



# North Leigh Parish

Serving North Leigh, East End, New Yatt and Wilcote

## Parish Council Newsletter - April 2023

### **View From the Chair**

Welcome to the first Parish Council Newsletter of 2023 and also welcome to Fran Jeffes who has recently joined us as a co-opted Parish Councillor.

This Newsletter contains updates on various issues affecting the village.

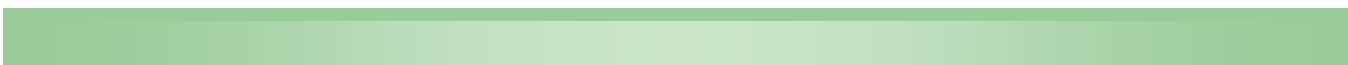
We appreciate that proposals to build more houses in the village is an emotive subject, so members of the Parish Council attended the West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) Lowlands Planning meeting in January to raise concerns regarding the proposed development by Rectory Homes. In addition, Councillors met with Thames Water regarding the state of the sewage system in the parish. There are more details of these meetings in the Planning Committee News section.

Currently the Parish Council is looking at ways of improving the facilities at the Adventure Playground. Some excellent suggestions have been submitted by residents as to uses and equipment that would be popular, but we are still seeking ideas so please send these to the Parish Council clerk.

Looking out of the window at the sunshine and flowers indicating the start of spring I would urge you to please take heed of the item regarding helping wildlife over the next few months.

Lastly, we are pleased to advise there is a small reduction to the Parish Council precept this year.

**Julie Minch**  
**Chair**



## **No Mow May - Grass Verges, Hedges and Footways in The Parish.**

Once again the Parish Council will be lending its support to Plantlife's 'No Mow May' campaign to help our Bees, Butterflies, Wildlife and gardeners! By not mowing in May and mowing less often we can improve biodiversity, have positive outcomes for nature, reduce carbon emissions and provide our Bees and Butterflies with nectar rich wildflowers when there are fewer flowers in our garden in May.

Not mowing in May allows the wildflowers to thrive, providing Bees and other insects with their favourite 'Nectar Stops'. Bees are a valuable part of our food chain, pollinating flowers for fruit, vegetables, and trees.

The Council would also request that residents refrain from cutting their hedges from March/April through to June/July if possible as many species of birds are nesting between these months. However, if a footway runs past your property, the Council would request that the hedges, shrubs or trees do not grow to the extent that the path is obstructed.

Although the hedges and grass verges may look a bit wild/ untidy towards the end of June/July, please be patient as they provide more protection for nesting birds and other wildlife.

If you are interested in learning more about Plantlife and their work, the website address is below:

[www.plantlife.org.uk/uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk)

## North Leigh Parish Council Planning Committee News

The Parish Council Planning Committee has been active with regard to a number of planning applications. Updates on three of these are below:

### 44 Common Road Planning Appeal

The planning application by Abbeymill Homes for 10 houses at 44 Common Road was strongly opposed by North Leigh Parish Council, supported unanimously by the District Councillors of the WODC Lowlands Planning Committee and the application was refused in May 2022. However, Abbeymill Homes appealed the decision on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and despite the numerous “harms” of the proposal the Appeal inspector overturned the decision on balance due to the shortfall in the 5 year land supply in West Oxfordshire so this development will now go ahead.

### Proposed development at New Yatt

The land promoters Manor Oak Homes, together with planning consultants, AR Planning held a presentation in the Memorial Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 regarding their proposed development for approximately 40 houses on a site adjacent to Masons Grove, south of New Yatt Road. This presentation was well attended by North Leigh residents who shared their concerns with the representatives of the proposal. The plans for this development are shown on Manor Oak’s website [www.manoroakhomes.co.uk/project/nor-070/](http://www.manoroakhomes.co.uk/project/nor-070/) . We anticipate that Manor Oak Homes will be submitting a planning application to WODC for this site in the coming weeks, however the Parish Council has made it clear that it will be opposing this application and has grave concerns that it would coalesce the two villages of North Leigh and New Yatt. Please subscribe to the Parish Council’s monthly online newsletter for further updates on this <https://northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk/> . We urge you to share your concerns on the WODC planning portal once the application has been submitted.

