

Annual Parish Meeting 2021 Reports

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Impact of the coronavirus pandemic

The last year has been a challenge for us all, and the priority has been the well-being of the village as a whole. Thankfully the impact here in Haddenham has not been as severe as in other places and the Parish Council was in a good position to continue operations and provide some community support.

- A mobile phone was used to set up a local helpline and to redirect calls to the PC office.
- A new email address was set up as a main point of contact for volunteering and requests for help with shopping or collecting prescriptions.
- New working relationships were formed with the FISH scheme and a group of volunteers who developed the Haddenham Hamper website.
- The pharmacy was supported when it was setting up as a vaccination centre and needed volunteers to manage the car park.

The PC had already set up its computing on a remote server enabling staff to easily work from home, and when the emergency legislation was passed we were allowed to hold our meetings remotely. It's fair to say it was with some trepidation that we held our first remote meeting, however after nearly a year of working that way we've got the hang of it, and it has provided some amusement along the way. We are all looking forward to meeting face to face again very soon, but Zoom will remain a useful means of informal communication, and possibly hybrid meetings will be a thing of the future.

Staffing

As the village is growing, so is the Parish Council in order to keep up with the new responsibilities it is taking on. We now have a full-time Clerk and 3 part-time staff. In August 2019 Kerrie Griffiths joined us as Assistant Clerk, Kerrie has been responsible for getting our new electronic newsletter up and running, and you will see her taking the minutes at our meetings as well as other invaluable administrative support. We're really pleased to welcome our Deputy Clerk Emma Marsden back after her long illness. Jane Allman re-joined us to provide temporary cover for Emma and is going to stay on for the next year to get a new role of Facilities Manager up and running.

New Parish Council Office and Conference Room

Several years of planning have come to fruition during the last year starting with the completion of the legal process of Buckinghamshire County Council terminating its lease on the former Day Centre and handing that part of the Village Hall building back to Banks Park Recreation Ground Charity. The existing office has been too small for two members of staff, with no safe reception area and nowhere to hold an informal meeting. Parish Council meetings have been juggled with other village hall bookings and having to hold them in the old Day Centre Lounge without proper furniture and working around the pillars was difficult.

PCMS were engaged to draw up plans to reconfigure the disused ancillary rooms to create a new office with space for 4 members of staff, a reception area, a small meeting room, kitchen and

toilets. We were especially pleased that the two supporting pillars in the lounge could be removed and replaced with a steel joist which has opened up the space and created a good size room that will serve as a committee / conference room that can be hired out. The construction work has been carried out by Jet and was completed in March, and we are really pleased with the finished result. The entire flat roof was replaced and external paving renewed / re-laid as part of the project. Funding for the project has come from a £165,000 New Homes Bonus Grant from Buckinghamshire Council (formerly through AVDC), £38,185 S106, £13,000 dilapidations; £15,000 Banks Park Recreation Ground Charity and c£25,000 from Parish Council Reserves.

Precept and budgets

We continue to work to a 5-year business plan, and this year have set a more detailed Action Plan for 2021/22. The adoption of amenity land and play areas at the Airfield comes with commuted sums which are meant to cover the maintenance costs for 10 years. As we are adopting a lot of amenity land in a relatively short space of time and don't want to set the residents up for a significant council tax increase in 10 years' time when the commuted sums are used up we are planning a gradual small increase in the precept each year and balancing the shortfall with utilisation of the commuted sum. Setting the precept for 2021/22 was particularly challenging as no new homes were included in the tax base set by Buckinghamshire Council and despite questioning this we have not yet received a satisfactory explanation.

New Facilities

The new developments in the village all make S106 contributions to sport and leisure projects, which the Parish Council nominates. In March 2020 work was completed to install 2 new mini-courts with improvements to the car park and pedestrian access at Woodways Recreation Area which used £110,840 of S106 funding. The mini-courts are now in use by Haddenham Tennis Club (when lockdown allows!) and have been a great boost to their junior players. In the second half of 2019 £112,931 was spent improving the play areas at Sheerstock and Banks Park and installing a disabled swing at Woodways Play Area. A £90,000 refurbishment project for Woodways play area is planned for summer 2021.

Grants

The Heritage Fund has awarded grants towards the repair of public facing wicket walls on Stockwell and Gibson Lane. Haddenham Youth and Community Centre, Haddenham Community Library, Haddenham Tennis Club, The Sixty Plus Club and Red Kite Radio have all received grants.

Facilities Management

Old and collapsing drains have been replaced at Woodways pavilion, and the soakaways cleared to help resolve flooding issues in the car park. New doors have also been fitted to the pavilion including a new coded access locking system.

Adoption of land

The legal transfer of land at Haddenham Airfield completed in January 2021, the football pitches have been in use by Haddenham Youth Football Club since August 2019. The site includes land to build a pavilion, which has been designed and has planning permission, and is currently undergoing a sustainability review before going out to tender later this year.

The open space at the front of Platers Road has reached the end of the 2-year developer maintenance period and the legal process of transferring the land to the Parish Council has started. The Parish Council is also entering into a legal agreement with Dandara to adopt the open spaces on the development at Aston Road, this will include the Country Park, 2 play areas, a new cricket pitch

with space to build a pavilion, and a new burial ground. The Country Park has just passed an initial inspection by Buckinghamshire Council and can now be opened up for use. We hope to have the burial ground land by the end of the year and can then start the process of obtaining Environment Agency approval for burials.

