

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: www.bensonpc.org.uk

Minutes of the Benson Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 15th December 2016 at 7:30pm in the Benson Parish Hall Committee Room.

Present:

Cllr P Peers	(Chair)	(CPP)
Cllr P Baylis		(CPB)
Cllr J Fowler		(CJF)
Cllr R Jordan		(CRJ)
Cllr F Lovesey		(CFL)
Cllr T McTeague		(CTM)
Cllr D Olley		(CDO)
Cllr P Murray		(CPM)
Cllr T Stevenson		(CTS) Left the meeting 7:50PM.
Cllr M Winton		(CMW)

Proper Officer: P Eldridge (CLK)

There was 1 member of the public present.

MINUTES

1. **Apologies.** Cllr S McCann (CSM), Cllr R Workman (CRW).
2. **Declarations of Interest.** – There were no declarations of interest.
3. **To receive reports from the following:**
 - a. Cllr M Gray – OCC Member. Cllr Gray was not present at the meeting.
 - b. Cllr F Bloomfield – SODC Member. Cllr Bloomfield was not present at the meeting but had provided a written report attached at Annex B.
 - c. Cllr R Pullen – SODC Member. Cllr Pullen sent apologies for the meeting as he was not available for the meeting.
4. **Public Session.** To allow members of the public to ask questions and address the Chairman. The member of the public present did not wish to ask any questions or address the chairman.
5. **Minutes of Last Meeting:** To approve and sign minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24th November 2016: **Members who were present at the Benson Parish Council meeting held Thursday 24th November 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr P Peers chair of the parish council signed the minutes as a true record.
6. **Benson Parish Council Planning Committee:**
 - a. To consider Planning Applications:
 - i. **BPC66/16/P16/S3441/O.** Land South of Watlington Road, Benson, OX10 6NP
Outline application (with all matters reserved except access) for the erection of up to 180 dwellings (40% of which will be affordable) with associated access, public open space, landscaping and play space.
Members unanimously resolved to object to the application on the grounds of:

Key Objections:

- The development will have a major impact on the visual amenity of houses in Blacklands Road and Brook Street. Their own landscape assessment report states “the impact is significant and should be considered in the planning balance”. The site being located on higher ground, it will overlook existing properties in Brook St and Blacklands Road.
- The impact of additional vehicles generated by this development. The figures quoted for the anticipated growth at Littleworth Road do not agree with the latest figures in P16/3611
- The development is not sustainable due to its distance from village facilities (school, doctors etc.)

Other relevant comments:

Consultation Statement

No public event has been held to allow residents to view plans of the development

The website only available to comment for a 2-week period

The meeting with the Parish Council did not state we were "looking for an additional 190 dwellings over that which has been approved in Phase 1 and 2 of Littleworth Road". What was stated was that the NP were looking to recommend some additional housing over the 190 allocated to Benson by SODC as part of the SHMA process. A number was not specified.

Out of 35 responses received – only 1 was supportive, 34 objected

Heritage Statement

The population of Benson was not 5567 in 2001. It was actually 4464

The picture labelled Benson Library shows the petrol station!!

Design & Access Statement

The picture labelled Allotments shows agricultural field not allotments

The Design and Access Statement fails to consider the impact of the 400 houses already approved at Littleworth Road

Traffic flows in the "town" are not generally low

The 97-bus route no longer exists (funding withdrawn) and the 114 service only has 1 bus per day

Noise Assessment

As demonstrated from RAF Benson correspondence, rotary aircraft do not follow set paths due to weather variances

Agricultural Land Assessment - 30% of land classified as Very Good or Good quality and remaining 70% as Moderate. Why is good quality agricultural land being given up for development?

Utilities Report

There is no mention of waste disposal; only that supply can be met (and does this supply include all other developments)

The foul waste water disposal is currently an issue in Benson with Thames Water

admitting there is insufficient capacity.

