

Parish Council Newsletter - Autumn 2023

View From the New Chair

Welcome to the second Parish Council Newsletter of 2023 and the beginning of the autumn.

Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow Councillor Julie Minch for filling the role of Council Chair until the end of the 2022/2023 year following the previous Chair's resignation. I would also like to welcome Malcolm Shead to the Council, and I am sure that he will prove to be a very valuable addition to the team.

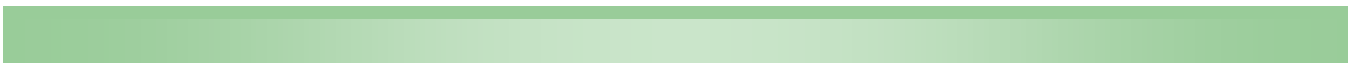
For my part I have been a member of the Parish Council since July 2017 and during that time I have worked on a number of the Council's projects, including Speedwatch, management of the cemetery, planning and staffing. I now look forward to continuing to collaborate with my fellow councillors and hopefully, filling the role of Chair as effectively as my predecessors.

Since the previous newsletter, the Council has been pleased to see an increase in the numbers of parishioners attending Parish Council meetings to express their views on various issues affecting the parish. I do hope that this trend in participation continues as we very much encourage members of the public to attend our meetings. We, as a council, are extremely interested to hear the views of the parishioners as this input is extremely helpful in assisting us to understand how the facilities that are provided and monitored by the Parish Council can be improved and developed.

Our aim is to encourage engagement with parishioners and hopefully you will find some useful information and updates in this issue of the Newsletter.

Andy Clements

Chair



North Leigh Village Litter Pick

On Sunday 26th March, 10 villagers took part in a Litter Pick organised by Councillor Carol Frost. The Parish Council would like to thank those who made a special effort to take part in this activity. The Council very much appreciates the assistance of villagers in activities that help maintain the environment of the village. The Council would encourage more villagers to participate in these activities. In addition to keeping the village and parish tidy and as a pleasant place to live it also provides the opportunity to meet with other parishioners and help develop a friendly community spirit.

This significant effort resulted in the collection of 16 bags of rubbish – along with a large bin of various items!

Botley West Solar Farm

There has been a lot of interest expressed regarding the proposal to construct a new solar farm on three local sites and which, if built, will cover over 3400 acres of land.

The three sites in question are:

1. Land adjacent to Farmoor Reservoir.
2. Land North of Eynsham / East of Long Hanborough (the largest section)
3. Land Northeast of Woodstock.

You can obtain more information about this scheme from the following websites where you will find guidance on how to make any comments or register any concerns that you may have.

<https://stopbotleywest.com/>

<https://botleywest.co.uk/Home-Botley-West.html>

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/botleywestsolarfarm>

As yet North Leigh Parish Council has not been officially invited to comment on the proposal.

North Leigh Parish Council Planning Committee News

Land South Of 1 New Yatt Road, North Leigh.

The land promoters Manor Oak Homes, together with planning consultants AR Planning, have filed an application with West Oxfordshire District Council (“WODC”) for planning permission for their proposed development for up to 43 houses on a site adjacent to Breakspear Way, south of New Yatt Road www.manoroakhomes.co.uk/project/nor-070/. North Leigh Parish Council strongly opposes this application because it would coalesce the two villages of North Leigh and New Yatt. This would result in an overall increase in the number of houses in North Leigh by 40% in the last 6 years which is excessive, given the village does not have the infrastructure to support this influx of new residents. More than 60 residents have lodged objection comments directly on the Manor Oak Homes website.

The North Leigh Parish Council Planning Committee held a public meeting on 26th April 2023 to discuss the proposal. The meeting was attended by at least 30 residents of the village who raised many strong and valid reasons to oppose this application and a “strong objection” comment was drafted and filed by the Parish Council on the WODC planning portal. The Manor Oak Homes application, the Parish Council objection and the objections of individual residents and other interested parties can be viewed on <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/view-planning-applications/> searching by the application reference: 23/00794/OUT. It is not too late to add your voice to the comments on the portal and we urge you to do this if you have not already done so.

North Leigh Parish Council Planning Committee News—continued

The Parish Council is also monitoring the situation regarding the potential bankruptcy of Thames Water and how this will impact the upgrade of the sewage treatment works at Church Hanborough scheduled for 2025. This will have a direct bearing on whether Thames Water will be able to provide adequate sewerage at the Manor Oak Homes site and will be an important consideration in the assessment of the planning application.

It is expected that this application will be discussed at a meeting of the WODC Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee (at the WODC Offices at Woodgreen, Witney) and the Parish Council will speak to make a strong opposition to the proposal. The date is due to be 2pm on 11th September 2023. Once the agenda for this meeting is set, it will be put on the village website, North Leigh Parish Council Facebook page and sent to those who have signed up to the Parish Council's mailing list. Members of the public are able to attend and speak if they register with WODC.