Climate Emergency

The last APM included a presentation on climate change and support was shown for the Parish Council to declare a climate emergency, which it then did at its meeting held on 24th June 2019. A target for achieving net-zero emissions by 2030 was introduced. Since then, work has been undertaken to identify the biggest sources of carbon emissions within the village. It was agreed we should focus on sources that will not be reduced by external factors such as government policy and where Haddenham residents taking action will have the greatest impact.

In January 2020, David O'Hanlon presented a comprehensive report at the Parish Council meeting on the approach the Parish Council is taking and the urgent reasons for taking action. It was explained that future initiatives would launch using a "pilot" structure and would enrol early adopters via multiple existing social networks in the parish. The pilots will be used to refine the schemes based on feedback and to generate enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the pandemic has prevented the planned meetings, however David has now presented the report remotely to several local community organisations, to spread the word on what we're planning to do and why. More presentations are planned for the future.

The first project was to focus on reducing food waste, which has been complicated by coronavirus and lockdowns changing what is safe and practical for residents to do. In recent months, a joint working group with Zero Carbon Haddenham has been holding regular meetings by zoom, where plans for a food waste project have continued to be developed, alongside investigation of the feasibility of other projects such as an electric car club, increased electric vehicle charging points around the village and a home insulations scheme. We have also reached out to Thame Green Living to see if there are any opportunities for collaboration.

David O'Hanlon
Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Bigger Picture Planning Context

In 2020 the Government published its “Planning for the Future” White Paper proposing a radical shake-up of the planning system to considerable criticism from within the sector and beyond. The White Paper envisages a marginal role at best for Neighbourhood Plans. The PC supported the responses made by Buckinghamshire Council and by a group of leading planning academics in their report “The wrong Answers to the wrong Questions”.

The Government, which published its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, updated it in 2018, again in 2019, and is now consulting on yet further changes, particularly in relation to implementation of a new National Design Guide. The PC submitted comments on the latter to NALC for inclusion in its response.

Earlier in 2021 the Department for Transport formally abandoned the proposal for a new expressway linking Oxford to Cambridge. Work on the east-west railway will proceed, and further announcements about new or expanded towns in the “arc” are promised.

In April 2020 Buckinghamshire Council took over as our new unitary authority in place of BCC and the previous District Councils including AVDC. Work has already started on a new Buckinghamshire Local Plan 2040 (BLP2040) covering the entire county, but its approach will be affected by the outcome of the White Paper which wants less public consultation.

Meanwhile AVDC’s Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) has reached Final Modifications stage and should finally be adopted in 2021. It will have statutory force in our area until BLP2040 is finished. There have been several changes to Permitted Development rules and to the Use Classes Order. The net effect is to remove some changes of use from planning control, particularly from commercial, retail and office to residential, as at Waterslade House, and thereby negating the intentions of many Neighbourhood Plans including ours.

Work of the PC Planning Committee

The PC is a statutory consultee on planning applications. We review all applications and submit comments to Buckinghamshire Council which determines them. We have to respond within set time limits, and we concentrate on “material” (i.e. relevant) planning matters in order to give our comments weight.

During 2019/20 we had 15 meetings and commented on 68 planning applications; during 2020/21 we held 17 meetings (all held remotely) and reviewed 73 applications – in all a serious volume of work.

The majority are householder extensions, but can still be controversial, usually because of overlooking, loss of daylight, inadequate parking provision, or inappropriate design or materials. We give informal advice to applicants and neighbours.

On larger developments, the PC concentrates on the details of any assets to be transferred to the PC: open space, playgrounds, street lighting, and S106 obligations in respect of sport, leisure & recreation. We attend site meetings, particularly as handover approaches, and deal with the legal documentation of land transfers.

During 2020 the PC has been consulted by Bucks Council having secured funding for an experimental 20mph with cycle lane along Thame Road/Tacks Lane which is under review. After years of pressure by the PC, Bucks Council finally implemented a 20mph limit along Dollicott/Rudds/Rosemary Lanes, extended the 30mph zone southwards along Stanbridge Rd, and made a 40mph limit at Scotsgrove.

The PC has prepared a brief for a “Streetscape” project for a wider review of traffic impact and connectivity issues, and in 2021 obtained a funding contribution towards consultant’s fees from

Bucks Council's Community Board. This project will start by the new PC after the May local elections.

Principal Current Developments

Airfield site: development by Cala Homes. Eastern phases are complete; work now starting on final western phase on former football pitch by Pegasus Rd. New open space, playing fields, playground and site for pavilion have just been transferred to the PC in 2021.

Aston Rd: Dandara's progress has picked up in 2021 after slow start back in 2018. Open space in the south east quadrant is nearly ready for public access. There is a current planning application for a re-design of phase 1 land for 85 homes, a net uplift of 32 units. Legal agreement on the transfer of all amenity land to the PC is ready to sign.

Land off Churchway to the north of Rosemary Lane (aka HAD007): the outline application submitted in 2017 was finally approved in October 2020 for 273 dwellings. The PC made representations at the AVDC planning meeting in January 2020. In February 2021 the PC submitted comprehensive objections on the Phase 1 Reserved Matters application by Redrow Homes.

Land at Platers Rd off Dollicott: the open space is almost ready for adoption by the PC.

The Green Dragon, Churchway: Two planning applications for change of use to residential have been refused, and both have been appealed. The first appeal was dismissed; a decision on the second is awaited. The PC has submitted comprehensive objections at all stages.

19/20 Fort End House of Spice: appeal decision awaited on revised application for a reduced size restaurant and 5 flats. The PC has again objected.