Landscape & Visual Assessment

This is a major impact on visual impact of development on properties on Blacklands Road and Brook St. It is also a major impact upon the Public Footpath 125/12/10. Their own report states that the visual impact is significant and should be considered in the planning balance.

Archaeological Assessment

The map shows Littleworth Road site rather than Watlington Road.

Geo-environmental Study

As stated in the report soil samples and chemical testing should be undertaken to confirm no significant levels of contaminant on site. This needs to be done prior to planning permission

Travel Plan

There is no 136 service on a Sunday.

139B only runs from 10:00 until 18:10

So intangible (due to Outline nature of application) as to be worthless

Transport Assessment

The report suggests people will cycle from the site to Cholsey to catch a train which is utterly preposterous

The figures for anticipated growth due to application at Littleworth Road do not agree with latest values in LWR P16/S3611 and show a 40% increase.

BEN5 AM Peak		BEN5 PM Peak		Total
Arrivals	Depart	Arrivals	Depart	
33	51	73	19	176
LWR AM Peak		LWR PM Peak		Total
43	70	73	24	241

The junction into site is still within 50mph limit. At the meeting with WW it was agreed to extend the current 30mph limit but this is not reflected in the application

The site has poor connections to the existing village meaning people will invariably use vehicles.

Design

The application states this is an "excellent design". However, as this is an Outline application there is insufficient detail to assess the design.

- b. To note Planning Decisions:
 - i. **BPC58/16/P16/S2037/LB:** Fifield Manor, Benson, Wallingford, OXON, OX10 6H.
Amendment: No. 1 - dated 15th September 2016
Removal of partially demolished lean-to from existing dovecote and erection of an ancillary building comprising a double carport, double garage, workshop, office and studio/storage. (As amended by revised plans showing a reduction in the size of the proposed outbuilding and as supported by the amended Design & Access Statement and Statement of Significance received on 15 September 2016).

Permission Granted.

ii. **BPC59/16/P16/S2038/HH:** Fifield Manor, Benson, Wallingford, OXON, OX10 6H.

Amendment: No. 1 - dated 15th September

Removal of partially demolished lean-to from existing dovecote and erection of an ancillary building comprising a double carport, double garage, workshop, office and studio/storage. (As amended by revised plans showing a reduction in the size of the proposed outbuilding and as supported by the amended Design & Access Statement and Statement of Significance received on 15 September 2016).

Permission Granted.

iii. **BPC63/16/P16/S3477/HH.** Blenheim House, 24 Oxford Road, Benson, OX10 6LX.

Replacement of existing freestanding glasshouse with Victorian style glasshouse.

Permission Granted.

c. To note Planning Application Withdrawals:

i. **BPC46/14/P14/S2564/FUL.** Land north of Littleworth Road Benson.

1) The erection of 125 dwellings with associated access, open space and landscaping;

2) 41 retirement flats and 11 retirement bungalows with associated parking and car share facilities. (Associated community facilities falling within the blue line which will be subject to a separate planning application following consultation with Benson Parish Council.)

Application withdrawn: Letter from SODC dated 8th December 2016.

d. To discuss the requirement to engage the Benson Community in the current planning applications for large developments around Benson Village and review the draft poster and councillor comments on the poster. At this point, Cllr T Stevenson excused himself from the meeting as he was feeling unwell leaving at 7:50PM. Cllr R Jordan produced a different map he had obtained from SODC informing the council that Benson Parish Council (BPC) was licensed to use it. After a quick examination, Cllr J Fowler noted that the map was inaccurate on area BEN3. Cllr P Peers commented that she was still waiting for an official confirmation from SODC on the copyright of the original map so that BPC could use it. Cllr M Winton queried why the BPC was concerned about copyright on the map? Cllr Fowler responded that permission to use it was required to send out electronic copies of the map. Cllr Peers explained that she did not think a decision on engaging the public could be made at this meeting while negotiations were still taking place with other organisations in the village on the way forward. At the end of the discussion it was agreed that:

i. The Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee should coopt members of other village organisations to help in communicating information to parishioners on major developments in Benson. Cllrs M Winton, R Jordan and T McTeague also agreed to work with the communications team.

ii. The Clerk should contact SODC to get more information on both of the maps copyright and their use in the communications campaign.