North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan – Your Vision for the Parish

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee has met 6 times this year. The focus so far has been on producing a questionnaire, based a national template that has been refined through being used by a large number of neighbourhood plans.

The committee hopes that the questionnaire will be ready for distribution to the parish by the end of the summer when everyone is refreshed from their summer holidays with thoughts of new views and ideas as to how to create a thriving and pleasant parish.

These views and suggestions will form the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will be a powerful tool to ensure that the views of local residents are given the correct weight in the future.

There are still vacancies for members of the Committee and the Parish Council, and the Neighbourhood Plan Committee members would hope that more parishioners would be available to join the Committee and help to speed up the development of the plan. If you are interested in taking part, please contact the Parish Clerk:

parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk

Public Forum - Suggestions and Input to the Parish Council

As mentioned in The View From the New Chair there has been a welcome increase in the attendance of parishioners at the Parish Council meetings.

The council would like to encourage those of you who are able to attend these meetings to do so, particularly if you have any views, questions or suggestions based on the agenda for a given meeting. Attendees will be invited to make their representations during the Public Forum section of the meeting and any information provided may be used to assist the Council with the decision making for the relevant agenda item.

Speedwatch

To date, this year the Community Speedwatch group has carried out 32 sessions, some of which were in unusually hot weather! Of those vehicles surveyed 20% were travelling above the 30 MPH limit and 5% over 35 MPH.

As Councillor Andy Clements has taken on the role of the Parish Council Chair, the Speedwatch team for East End will now be co-ordinated by a parishioner who has kindly offered to take on the role.

The Parish Council is still looking to recruit a new co-ordinator for North Leigh, including New Yatt and Wilcote. Ideally the Council would prefer someone other than a councillor to take on this role and for the whole Speedwatch team to eventually become autonomous.

The speed of vehicles travelling through the parish is of a continuing concern for many of our residents and we would like to encourage more parishioners to join the team as this would allow more surveys to be carried out.

If you would like to participate but are unsure of how much time is required and the procedure to apply, please contact the Parish Clerk:

parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk

North Leigh Village 20 mph Speed Limit Survey

In conjunction with Liam Walker, the Oxfordshire County Councillor for the ward, the Parish Council distributed paper copies of the 20 mph speed limit survey to all the properties within the village of North Leigh.

The survey was also accessible via Liam Walker's website and links to the survey were provided on the Parish Council website. It was hoped that by providing multiple ways for villagers to take part in the survey the result would genuinely reflect the overall opinion of North Leigh village.

The results are listed below:

OCC 20mph survey results

Online via the survey:

76 voted for a 20mph zone.

121 voted for a blanket 20mph change.

174 voted for no change.

In the post:

10 voted for a 20mph zone.

11 voted for a blanket 20mph change.

8 voted for no change.

Totals:

20mph zone: 86

Blanket 20mph: 132

No change: 183

The Council reviewed the 20mph survey results at the July Parish Council meeting and following a discussion, the Council resolved to proceed with blanket 20mph limit in North Leigh.

Benefitting the young in North Leigh Parish

In addition to the refurbishment of the Children's Playground carried out last year, the Parish Council has fitted new equipment in the Skatepark/Adventure Playground.

Although the Parish Council is currently in the process of negotiating with WODC for a long-term lease on the Skatepark/Adventure Playground area of land, we are pleased to announce that a new basketball net and soccer goal has been fitted. This was carried out after some helpful input from a number of children using the facility.

Once the lease negotiation is completed the Parish Council hopes to undertake a major refurbishment of the site and will be seeking to discuss with young persons of all ages in the parish as to the facilities to be created.

The Parish Council is also pleased to report that it has will be making a donation to the 1st North Leigh Scout Group that will enable the group to order a new secure container for their equipment. The Parish Council has also donated to the North Leigh Youth Project.

Public Rights of Way

There are 43 public footpaths and bridleways across the parish of North Leigh, all of which are listed in the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) definitive statement and shown on the definitive map. Both documents are available for inspection on OCC's website.

Whilst OCC, as highways authority, are legally responsible for maintaining these records, and ensuring these rights of way continue to be accessible for everyone to enjoy, it is the responsibility of landowners to maintain the rights of way across their land, ensuring they continue to be accessible and safe to use including maintaining and repairing gates etc.

Many of the footpaths and bridleways across our parish are used and enjoyed on a regular basis by residents, visitors, dog walkers and horse riders for leisure and pleasure purposes as they enjoy the wonderful area in which we live.

Should any concerns or problems arise regarding the state of the Footpaths and bridleways they should be reported directly to OCC, using the link below:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/countryside/countryside-access/public-rights-way/report-footpath-issue>

If there is not a timely response from OCC, then please inform the Parish Clerk:

parishclerk@northleighparish.gov.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have any suggestions regarding content that you would wish to see included in future Newsletters from the Council, please contact the Parish Clerk who will forward those suggestions to the Council:

parishclerk@northleighparish.gov.uk