Recent Developments in Haddenham - Overview

The PC maintains the following overview of development in Haddenham, to keep track of the planning history of individual sites, and to help respond to inquiries.

1851 Census 1703 people in Haddenham

1951 Census 1666

1981 Census 4815

2011 Census 4502 people (= c. 2000 homes)

Major growth happened post-war 1950s to 1970s, when the last big development was the Sheerstock estate. There was actually a decline in population from 1981 to 2011. Haddenham was then identified as a "strategic settlement" for growth by 50% with over 1,000 new homes during the VALP plan period 2011 to 2033. Most of the growth is on 3 allocated sites: Airfield (233 homes), Aston Road/Glebe (280 or 312), and land west of Churchway/north of Rosemary Lane (273). Each site below has a unique reference number which can be used to access details of its planning history on Bucks Council's web-site. The first two numbers refer to the year of the application.

Recent Completions (328 homes):

07/00226/AOP Land at Thame Rd paddock site (WE Black) - now Wirethorn Furlong - 31 homes

07/03507/AOP Spicer Hallfield, Banks Rd (WE Black) - now Printers Piece/Spicers Yard - 48 homes

09/01873/APP 4 Stanbridge Rd demolition of existing house and erection of 5 homes

10/00009/AOP Land adjoining station (Persimmon) - now Cotts Field/Pilots Place - 72 homes

11/00209/APP 40 Thame Rd - redevelopment - 6 flats

12/02247/APP 26 Rudds Lane - now Roundhill View - redevelopment - 4 houses

11/012666/APP Land adj. 5 Townsend/Mallards Croft - 6 houses (amendment to 07/01437/APP)

13/03205/APP Land at Fern Lane (Rectory) - now Ricketts Way - 5 units (4 new + 1 refurb)

14/03637/APP Land at Pegasus Way (WE Black) - now Millway Furlong - 45 homes

14/01099/APP 23 High Street (Peking Rendezvous) - now Waggoners Court - 6 homes

15/02123/APP Land at Dollicott (Cala) - now Platers Rd - 25 homes

16/02190/APP 2 Thame Rd – change of use from shop/office and enlargement to 1 house
16/0412/AOP Land east of Stanbridge Rd (Rectory) – now Mead Furlong/Brook Meadow - 43
17/01692/APP Fairfields Farm (Rectory) - now Fairfield Close - 14 homes
18/01172/APP – Airfield retail & nursery site at Tibbs Rd - 17 homes – completed 2020

Under construction (523 + 69 flat Care Home):

14/03289/AOP & 16/04575/ADP Land at Haddenham Airfield (Cala) - 233 homes
14/02666/AOP Land at Aston Rd by Lightwood Strategic for 280 homes; 17/01841/ADP reserved matters by Dandara Phases 1&2 147 homes granted May 2018; 17/04543/ADP Phases 3&4 137 homes granted Jan 2020; 19/00087/APP (design changes – still undetermined). Also see below.
16/00047/APP Dollicott Paddock (WE Black) - 10 homes. Started on site 2020.
19/00172/APP and 20/01672/APP Land adj Pegasus Way at Westfield Close – 69 flat Care Home for 81 residents

Approved in principle (338):

17/02280/AOP Land west of Churchway/north of Rosemary Lane (HAD007) - permission 9/10/20 plus S106 agreement for 273 homes (see also Reserved Matters below)
18/00066/COUOR Chiltern House Thame Rd B1 to C3 permitted development – 12 flats
18/01037/AOP Land adjacent To Haddenham Nurseries Stanbridge Road. Outline permission granted June 2020 for 16 homes
20/01298/COUOR Waterslade House Thame Rd B1 to C3 permitted development – 36 flats
20/00787/APP 9 Gibson Lane – 1 house (previous application 18/02755/APP refused on appeal)

Applications to be determined:

17/02126/APP re-submitted 20/02897/APP - land at 14 Townsend – 5 homes – decision awaited
18/02385/APP re-submitted 20/01129/APP 19/20 Fort End (House of Spice) retention of part of restaurant and change of use of part to 5 flats – appeal lodged 2021 for non-determination
20/03764/APP Land at Aston Rd – amendment to Phase 1 for 85 dwellings (i.e. net uplift of 32 from 53 originally, resulting in revised overall site total of 312) - outcome awaited
21/00215/ADP HAD007 Phase 1 Reserved Matters for 153 homes submitted 2021 by Redrow Homes
21/00621/APP Land Off Aston Road - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of two dwellings (resubmission)
21/00863/APP Land to rear of 108 Churchway – 2 x 2bed flats -to be determined

Applications refused (149):

14/02309/APP Haddenham Health Centre – erection of 8 bungalows - refused
15/00980/APP 19/20 Fort End (House of Spice) change of use to 7 flats - refused on appeal
17/01225/AOP Land east of Churchway/north of Green Lane 72 homes – refused on appeal in 2018
18/03704/APP Chiltern House redevelopment for 17 flats refused on appeal for non-determination
19/02145/APP Land off Lower Rd/Rear of Stanbridge Rd 43 homes - refused on appeal 2021 for non-determination. Resubmission of smaller scheme expected.
19/01806/APP Land off Aston Rd – derelict site – 2 homes – refused 2021. Resubmitted 2021

Total units approved since 2011 census is 1102 homes

At an average household occupancy of 2.5, this represents c.2700 people, making a total population of c.7200 on completion of all approved developments.

