be introduced that will be used to guide future government policy making. I know that developing a Nature Recovery Network is important to many. The 25-Year Environment Plan sets a commitment to this and a framework for Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be legislated for the Environment Bill. If you are interested in finding out more about these important pieces of legislation details can be found on the Parliament website: www.parliament.uk.

I am aware that this newsletter will appear in December publications. I hope that by then we will be out of lockdown and all able to look forward to a festive break that is something like the normal break we would take at the end of the year. It has been a difficult year in many ways, but I am optimistic that the tide will soon turn thanks to the wonderful work of our scientists who have thrown so much effort at vaccine research. However I know that for many families COVID-19 has taken the most dreadful toll and that loved ones are sorely missed all of the time and will be especially so during festivities. No words can ease that and I offer my deepest sympathies to all of you who face such loss.

John Howell

If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, please email me at john.howell.mp@parliament.uk. If you cannot email you can write to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA or PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD.

For briefings on specific issues, please visit my website www.johnhowell.org.uk.

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Crowmarsh Parish Council News

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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>

Notes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5th November 2020

Present: Cllrs John Griffin, David Topliss, Stephen Sherbourne, David Rowley, Ken McCrea, Stuart Soames, Fleur Stevenson and Andrew Johnson, County Cllr Mark Gray, Dr Yvonne Peet (Finance Officer) and Mrs Sue Rance (Clerk). Apologies were received from Cllrs Liz Ryall and Julian Park

The council co-opted Robin Smith as a new councillor for the North Stoke ward. We still have one vacancy and would welcome expressions of interest – please contact the parish clerk.

Report from the district councillors

COVID-19 support for individuals and families can be accessed via the SODC Community Hub (communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk or telephone 01235 422600). Businesses are advised to check the website www.svbs.co.uk and sign up for regular newsletters.

A survey of residents' waste from random bins in selected streets will inform SODC how bins are being used and guide communication with residents about waste services.

The Inspector's final report on the SODC Local Plan 2035 is expected soon.

The council has been consulting on proposed changes to parking arrangements in off-street car parks, to make charging more equal and to encourage use of electric vehicles in order to reduce emissions (southoxon.gov.uk/parking).

SODC has responded robustly to the Government's White Paper on Planning Reform (<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/external-planning-consultations-our-response/>)

District Cllr Powell will be holding meetings about what is to be done with the former

council offices site and is keeping in touch with Crowmarsh, Wallingford and Benson Councils. Around 20 responses have been received to the consultation on the future of the site, which is printed again on page 4 – please do have your say, online or in writing.

District Cllr Cooper has been investigating with Thames Water sewage problems on and around the SODC site, where residual tanks are sited, as well as the water being pumped from the Bloor site into a ditch in Benson Lane.

Planning

Decisions by SODC

P20/S2748/FUL Crowmarsh Pavillion, Bellamy Way, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8FN Internal alterations, new window/door openings, extension of external walkway and paved areas. Planning Permission

P20/S2787/LB 2 Church Cottages Church Lane North Stoke OX10 6BH Like-for-like replacement of the roof. Listed Building Consent

P20/S2348/HH 6 Wallingford Road North Stoke OX10 6BD Demolition of garage wing, new side extension, entrance gable and revised dormers. Planning Permission

P20/S1342/FUL 'New Barn', Mongewell Park Farm, Constitution Hill, Mongewell OX10 8BS Demolition of building. New dwelling with garden, parking area and improved entrance. Planning Permission

P20/S2701/HH 24 Howbery Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8NR Replacement of conservatory with single-storey rear extension. Planning Permission

Responses to consultations

P20/S3059/HH 5 Carmel Terrace, Mongewell OX10 8BX Two-storey side extension and window alterations to the Eastern elevation. Recommend approval.

P20/S3889/HH 27 Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8ED Ground and first floor rear extension. Recommend approval. It will extend no further back than the new house next door.

P20/S3870/N1A 55b The Street, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EA Conversion of office to 2-bed residential property with the addition of one new window into the south-facing brick and flint wall. The dwelling will have very little outside space and no rear access, but small homes are in demand. No strong views.

P20/S3537/HH 4 Whitehouse Road, North Stoke OX10 6BA Demolition of conservatory. Two-storey side and rear and single-storey front and rear extensions. No strong views.

Other planning matters

Work has begun on The Springs Golf Club development (P20/S1589/FUL). Plans for a pedestrian link to the footway along the B4009 have to be approved as a condition of the planning permission. Weekend working has been allowed in order to relocate bats before the end of October.

A tree preservation order has been confirmed on an oak tree at Blenheim Farm, Icknield Way.

Neighbourhood plan

A meeting was held with SODC officers and councillors on Friday 9 October. Nick Robins has incorporated many of the consultation responses and it is hoped that the plan can be submitted to SODC before Christmas.

Finance

Payments approved included £120 for bio-misting with Zoono at the playground, £861.12 for dog bin emptying (July-September) and £1734 for grass cutting. It was agreed to increase the clerk's and finance officer's pay by 2.5% from 1 November, with a 5% rise for Chris Strange, who is working additional hours.

The audit report is awaited. The accounts for the year to date include £120,925 in Community Infrastructure Levy, to be spent on infrastructure projects, but this is capped so the council will receive no more for the year. It has to be spent within five years of receipt and will be considered in the budget for 2020/2021 at the December meeting, when the council will agree spending plans and set the precept, the amount that we receive via SODC from the

Council Tax. Operating income is considerably reduced because the pavilion has been closed.

A grant of £250 was agreed to Home-Start, which provides support for vulnerable families. Donations of £100 each were agreed to the Crowmarsh Gifford and North Stoke British Legion Poppy Appeals.

Environment and recreation committee

The outdoor gym and pavilion have had to be closed in line with government restrictions but the children's playground remains open. Biomisting treatment of the playground will continue until the end of March.

Planning permission has been granted for improvements to the pavilion. Ventilation improvements are being researched as well as the structural changes. The next step will be applying for building regulations approval.

Cllr Soames has stepped down from the committee. He was thanked for his hard work over many years. Mrs Linda Parker, a school governor and deputy churchwarden, will be co-opted onto the committee.

Maintenance costs are increasing and a maintenance and replacement fund was suggested as a way to provide for this. The Finance Officer will consult SODC about the correct approach in accounting for this.

Cllr Sherbourne had a site meeting to discuss tree planting at the top of Park View: nearby residents will be consulted on this. Suggestions are welcomed for other tree planting locations.

Correspondence

Correspondence included a campaign against 5G phone installations and a report of motorcyclists using Watery Lane.

Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on-line on Thursday 10th December 2020 from 7.30pm. Please contact the clerk to join the meeting.

To book North Stoke Village Hall

Contact Nikki Arnfeld
(839736, narnfeld@yahoo.co.uk) or
Stuart Soames (836058,
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