Action: Clerk to contact SODC to discuss copyright of documentation.

CLK

e. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Cllr J Fowler reported that:

i. Community facilities agreed and provided in major planning applications are not lost if the planning permission is sold on to another developer as the new developer still has the obligation to provide facilities stated in planning permissions.

ii. The meeting with CALA homes went reasonably well and it was agreed by CALA Homes that the issues on the current plan brought to the meeting by the Benson Parish Council would be considered and reported back on. Cllr Fowler noted at this point that he felt another meeting on phase 2 would be required if it was also sold on in the future.

iii. Central government had intervened on the requirements of councils to maintain a 5-year land supply and this should help enable SODC to better consider future large development planning applications.

7. **Benson Parish Council Finance Committee:**

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 6th December 2016. **Members who were present at the Benson Parish Council finance committee meeting held Tuesday 6th December 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr P Peers chair of the finance committee signed the minutes as a true record.

b. To present finance recommendations to Council:

i. **Recommendation to Full Council that the 2016 Debt Recovery Policy version 0.4 is adopted.**

After a vigorous discussion **Members present resolved by 5 votes with 3 against and 1 abstention to approve the recommendation.**

Cllr J Fowler commented that Cllrs R Jordan and T McTeague could still, if they wished, liaise with the RFO to improve the policy.

ii. **Recommendation to full council that a £30 gift voucher is purchased as a prize for the Best Photographer at Wallingford School as chosen by the Tech Committee reference photos for the Benson Parish Council website.**

Members present unanimously resolved to approve the recommendation.

iii. **Recommendation to Full Council to set the budget for 2017-18 with a net expenditure/precept of £130,631. With a tax base for the year of 1693.4, a precept of £130,631 amounts to £77.14 per annum per band D dwelling, an increase of 3.9% on the 2016-17 band D figure of £74.21.**

Members present resolved by 7 votes with 2 abstentions to approve the recommendation.

c. To receive a report from the chairman of the finance committee. Chairman had nothing further to report.

8. **Benson Parish Council Halls Committee:**

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Halls Committee Meeting held on Thursday 8th December 2016:

i. Cllr T McTeague asked members of the halls committee to amend item 4 to say:

“The halls committee reviewed the comments that were received from the public meeting and agreed to look at baby changing facilities and an upstairs toilet in the regeneration plans”.

Members who were present at the Benson Parish Council Halls committee meeting held Thursday 8th December 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the amendment to the minutes.

ii. **Members who were present at the Benson Parish Council Halls committee meeting held Thursday 8th December 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the amended minutes of the meeting** It was agreed that the clerk should update the minutes and bring a copy to Cllr T McTeague chair of the Halls committee to sign as a true record.

b. To present halls recommendations to Council:

i. **Recommendation to Full Council that Benson Parish Council resolve to progress to the next stage of the development for the halls regeneration project, at an approximate cost of 700k + vat. The next stage is to Finalise plans and proceed with pre-application advice.**

Cllr T McTeague briefed Cllrs on the cost of the proposed hall extension development and that there would be additional public displays of information and consultations. After a brief discussion, **Members present resolved by 8 votes with 1 abstention to approve the recommendation.**

c. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Halls Committee.

Cllr T McTeague reported on the requirement for additional key holders to be available to attend callouts from hall hirers to resolve any issues with out of normal working hours' problems. It had been suggested that this could be facilitated by the purchase of an electronic reception service that could divert out of hours calls to nominated telephone number(s).

Action: Parish Staff to review and recommend an electronic reception service to the halls committee.