David Truesdale, Chair of Planning Committee

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Parish Council, along with the rest of the world, has been deeply affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic that has swept the world. We at the council have endeavoured to continue to provide a full service to the residents of Haddenham to keep our Parks and Playgrounds maintained, our litter bins emptied and streetlights working, through the lockdowns we have all experienced. Remote working, illness and travel restrictions have affected the contractors that the Parish use, so works have often had to be delayed. As we move into a safer unrestricted time we are now able to catch up on these delayed works and focus on big projects.

Village Grounds Maintenance

The village maintenance has continued to be provided by Aspire Ltd supervised by our main contact Kevin Wynne with the support of his fellow workers. They continue to provide very reliable and competent service and are extremely well regarded by the local residents.

A large project has just been completed at Woodways playing field to clear the boundary.

We have taken ownership of the Tibbs Road open spaces on the Airfield site and Aspire have added this to their work schedule in the last couple of months, encompassing the new play area and playing fields.

The contract for our ground maintenance is due for renewal and we have entered a tendering process to ensure we continue to get the best services, at the best price, for the village.

Haddenham Tree Works

Emergency and small scale tree works continued through the last year, due to Covid-19 illness and other restrictions major tree works were delayed. The tree surgeon is now working to catch up and get these done, and has started works to the leylandii at the Sheerstock Footpath. Other work is outstanding around the village and will commence when it can be scheduled. No tree will be worked on if there is any impact on nesting birds.

Pond Maintenance

In July 2019 we undertook some major clearing of the Banks Road and Rudd's Lane ponds. The contractors removed multiple skips of debris including road signs and a microwave. We have since removed duck weed (blanket weed) on a regular basis, as it accumulates due to the stagnant nature of the water during low rainfall periods. The Parish Council is currently looking for a specialist pond company for regular maintenance to solve this issue, which has proved challenging.

The Church End pond has some loose edging logs, and repair work is scheduled.

Streetlight Maintenance

We continue to use the services of Eldridges Ltd for all the Parish streetlights. These are normally monthly visits unless there is an emergency. The upgrade of the lights to low energy continues with a more concerted effort over the next few months, now that we are able.

St Mary's Churchyard

We continue to maintain the 'closed' churchyard. There is an issue concerning the dumping of waste on areas of the churchyard. The contractor is helping to clear this and new signs have been put up to advise visitors to take their rubbish home, we will monitor the situation.

A survey of the churchyard area and walls showed that a cost of over £100,000 is required to restore them to a safe and reasonable state, repairs that were inherited with the maintenance responsibility. Repair work was carried out on the front walls of the churchyard on the boundary of the Church End pond.

We now hope to move forward on repairing and reinstating the rest of the damaged walls. The PC has also, in principle, agreed to take on the responsibility for setting up and maintaining a new burial ground, on the land at Aston Road, which will be prepared for handover by Dandara later this year, after sign off by Buckinghamshire Council. The proposal and planning for this project is still ongoing, with the appointment of a cemetery development specialist.

Parish Play Areas

General maintenance and regular inspections have continued on the Play grounds to insure their safety.

During the first lockdown our playgrounds were closed and signposted following government advice and government guidelines were followed once re-opened.

It was recognised by the Council that Woodways play area needed to be refurbished, to that end resident surveys were carried out and liaison with the schools and nurseries to get local opinions on updating play areas. With resounding local support, we are moving forward with plans to provide new play equipment. The range of equipment will allow all ages to benefit from the improvements. We hope the new improved play area will be open for everyone to enjoy by the summer holidays. The new play area at Tibbs Road is now open providing a welcome addition to the local community, which the Parish Council has taken responsibility for now it is completed.

The Sentinel Speed Watch

Due to the limitations on volunteer activity during this last year the Sentinel speed watch was suspended, and we have recently received news that it can start up again. Thames Valley Police are revamping the Community Speed Watch Scheme, and we will work with them to move over to the new way of working.

We continue as a parish to apply pressure to Bucks County Council to resolve the problems with the degrading road surfaces, blocked drains and parking.

Chris Young
Environment Committee Chair

TOWNSEND COMMUNITY ORCHARD REPORT

The Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 had a big impact on the ability of the community orchard committee to keep up with the regular maintenance tasks. Due to social distancing rules, all volunteer work parties had to be cancelled between April and July. Once the first lockdown measures were eased a rota of two-person teams was set up to do the essential mowing and weeding tasks. The annual meadow grass cut was completed in August, before the second lockdown put work parties on hold again. A "Rule of Six" work party was held in December to do an end of year tidy up and then the Third national lockdown ceased all activities once more. In April 2021 we resumed "Rule of Six" work parties and hope to be able to continue these during the summer. Like most of the visitors in 2020 the orchard did look a bit "shaggy" and in need of a haircut. However, all forty trees survived and this spring the early blossoming trees are putting on a great display.

The pandemic illustrated how important the orchard has become for villagers, being one of the only locally accessible green spaces to escape to when travel restrictions were in place. It provided a space for exercise and a good measure of peace and tranquillity for families and other residents during a very turbulent year. The orchard committee would encourage the parish council to consider the creation of similar sites across the village to make a network of green spaces, easily accessible by bike or foot, for all to enjoy. All the planned social events at the orchard had to be cancelled, but thanks largely to the Baruch family, a jazz concert was recorded and shown online in September and a marvellous Christmas light display was erected as part of the Festive Lights trail in December. The committee would like to express its sincere gratitude to Mark and John Baruch for these special contributions. In July 2021 we are hoping to host a Shakespearian performance by the travelling troupe, Handlebards, to mark the end of Lockdown.