## North Leigh Parish Council Planning Committee News—continued

### Rectory Rise Planning Application

The outline planning application by Rectory Homes for up to 55 houses at Rectory Rise adjacent to the Marlborough Gardens site in North Leigh was brought to the WODC Lowlands Planning committee on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The Parish Council opposed this application and raised strong concerns about insufficient sewage, drainage and clean water infrastructure capacity in the village to support additional housing, as well as concerns about the dangerous access onto the A4095 and the impact on parking and crowding for existing residents of the village. Referencing the shortfall in the 5 year land supply in West Oxfordshire, it was deemed that the benefits provided by this additional housing capacity (which includes 40% affordable housing) outweighed the harms and the scheme was approved by a majority.

In mitigation of this approval, the Parish Council secured a range of S106 commitments for the benefit of North Leigh residents including land for a multi-use games area (MUGA) to be located on the Rectory Rise site and contributions to the proposed cycle path between Common Road and Park Road on the A4095.

A “Grampian Clause” was also secured so that Thames Water will need to demonstrate sufficient sewage treatment capacity at the Church Hanborough sewage treatment works before Rectory Rise can be occupied by residents.

### S106 Suggestions

The Parish Council is continuing to monitor and oppose further housing developments in the village and seeks to secure S106 contributions in mitigation in the event that housing developments are approved. We welcome suggestions from North Leigh residents regarding possible uses of the S106 funds.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for how this money could be used please contact the Parish Clerk at:

[parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk).

## North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan – Your Vision for the Parish

We are delighted to inform you that the first meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee took place on the 20th February 2023. We now have a committee composed of 4 parishioners and 3 parish councillors. If you are interested in taking part in the building of the Neighbourhood Plan there is still the opportunity as we would like to increase the committee by at least another parishioner. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact the Parish Clerk at:

[parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk)

The meeting was fortunate to have Tom McCulloch, Joint-Chief Executive of Community First Oxfordshire in attendance. Tom provided the committee with useful advice and guidance into starting the process of creating a Neighbourhood Plan.

The first objective for the new Committee is to create and distribute a questionnaire to the parish. The purpose of this is to obtain wide ranging feedback from the parish in order to build a comprehensive view of what needs to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. We hope that this will be distributed to the parish before the end of June.

The document will be available as a physical copy as well as being online at the Parish Council website.

We are looking forward to receiving that feedback and would encourage you to participate in the Neighbourhood Plan process. As the plan starts to take shape the committee will need extra volunteers to assist with and take part in the working groups that will be required. If you are interested in taking part in the Plan, please contact the Parish Clerk at:

[parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## **Speedwatch**

The Community Speedwatch group started this year's campaign on February 13<sup>th</sup> with their first survey session of the year on Common Road. The results and statistics obtained from the Speedwatch sessions are collated and sent to Thames Valley Police. This information assists the police in determining whether there needs to be any police activity such as setting up speed cameras to monitor a particular stretch of road within the villages. The monitoring sessions carried out by the Speedwatch volunteers provide important factual information on which the police may base decisions to take further action against motorists who exceed the speed limit.

It is hoped that the group will be able to carry out seven or eight surveys per month depending on the availability of the volunteers. At present we are a very small but dedicated band, and we would be very happy to welcome new members as this would allow us to increase the number of surveys that we carry out. If you would like to join the Speedwatch team please contact Councillor Andy Clements via the Parish Clerk or directly by email at:

[andy.clements@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:andy.clements@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Over the next few weeks, the Parish Council will be distributing the 20 MPH survey to each residential address it will also be available to complete online at the Parish Council website.

The Parish Council would encourage as many residents as possible to take part in the survey in order to ensure that it accurately reflects the wishes of the village as a whole.

## **Suggestions and Input to the Parish Council**

The Parish Council is always seeking input from parishioners and we would encourage you to attend the monthly Parish Council meetings if you have any comments about agenda items or how to improve the parish. We would also encourage you to use the parish website to sign up to receive the newsletter via email to keep up to date with Parish life or to contact the council with your comments, ideas and concerns. Alternatively become a Parish Councillor if you wish to be actively involved in decision making, at time of writing we have a vacancy.