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9. **Benson Parish Council Recreation and Lands Committee:**

a. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Recreation and Lands Committee. Cllr P Baylis reported that:

i. A new gate had been provided on the footpath leading from the Riverside Café into Rivermead. Although work on the Riverside Café side of the work had been completed the Rivermead side access through the gate was in a very poor state on the completion of the work. Cllr Baylis continued that since good access was essential she had authorised emergency work to be immediately carried out to rectify access issues with the installation of a short ramp. This work was now complete.

ii. The Millstream Public Toilets were closed due to an issue with the flushing of the toilet. (Post Meeting Note: Clerk reports that the issue has been resolved and the toilets reopened AM Monday 19th December 2016).

iii. The Community Unpaid Work Team have finished working for 2016.

iv. The ongoing work at Millstream Public Toilets by a parishioner to make a garden and rockery. This is proceeding well and some funding has been authorised for the provision of plants. It was agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent to the parishioner.

Action: Clerk to send a letter of thanks to the parishioner.

CLK

10. Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:

a. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Steering Group. Cllr J Fowler reported:

i. Work on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has commenced and it should be completed early / mid-January.

ii. A meeting was held with GVA (the developer promoting Chalgrove Airfield), their Transport Consultants and representatives from Berrick Salome PC. We conducted a tour of Berrick and Benson in order that GVA could better understand some of the issues and site locations.

GVA are proposing that should Chalgrove go ahead, Hollandtide Lane will be upgraded and be the favoured vehicle route for traffic from Berrick to Benson. The Braze Lane route will be designated as a green/quiet lane. GVA are going to draw up a plan showing the proposed route for the Edge Road around Benson. They are also going to speak WestWaddy/Styles about Phase 2 of the BEN1 site in relation to the Edge Road and OCC/SODC about a strategic view of all the developments in this area

11. Benson Parish Council Working Groups. To receive reports from the Benson Parish Council Working Groups: There were no reports from working groups.

12. Benson Parish Council Chairman:

a. To receive a report from the Chairman. Cllr P Peers reported:

i. Her thanks to Cllrs for their support and attendance at meetings during 2016.

ii. Her thanks to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee and particularly the chair Cllr J Fowler for all their work on the production of a Benson Village Neighbourhood Plan.

iii. That this would be the last meeting of the current parish clerk who is retiring and that she would like to record a special vote of thanks to the clerk for his hard work during his tenure. Cllr J Fowler also asked for his thanks to be minuted as the clerk had supported him well when he was the chair of the council.

b. To report on any items or issues brought forward. No items or issues were brought to the meeting.

13. To discuss and agree any Proposals or Approvals. No proposals had been submitted.

14. Correspondence:

a. To review correspondence and post received as detailed on attached list.

Post received for meeting Thursday 15th December 2016

Post/Emails Received	Action
1. Price Increase - Office 365 circulated Mon 12 th Dec 2016 at 11:57.	Noted
2. Independent Review of Members Allowances circulated Mon 5 th Dec 2016 at 11:28.	Noted
3. Sunnyside Children's Play Park complaint circulated by the clerk Mon 12 Dec 2016 at 12:31.	Noted