Other developments during 2020 included the installation of a second bench (in memory of Janet Piers), and the repair of the Witchert wall beside Townsend Green by Chris Bowler. An online presentation was given to the Abbeyfield residents as part of an Active Aging project and the committee are investigating the idea of building a raised bed for elderly visitors to tend and enjoy. Also planned for 2021 is the planting of two new fruit trees including one mulberry and a possible upgrading of the main perimeter path. The latter is getting quite eroded due to the increased popularity of the orchard and the consequent increased footfall. Over winter it was getting very muddy, necessitating the spreading of woodchip to make it more passable.

This report wouldn't be complete without a mention for our dedicated and hard-working volunteers who come out in all weathers to keep the orchard tidy and make it a very pleasant place to visit. These include the monthly work party team, the orchard watchers, and the summer mowing team. Lastly, the rest of the committee would like to pay tribute to our retiring Chairman, David Greaves who after over 6 years of service to the orchard project is stepping down. David has been involved with the project since the very start in 2014 when the site was just a bare grassy field. He oversaw the successful transition from blueprint design to a fully planted up orchard, and the installation of the infrastructure such as the log benches in "The Core". As ever new members to the orchard committee or volunteers are very welcome and can register their interest in helping out via the Acting Chairman, Diccon Proctor via communityorchard.haddenham@gmail.com.

Diccon Proctor
Acting Townsend Community Orchard Chair

ALLOTMENTS REPORT

Waiting List and new plots

The waiting list is the longest it has been for some time – 22 new people (and a number of existing plot holders who would like a larger plot.) All plots are currently let.

We are planning to create 4 new plots on land currently not used.

Monthly Inspections

John (Chair) and Alison (Secretary) are conducting monthly inspections to ensure that all plots are being used. The first one was carried out on the 22nd March. As a result, 3 people were given notice to put their allotment in order before the follow-up inspection on the 26th April.

Bore Hole / Water

The bore hole project has been a great success, saving thousands of pounds in water. It is now being developed to overcome problems of shortage of water when the sun is not on the solar panels and so the pump not working – this has been an issue during very hot periods. New solar panels have been installed and a battery which will store the surplus energy generated during the day will be added to the system to power the pump during the evenings to ensure there is always a sufficient supply of water.

Many thanks to Chris Wylam for all his hard work on this project.

Hedges

After many years of working on the circumference hedges, Mike Kershaw, is now passing over the responsibility to Jaime Zaldua and Diccon Proctor (Diccon is not an allotment holder, but keen to help and knowledgeable about hedging). They will get started when the hedging season opens in the autumn.

Thank you to all the hard work Mike has put in to recover and maintain our hedges.

Shredding

Richard Moore has set up a new project to use the debris resulting from the hedging (and woody material from people's plots) by shredding it and making it available for plotters' use. He has built three large bays – one for compostable material, one for the woody waste, and one for the shredded matter. A shredder was bought from Aspire (who no longer needed it), and is used exclusively by Richard.

Grow to Give

Another new project is Grow to Give. This is a Buckinghamshire Council funded project whereby crates are put out every weekend to collect any surplus produce that plotters may have. This is then delivered on a Monday morning to The Vineyard in Aylesbury, who use it for their food bank boxes, or by their chef to be used for ready-made meals, which are then distributed.

This project only started on the weekend of 17-19th April, and as yet there is little surplus produce (indeed little produce of any sort). A lot of support has been offered by a large number of plotters and we're hoping that the project will grow with the growing season.

Alison Watts, Allotments Secretary

John Wheeler, Allotments Committee Chair

SNAKEMOOR NATURE RESERVE REPORT

Summary

Snakemoor has seen unprecedented change over the past year - with many more visitors from an expanding village. The Volunteers have coped exceedingly well with this impact, despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The healthy and vibrant state of the Reserve is a credit to them all.

Significant progress has been made:

- Planting a variety of new saplings, bulbs and other plants
- Pond improvements
- Upgrading the paths
- Communicating about the reserve to new residents

Security has been improved and littering issues addressed

Topics to tackle this year:

- Completing the path project
- Encouraging new wildlife in the pond
- Renovating the bird boxes

Working Groups & Other Activities in the reporting period:

August 2019: Hay gathering from the meadow (kindly harvested previously by Michael Whitney); developing the Willow Tunnel feature

October 2019: Tree maintenance; sapling work; nettle clearance; Willow Tunnel upkeep

November 2019: Installation of a new fence on the west margin of the Reserve

February 2020: Tree pruning and Willow Tunnel maintenance

March 2020 - September 2020: Lockdown period obliged any work to be done in pairs or singly. Much worthwhile maintenance continued.

August 2020: meadow mowing by Michael Whitney.

October 2020: Pond and stream clearance; making good after wind damage; clearing unwanted saplings

April 2020: Chipping of debris; laying paths with chippings; stream clearing; Willow Tunnel upkeep.

Typically, Working Groups have seen 12 - 20 Volunteers turn out for a Saturday morning to undertake the tasks above. Some bring specialised vehicles and equipment which make a great difference to what can be achieved without costly external services.

In addition to the above, many Volunteers have carried out valuable work in between organised Working Groups. Examples are:

- Pruning and maintenance of the orchard and other areas
- Clearing and maintenance of the pond and stream
- Maintenance and gap filling of the driveway hedge
- Removing unwanted saplings, nettles etc.
- Keeping litter to very low levels

Significant progress has been made with adding new flora, and taking out dead and diseased items. These include:

- Oak
- Yew
- Box
- Sweet chestnut
- Alder
- Lime
- Rowan
- Silver birch
- Various hedging species
- Aconites
- Primroses

In addition to the wonderful body of Snakemoor Volunteers, I would also like to thank Kevin Wynne and Aspire Community Works for a good deal of support and assistance over the past year. Finally, Snakemoor would not have been able to progress so far without the frequent support of Mark Nicholson for trees, fencing and wood chipping.

Julian Watson
Snakemoor Volunteer Manager

RELEAF REPORT

Earlier this year members of the reLEAF team met with the Environment Committee to discuss our proposals for tree planting on Sheerstock, and subsequently a sub subgroup of the Environment Committee continued working with us to refine the proposals. They requested we carried out a consultation with nearby residents. On the whole, the responses to the consultation were very positive with people keen to be involved, either in planting or watering of trees.

This spring, we have planted 11 trees at the top end of Sheerstock, on parish council owned land. Sadly, we have not been able to involve the community in the planting as we have had to work within Covid restrictions, either planting as household bubbles or in pairs being careful to maintain our distance. The trees planted are a mixture of crab apples, plum, mountain ash, silverbirch and a couple of ornamental trees. We have recruited local residents to water the trees between March & October both this year and next, which should see the trees properly established. (In spring last year, just before lockdown began, we managed to plant five trees, four apples and a nut tree, on an area of parish council owned land behind some garages on Sheerstock. Residents watered them every week through the summer and they are looking very healthy.)

We haven't managed to plant all the trees that were agreed as we ran out of time - recommended tree planting season is October to March. So we have agreements in place for planting on the Sheerstock recreation ground near the railway line which we will continue with in October, although we have added hedging plants to fill some gaps in the hedge.

We have been discussing ideas for tree planting on the Woodways recreation ground with the various sports groups that use it and Aspire. We hope to bring a proposal to the next Environment Committee. We also look forward to receiving the final approval for the types of trees that could be planted in the Pound area, by Church End pond.

Also this year we've engaged with the Management Committee of the Chilworth Gate development, and enhanced the planting on the small park area and strip of land adjacent to the railway line. We have planted trees to screen the pedestrian footbridge, to enhance the hedge and to screen the pumping station. We also replaced a couple of trees that were originally planted by the developer but had completely failed. We've started to tidy up some of the tree guards and stakes from earlier planting which are no longer required, and will start to negatively impact the area and the trees if left.

We've been involved in talks with Buckinghamshire Council (BC), who established a community tree planting task and finish group. One of reLEAF's key aims at these meetings has been to establish how we can plant trees on the roadside verges, which are controlled by the highways authority. The various BC departments involved have come to the consensus that it is too dangerous for untrained members of the community to plant in roadside verges due to all the utilities which could be running below the surface. Apparently, even when appropriate maps are consulted & scanning equipment is used to check an area, it is not uncommon for utilities to be uncovered that had not previously been detected. BC have decided that only their own contractors will be permitted to plant trees in roadside verges and they are currently working on a process which would enable either a private individual or a community group to request trees in a particular roadside verge. The idea is that BC officers would assess the suitability of the site, and, if suitable, the requester could then pay for BC contractors to supply & plant tree(s). The suggestion is that there would be a discounted price if watering the tree for the first few years was undertaken by the requester. The tree would be the responsibility of BC. The current expected cost of this is probably going to be too

high to be viable for us to go down this route without significant funding. reLEAF and the other community tree planting group involved were rather dismayed at this, but at the most recent meeting we were told about Treescapes

The government is about to launch the Local Authority Treescapes fund <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authority-treescapes-fund> and BC is one of the authorities eligible to apply for funding.

The full details have not been announced (due 'early April') but the headlines are that BC could receive up to £300,000 for tree planting projects that involve the community. The funding will be for trees or hedgerow that:

- are not in existing woodland areas,
- are planted in blocks of up to 0.5-hectare maximum
- can be on privately owned land
- can be street trees (i.e. next to the highway)

The funding is for capital cost only, but this can include contractors undertaking the work and the first three years of maintenance

There is however a very short timescale for applications which must be in by the end of May this year. Also, the planting must take place by 5/4/22. The officer who would make the application from BC has asked us to submit suggestions of where we would like to plant trees. reLEAF intend to submit suggestions for trees on Sheerstock, Wykeham Way, Willis Road area and possibly elsewhere in the village if we can do so in the time available.

It has been a difficult year but we have managed to achieve quite a bit, with one family bubble planting 40 trees! Hopefully we will achieve even more next year (although we have noticed that the price of trees has increased and there are also predictions that tree supplies may run short with the nationwide interest in tree planting). We are supporting the Rotary club in their bid to get Land Improvement Holdings to permit an area of woodland between the railway line & Pegasus Road, so let's hope the easing of restrictions will see that project back to life too.

Kristen Shaw
reLEAF member

HADDENHAM SAFE WALKING & CYCLING REPORT

Safety within Haddenham for walkers and cyclists

Our aim is for Haddenham to become a *‘Walking and Cycling Village’*, where vehicles are not given automatic precedence. We appreciate that all journeys cannot be vehicle-free for many valid reasons: time constraints, ill-health, emergencies and public transport. But we want the *safety* of pedestrians and cyclists of all ages to be paramount in village travel. We therefore wish to encourage and support safe walking and cycling within Haddenham, *when practical*, given the health benefits of exercise and less pollution, beside the social benefits of easy interactions within the village community.

Much needs to be done to achieve this. In the short term, we need to focus village attention on careful walking, cycling and driving where we *all* follow the Highway Code. We would like to have a village-wide campaign to encourage the prolongation of the current increase in walking and cycling throughout the village by leading drivers and cyclists to expect pedestrians on roadsides and at our village spaces e.g. Church End, Fort End, Townsend Green.