4. Thames Path National Trail Winter newsletter circulated Mon 12 th Dec 2016 at 12:41.	Noted
5. Comment on Planning Application: P16/S3611/FUL circulated Fri 9 th Dec 2017 at 08:34.	Noted
6. Telephone box adoption and removal circulated Wed 14 th Dec 2016 at 09:17 and 09:22.	Noted
7. Ombudsman to cover town and parish councils – consultation circulated Wed 14 Dec 2016 at 09:27.	Noted
8. Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association newsletter circulated Wed 14 Dec 2016 at 09:33.	Noted
9. Community First Autumn/Winter Newsletter circulated Wed 14 Dec 2016 at 09:38.	Noted
10. Request to install a small poly tunnel type greenhouse on allotment plot 57 circulated Mon 12 th Dec 2016 at 12:06. Cllr P Baylis noted that it had been previously agreed that the granting of permission for poly tunnels and sheds on allotments be devolved to parish staff if they complied with the tenancy agreement. Cllr D Olley noted that the location of any buildings should also be agreed as part of the permission. Cllr Baylis requested that the devolving of the granting of permission and a review of the tenancy agreement should be passed to the recreation and lands committee do discuss and this was agreed. Action: Clerk to place and item on the next recreation and lands agenda to discuss sheds etc. on allotments.	CLK
11. Request to put shed on allotment 56 circulated Mon 12 th Dec 2016 at 12:24. To be passed to recreation and lands as actioned at item 14.a.10. above.	
12. Wallingford Corn Exchange Theatre request for donation circulated Wed 14 Dec 2016 at 09:47. Cllr P Baylis commented that she would support a grant to the Corn Exchange as it was the only local arts facility to Benson. This was generally agreed by Cllrs and the clerk was instructed to send a grants application form to the Corn Exchange. Action: Clerk to send grants application and policy to the Corn Exchange.	CLK
b. To review Parish Office Notes as detailed on attached list (to follow).	
1. Benson Parish Office Christmas Shut down. The Parish Office will close for Christmas from Friday 23 rd December 2016 until Tuesday 3 rd January 2017 start and end dates included. The Benson Helpline will close from Wednesday 21 st December 2016 until Wednesday 4 th January 2017 start and end dates included.	Noted

15. **Finance:**

- a. To sign off the reconciled bank statement for the current account as at 28th November 2016.

Members present unanimously resolved to approve the reconciled bank statement as at 28th November 2016

- b. To sign cheques as detailed on the attached list (to follow).

16. **Questions to the Chairman:** There were no questions to the chairman.

17. **Items for Councillors to Note.**

- a. Cllr D Olley noted that the Rene Brogan Path was covered with wet leaves that could cause a slip hazard for pedestrians using it. Clerk instructed to clear the leaves ASAP.

Action: Clerk to arrange for the clearing of leaves on Benson footpaths.

Action: Clerk to place item on recreation and lands agenda to discuss regular clearance of footpaths.

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- b. Cllr P Baylis took the opportunity to wish all Cllrs and parish staff a Merry

Christmas and a happy New Year. Councillors present echoed the greetings.

18. **To confirm the date of the next council meeting.** Thursday 26th January 2017.

19. **Dates of Next Meetings:**

- a. Parish Council Meeting. Thursday 26th January 2017.
- b. Finance Meeting Tuesday 17th January 2017.
- c. Halls Meeting Thursday 12th January 2016.
- d. Recreation and Lands Meeting Thursday 9th February 2016.
- e. Planning Meeting Thursday 12th Jan 2017 at 7PM.



Peter Eldridge
Proper Officer
9th December 2016

**Annex A
Actions for Parish Council Meetings as at
15th December 2016**

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|-----|---|----------------------------|
| 1. | Cllr P Peers to discuss the proposed Oxfordshire Unitary Authority with Chair of SODC council meeting minutes 27th Oct 2016 (14.a.10.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CPP |
| 2. | Clerk to ask for nominations for awards in Benson Bulletin council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (10.c.i.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 3. | Clerk to ask for volunteer(s) in Benson Bulletin council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (10.c.ii.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 4. | Clerk to add item to next recreation and lands agenda to review requirement for notice board extension council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (13.a.i.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 5. | Clerk to post information on school admissions. council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (15.a.7).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 6. | Clerk to respond to complainant. Council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (15.a.14).
<i>Response sent. Action closed.</i> | CLK |
| 7. | Cllr Baylis to respond to complainant. Council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (15.a.15).
<i>In progress.</i> | CPB |
| 8. | Clerk to add item on R&L agenda to discuss refurbishment of equipment in Sunnyside play area. Council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (15.a.15).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 9. | Clerk to place item on Thames Path dog fouling on next R&L agenda. Council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (15.a.16).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 10. | Cllr Fowler to respond to complainant. Council meeting minutes 24th Nov 2016 (15.a.17).
<i>Response sent. Action closed.</i> | CJF |
| 11. | Clerk to contact SODC to discuss copyright of documentation. Council meeting minutes 15th Dec 2016 (6.d.ii.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 12. | Parish Staff to review and recommend an electronic reception service to the halls committee .Council meeting minutes 15th Dec 2016 (8.c.).
<i>Recommendation submitted trial in progress. Action closed.</i> | CLK
RFO
HMG |
| 13. | Clerk to send a letter of thanks to the parishioner. Council meeting minutes 15th Dec 2016 (9.a.iv.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |

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|-----|---|------------|
| 14. | Clerk to place and item on the next recreation and lands agenda to discuss sheds etc. on allotments. Council meeting minutes 15th Dec 2016 (14.a.10.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 15. | Clerk to send grants application and policy to the Corn Exchange. Council meeting minutes 15th Dec 2016 (14.a.12.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |
| 16. | Clerk to arrange for the clearing of leaves on Benson footpaths Council meeting minutes 15th Dec 2016 (17.a.).
<i>Leaves cleared. Action closed.</i> | CLK |
| 17. | Clerk to place item on recreation and lands agenda to discuss regular clearance of footpaths. Council meeting minutes 15th Dec 2016 (17.a.).
<i>In progress.</i> | CLK |

Annex B SODC Report from Cllr F Bloomfield

Didcot Garden Town is a major part of our plan for development in the District, offering a significant number of jobs and home. During November residents, businesses and visitors to Didcot have been asked to share their best ideas for the future of the area at Didcot Garden Town drop-in events.

The drop-ins, were hosted by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, with the public getting their first opportunity to feedback on what they think the Garden Town should include.

The councils are keen to speak to as many people as possible and a new interactive website has been launched at www.didcotgardentown.co.uk. It allows people to pin their ideas, comments and suggestions for Didcot to a map of the town, as well as to see what other people are commenting on. Anyone living in Didcot and surrounding villages is urged to have their say.

Two new Neighbourhood Planning Officers

Preparation of a neighbourhood plan remains a high priority for towns and villages across the district.

As part of our commitment to support them we are pleased to announce the appointment of two new Neighbourhood Planning Officers: Ricardo Rios and Rachael Riach can be contacted by email planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk

or telephone 01235 422600. We aim to support this team with further recruitment.

Neighbourhood Plans are very important for all communities. If your parish does not have one do consider getting involved with your parish council and our officers to get one adopted. They are a key way for you to have a say in how your community evolves in the future. This is especially important in terms of new housing and planning growth.

GLL seeks projects for funding initiative

GLL, our leisure management contractor, is supporting a crowd funding initiative to encourage local people to be active. GLL is offering funding of up to £2,500, access to qualified instructors and coaches, use of its facilities, free activities and monthly membership discounts. To be considered projects should get people active and improve their wellbeing such as revamping a playground, installing a zip-wire across a park or holding a mini Olympics in the high street! The project's benefits should be enjoyed by people in public spaces and have a tangible end result. It can be permanent (e.g. new football pitch) or temporary (e.g. an event).

For more information email megan.horwood@gll.org (Vale of White of Horse projects) or colin.williams@gll.org (South Oxfordshire projects).

Reminder to encourage residents to sign up for newsletter

As mentioned above, we are keen to improve communications with resident and South News the newsletter which includes information of interest to residents is one of our initiatives. Please encourage local residents to sign up for the newsletters which will be published every two months.

South News keeps residents in touch with news from the council, including the latest on planning and housing in South Oxfordshire, news on recycling collections and events at our leisure centres and Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot.

To receive South News visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/southnews

Raising awareness of domestic abuse

On the 25 November, we worked with the local charity, Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse (RRDA), to support White Ribbon Day, the international day for the elimination of violence against women.

To mark the day, RRDA and our Community Safety team had been given permission by the district and county councils to stencil chalk messages relating to domestic abuse on pavements and car parks across South and Vale.