For the long term, we welcome the Parish Council’s Streetscape Project and hope this can create a physical environment which gives drivers prompts to drive more slowly and give way to pedestrians and cyclists.

We wish to contribute as much as possible to Streetscape, so we are collecting evidence. Angela Matthews has led a [Survey of Parents](#) at all 3 village schools, asking how safe they feel en-route to school and what determines their preferred means of travel. Parents do not think that Haddenham is a safe place for children to cycle: the pavements are often too narrow to cope with buggies, scooters and other children; road traffic goes too fast for safety and pedestrians need more safe places for crossing busy roads. We have sent the Report to the Parish Council for the Streetscape Consultant to take into consideration.

We also counted cars on the E-W route through the village, to try to find out how much through traffic there was and the effect of the cycle lane. Lockdown has interfered with this but we estimate 15% *through* traffic on Woodways through to Thame Road and the Station. We expect Streetscape to suggest a means of discouraging/preventing through traffic.

We are discussing other ways to assist Streetscape on the issue of safety for pedestrians and cyclists, including researching a variety of safe cycling and walking routes.

The Pop-up Cycle Lane/20mph/Active Travel Plan. This government project gave money to Bucks for 5 schemes to reduce reliance on cars, of which ours is the only village scheme.

Alan and I attend regular review meetings with County Councillors on behalf of the Group. All are agreed that the scheme as it stands does not make it safer for children to cycle to school as it does not extend to Woodways and it is only one-way. However, the existence of HADDSWAC has helped focus Bucks Transport Strategy Section onto Haddenham, as we count as “Community Involvement”, with the hope of more money. Improvements are yet to be agreed but might include conservation grade street furniture, possible redesign of the Banks Road/Fort End area and measures to deal with the roundabouts, where clear routes for bikes and pedestrians are needed to cross the roundabouts safely. (Cllr Clive Harriss has been keen to make this cycleway work and understands cycle safety, but he is moving to another area after the elections.) The cycleway was a 3-month experiment, but Bucks have decided to keep it through the Spring so that fair weather cyclists will be included. The notable success of the cycleway has been a reduction in the speed of all vehicles along Thame Road and particularly round the Fort End bends, but there are still no safe places to cross the road at Fort End. The government decreed that we are not allowed to keep the 20mph limit without the cycleway.

We support a village-wide 20 mph limit as this is now a widely recognised convention to signal a residential area, where a heightened level of care and consideration is required.

Walks within and without the Village

We have been pressing for years for a Greenway i.e. a tarmac path for use by pedestrians and cyclists from Dollicott to the station but, although it is in the planners' minds, it is not yet a certainty.

Residents in the new houses on the airfield site have no safe walking and cycling route to the rest of the village, except via Pegasus Way/Thame Road. The impermeability of the industrial estate is a serious planning error and leads to increased vehicle use. It also cuts those areas off from the 'old village'. This is hardly conducive to Haddenham as a 'whole village'.

The footpaths on the Glebelands site are all closed, except part of the one behind Willis Road which still does not allow access to Churchway, despite persuasion by Bill Piers, Brian Bowman and others. This path is interrupted where it meets Barn Owl Lane. The dropped kerbs are not on the path line but into the roadway and the path itself disappears. Parked cars introduce another hazard, making the path unsafe.

Bucks Network of Greenways/Hard paths for walkers, cyclists, wheelchairs, buggies, mobility scooters

This is a new policy. Greenways will usually be routed off road to provide a cross country route and easy access to the countryside for those who cannot cope with mud and uneven surfaces. Our Green Lane is a precursor of this policy.

Thame-Haddenham-Aylesbury Greenway is to be known as the Thame-Aylesbury Greenway but Haddenham will be the main settlement to benefit from this idea and the plan is to have a link through the village, probably via Dollicott.

Towards Thame: funding for the Greenway from Haddenham to Thame has not been reinstated by the Oxon Growth Board despite the combined efforts of residents and Councillors in Bucks, S Oxfordshire and Thame. Bucks and Oxon Westlington continue to work together but we are back to glacial progress. No decision on the final route has yet been made. We are in regular contact with officers and David Truesdale and I am on the Walking and Cycling Sub-group of the local Community Board. We hope to use its influence to speed things up.

Towards Aylesbury: The Greenway will start from the elbow corner of our Green Lane and go to Westlington, then through Dinton and Upton to link up with the Stone cycleway and thus eventually go all the way to Aylesbury.

Our Green Lane is proving very popular. Our thanks go to Robyn Thorogood, Mike Whitney, Mark Nicholson and others for their care of the path.

Liaison with other villages/towns

We continue to liaise with organisations in Thame, Dinton, Chearsley and with Bucks. Councillors and officers. Events 1. We had planned several events but none could happen, except the 'electric bike demonstration', organised by Alan Thawley. This was much praised, as the demonstrator was an enthusiast rather than a salesman.

We are now investigating the possibility of an electric car club in Haddenham

In Bike Week at the end of May we will be holding a Family Bike Ride round Haddenham. This will take the form of a Map with a key to village highlights and possibilities. Families can sign up and then do the ride whenever suits them from any part of the village.

We are also looking into getting fold-out indicator bars for cyclists. These encourage drivers to give cyclists more space on the road.

Potholes

These are still unfilled all over the village and make cycling even more dangerous. More moderate vehicle speeds might reduce road damage. FixMyStreet is still the best place to report them. Get the App or go online. However, we have one success: after years of emails and tel calls, with help from others, we have finally got Willis Road (formerly 138 potholes) re-surfaced!