The messages will include the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service's Helpline number 0800 731 0055 and RRDA website.

White Ribbon Day is only one day, but abuse occurs every day so please help spread the word that there is support for those who need it 24 hours a day every day, including Christmas Day.

Excellent police feedback about councils' CCTV

The latest quarterly report on the district councils' CCTV cameras highlights how we continue to positively support the police in tackling crime and helping vulnerable people in South Oxfordshire.

During quarter two, our CCTV operators monitored over 550 incidents across Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford. Their alerts to the police resulted in 24 arrests.

The police are very happy with the service we provide. A new aspect of the reports is a section setting out the results of the customer satisfaction survey we ask all police officers to complete when they have requested camera footage. According to the feedback we received between July and September they thought our CCTV staff were excellent in terms of being polite, professional and informative.

Food and Safety team in The News

Our Food and Safety team has been featured in the news twice in November. Firstly in Environmental Health News the professional body publication of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

The team featured for its part in a successful prosecution; a nursery in Marcham, fined £6,740 after mouse droppings were found in their kitchen; and recovery of £1,280 in costs from a takeaway in Didcot after a hygiene emergency prohibition notice was served to prevent the use of food storage buildings.

Their second appearance in the news was regarding a Chinese takeaway in Thame which was fined after council officers found mice droppings during a routine food safety inspection.

On Tuesday 22 November at Oxford Magistrates' Court, the owners of Tommy Yaki, pleaded guilty to four food safety offences. As a result they were fined £2,400 and ordered to pay £1,876 costs. Food safety officers from SODC found the premises littered with mice droppings and a filthy kitchen. The building also had construction defects that allowed pests to get on the premises, and important cleaning and pest control procedures hadn't been carried out.

Officers immediately forced the premises to close, and it was prevented from reopening until action had been taken to remove the risk.

Following urgent improvements, the takeaway reopened a week after the closure – it was recently inspected and has now been awarded a rating of four.

Housing and homeless support amongst best in the country

Our housing and homelessness support has been recognised as one of the country's top performers by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS).

In a review of our vital front line housing services we scored an impressive 80 per cent, putting us in the top eight nationally (average 69 per cent) and one of the highest scorers in the south east. The review checked that the advice and support our residents receive is provided in a targeted, effective and efficient way.

The high score follows recent improvements we have made to the service, including launching a new online self-help service for housing information and advice, a new phone service for vulnerable residents, and intervening earlier to support those at risk of becoming homeless.

Free Christmas car parking

Please remind residents that we are offering free parking on various days in the run up to Christmas. It is free in district council car parks all day on the following days during December:

Abingdon: Saturdays - 3, 10, 17, 24 (plus Sat 26 November)

Didcot: Tuesdays - 6, 13 and 20

Faringdon: Sat 3, Tues 6, Fri 9, Sat 17

Goring: Saturdays - 3, 10, 17 and 24

Henley: Tuesdays - 6, 13, 20

Thame: Saturdays - 3, 10, 17 and 24

Wantage: Fridays - 2, 9, 16 and 23

Wallingford: Thursdays - 1, 8, 15 and 22

Bad weather waste collections

These are our plans if bad weather affects our waste collections this winter.

If bins aren't emptied on the scheduled day, residents should leave them out for two more days and we will do our best, weather permitting, to come back. If, after three days, they haven't been emptied, residents are advised to take their bins back in and put them out for the next scheduled collection date. They will also be able to leave extra waste out beside their bin in a suitable container.e.g. open box or a clear sack.

These arrangements do not apply during the Christmas collection schedule between 28 December and 13 January when we will work to the published calendar. Residents whose bins are missed due to adverse weather should take them back in and we'll empty them on the next scheduled collection date. We will keep people up to date with disruption information through our websites, social media, the local press and media. Biffa call centre on 03000 610 610

Enjoy the Christmas break.

Felix.