My thanks go to all group members for their ideas, their work and their support.

Cynthia Floud
Haddenham Safe Walking & Cycling Group Chair

CHARITIES

BANKS PARK RECREATION GROUND CHARITY

Village Hall Leases

The termination of the lease of the former Day Centre by Buckinghamshire County Council and the reversion of ownership back to the Charity has allowed disused and run-down rooms in the Village Hall to be updated and brought back into use. The Parish Council has led the refurbishment project and reported on this.

There is a complex arrangement between BPRGC, Haddenham Parish Council (HPC) and the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC). The management agreement was terminated with the surrender of the Day Centre lease and the VHMC is in the process of converting to a CIO. We have been seeking legal advice on the best way to set up a new lease for the village hall, new PC office and committee room, this involves solicitors to represent each party and will need the approval of the Charity Commission. The process is not straight forward and is taking a while to resolve, as we have to act in the best interests of all parties, but have a potential conflict of interest.

Facilities management

Work was carried out to replace a section of damaged drain work behind the main hall and all soakaways and gullies were cleared in December 2020.

As part of the refurbishment of the Day Centre the paving between the library, FitLife and the village hall was re-laid / replaced. The entire flat roof in the centre of the village hall needed replacing and was done with the refurbishment project, the Charity contributed £15,000 towards this work.

We are working to resolve a problem with a leak in the Mabel Parkinson room and have initially changed the guttering to prevent the flow of water across the roof hoping that is the straightforward solution. It may be necessary to carry out further investigative work and repairs.

David Truesdale

Chair of Banks Park Recreation Ground Charity

HADDENHAM EDUCATIONAL CHARITY

The charity has an income from the investment made following the sale of the Old British School in Churchway. The Old British School was a charity, with a deed of 1851, the original deed being varied over time until 1982 when the sale of the school was authorised the deed was varied to the scheme in existence today. The Trustee of the Charity became Haddenham Parish Council at this time.

Applications for small grants to support residents of Haddenham to provide assistance with pursuing further education, including university, apprenticeships, sports and the arts.

Grants

In 2019 the Charity awarded 14 grants of £200 each to 14 applicants.

In 2020 the Charity awarded 19 grants of £165 each to 21 applicants.

The grant awarding policy has been updated to reflect an increased number of applications and repeat applications and deal with these more fairly.

David O'Hanlon, Chair of Haddenham Educational Charity

HADDENHAM PAROCHIAL CHARITIES

Responsibility for the three Haddenham Parochial Charities was taken over from the Parish Church authorities when parish councils were instituted in 1894. The original charities were set up to support the poor of the parish by providing bread and coal at Christmas and corn seed on Good Friday. The income comes from investments and through ownership of the land at Townside which is used for allotments. The Parish Council leases the allotment site and pays an annual rent.

In modern times, the operation of the charity has changed and the trustees use the income of the charities to make grants to individuals in need of charitable relief in December and to organisations catering for residents in need of charitable relief at any time of year.

Applications can be made by contacting Alan Rose on 01844 291004.

2020/2021 has involved working with the Trustees to establish a new lease for the allotment land for the residents of Haddenham. These discussions hopefully will be completed in the next financial year.

Thames Valley Police

This year has been very busy one way or another for the neighbourhood team. During the beginning on the pandemic Tom was redeployed to Aylesbury to cover the response for a couple of months. As the PCSOs have not been able to carry out their usual engagement activities, they have been doing a lot of COVID 19 enforcement patrols and trying to stay in touch with their villages via Zoom and MS teams. Tom has recently completed his wildlife crime officers course and is busy with lots of investigations in that respect.

The neighbourhood area has got considerably bigger since the restructuring of the community board boundaries, and as a team we now cover Berryfields estate off the A41 as well. In order to deal with this increased area/demand, we have been allocated two new positions on the team, for a police officer and a further PCSO. Dean Kingham has returned to the team from Aylesbury, having worked on the team for 8 years in the past, and so has taken back to the area very well. He has become very skilled in all things anti-social behaviour whilst working in Aylesbury as well as bringing his wealth of knowledge about rural and wildlife crime. PCSO Chyna Mcgraa has also joined the team fresh from training school and is very keen to get out and about and get to know everybody when restrictions allow.

In terms of our crime focus, our neighbourhood priorities remain a reduction in rural crime and non-dwelling burglaries, including sheds and garages. We have conducted a number of operations recently in respect of this as well as supporting other neighbourhoods with similar priorities to our own across the Vale.

In terms of crime statistics, in the last 365 days in Haddenham there have been 254 crimes or crime related incidents recorded. (This seems like a very high figure but is largely due to a new IT system which creates a reference for nearly all incidents reported whereas in the past they were closed and no reference numbers were generated. That number therefore includes a lot of non-crime incidents like road hazards etc.)

In terms of actual crimes, crime across Aylesbury Vale is down 9% on a rolling 12-month period.

In Haddenham over the last year there have been 13 thefts reported, 8 thefts from motorvehicles and 6 burglaries (inc houses, sheds and garages etc.) These are not official statistics but from my own research so please don't take them as gospel.

The Haddenham/Long Crendon neighbourhood area has seen a decrease in crime of 13% over a rolling 12-month period. There have been 5 more shed break ins over the same period. Theft from motorvehicles is down 40%.

Tom Chalk
Neighbourhood Supervisor & Wildlife Crime Officer
Waddesdon Neighbourhood Policing Team