

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

Minutes of the Benson Parish Council meeting held on **Thursday 25th October 2018 at 7:30pm** in the Benson Parish Hall Committee Room.

Present:

Cllr B Pattison	Chair	Cllr P Baylis	Vice Chair
Cllr R Jordan		Cllr D Olley	
Cllr S McCann (from item 6)		Cllr T McTeague (until item 13)	
Cllr J Sharman		Cllr M Winton	

Proper Officers: E Lemaire

Members of the Public: 2 members of the public were present and the reporter from the Henley Standard

1. **Apologies:** Cllrs F Lovesey, P Murray, C Robinson, T Stevenson

2. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest

3. **To receive reports from the following:**

a. Cllr M Gray – OCC Member

Cllr M Gray reported that he has attended meetings with OCC Officers and the Head of Education and Development with regard to the Benson C of E School expansion plans. OCC are still awaiting the designer response to the recent Road Safety Audit report. He is pushing for more signage for the new Watlington Road zebra crossing.

The micro-asphalt used to resurface the Blacklands Road pavements will take 6 weeks to cure and become a decent surface. However, weeds have already broken through the surface and been reported on FixMyStreet through the Parish Office.

b. Cllr F Bloomfield – SODC Member – report attached

c. Cllr S Cooper – SODC Member

Cllr S Cooper reported that SODC are starting their council tax calculations now. The district element will not increase although there are concerns that the annual £4m new homes bonus that was due to be a 5-year deal and was a good source of income may not be continued. SODC has little scope to economise as it has a small number of staff and has outsourced services and contracts. SODC is using reserves to subsidise its budget.

CAPITA who took on the handling of revenue and benefits for SODC in a four Councils deal is struggling and potentially ending its local government involvement.

Efforts are still being made to ensure the Benson C of E School expansion plans are reconsidered. With over 800 new homes already granted permission in the village, the County allowance of one new primary school per 700 homes has already been exceeded.

4. **Public session**

Two members of the public addressed the chair.

P. Eldridge, Benson Community Association spoke to update on the Association's progress on the transfer of Warwick Spinney to Benson Parish Council. They have been advised to use a specialist solicitor for the transfer and will need to hold a meeting with an attendance of 25 in order to ratify the transfer. The expectation for this to go ahead is no sooner than January 2019 Cllr B Pattison advised that Benson Parish Council awaits further information before seeking Solicitor assistance with the transfer.

A Brooker, Millstream Day Centre spoke to reiterate the Centre's financial commitment from its reserves towards its development plan and its efforts to generate as high a level of funding from external sources as possible in order to maximise match funding from SODC. He extended an invitation to all Councillors to visit the Centre to view the improvements being made. Cllr T McTeague to attend as liaison Councillor.

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

5. Minutes of the last meeting

To approve and sign minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 27th September 2018. **Members who were present at the meeting unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting with no amendments.** Cllr B Pattison signed the minutes as a true record.

6. Benson Parish Council planning committee

a. To consider the following planning applications:

i. **BPC114/18 P18/S3234/FUL** (Full Application) Application Type: Minor

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension, new front entrance ramp and internal alterations

Address: Imogen Dental 14 High Street Benson OX10 6RP

Members resolved with 6 in favour and 1 abstention to return no objections to the application subject to assurances that acoustic levels will not be greater than those at present

ii. **BPC115/18 P18/S3235/LB** (Listed Building Consent) Application Type: Other

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension, new front entrance ramp and internal alterations

Address: Imogen Dental 14 High Street Benson OX10 6RP

Members resolved with 6 in favour and 1 abstention to return no objections to the application subject to assurances that acoustic levels will not be greater than those at present

iii. **BPC116/18 P18/S3306/LB** (Listed Building Consent) Application Type: Other

Proposal: Removal of internal partition walls and changes to the fenestration of an existing single-storey rear extension

Address: 15 Brook Street Benson OX10 6LQ

Members resolved with 6 in favour and 1 abstention to approve the application

iv. **BPC117/18 OCC ref: R3.0114/18** Planning application by Oxfordshire County Council for planning permission

Proposal: New single storey three classroom teaching block, including withdrawal room, toilets, stores, ancillary rooms together with minor modifications to hard and soft landscaping and modified parking arrangements

Address: Benson C of E School, Oxford Road, Benson, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 6LX

Members unanimously resolved to strongly object to the application on the following grounds:

The design is not in keeping with its surroundings in a conservation area

Loss of public amenity space

The car parking provision is too large

Will not satisfy the long term needs of the village

Traffic congestion outside the school will increase

v. **BPC118/18 P18/S3219/FUL** (Full Application) Application Type: Minor

Proposal: Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application P17/S4144/FUL Demolition of garages, workshops and offices and replaced with six dwellings with car parking, comprising of three detached houses, a pair of semi-detached houses and a detached bungalow

Address: Atlanta Garage Beggarsbush Hill Benson OXON OX10 6PL

Members resolved to approve the application – 6 in favour 1 abstention.

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

vi. **BPC120/18 P18/S3366/CC**

Proposal: New single storey three classroom teaching block, including withdrawal room, toilets, stores, ancillary rooms together with minor modifications to hard and soft landscaping and modified parking arrangements

Address: Benson CofE Primary School Oxford Road Benson OX10 6LX

Members unanimously resolved to strongly object to the application on the following grounds:

The design is not in keeping with its surroundings in a conservation area

Loss of public amenity space

The car parking provision is too large

Will not satisfy the long term needs of the village

Traffic congestion outside the school will increase

vii. **BPC121/18 P18/S2516/FUL** (Full Application) Application Type: Minor

Amendment: No. 1 - dated 15th October 2018

Proposal: Construction of one house with garage on land adjoining Lower Farm House. (As per amended plans received 15 October 2018)

Address: Land between 51 Preston Crowmarsh and Lower Farm House Preston Crowmarsh OX10 6SL

Members resolved with 6 in favour and 1 abstention to approve the application subject to assurances that the planning officer will set conditions on the building materials to be used ensuring they are in keeping with the surroundings and not be a change of street scene in a Conservation Area

Members voted unanimously in favour of suspending standing orders to discuss

BPC124/18 P18/S2262/RM Amendment: No. 1 - dated 18th October 2018 which was received too late to appear on the Agenda.

The planning officer has advised that the response date of 6th November 2018 can be extended due to CALA Homes now being unable to attend a proposed meeting with the Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Group arranged for 2nd November.

The amended application has not taken into account the matters raised by the NPDG and the Parish Council will be unable to support the application until such matters are addressed. Notably a Skatepark has not been included (in its place a MUGA), play equipment remains included as wooden and not a more durable material, the detail of the Community Building has not been addressed and no retail units are included.

Action: Meeting with CALA to be rearranged and extension until after the Full Council meeting on 22nd November 2018 to be requested. An extraordinary meeting to agree a response will be arranged if required.

Members voted unanimously in favour of resuming standing orders.

b. The following planning decisions were noted:

i. **BPC105/18 P18/S2605/HH**

Application proposal, including any amendments: Ground floor single storey extension for inclusive living

Site Location: 19 Castle Close Benson OX10 6SN

Planning permission GRANTED 25th September 2018

ii. **BPC106/18 P18/S2396/LB**

Application proposal, including any amendments: Retention of clock tower and insertion of lintel over doorway at out building at Lower Farm House

Site Location: Lower Farm House Preston Crowmarsh OX10 6SL

Listed building consent GRANTED 1st October 2018

iii. **BPC96/18 OCC ref: MW.0083/18**

Planning Permission for Agrivert The Stables, Radford, Chipping Norton, OX7 4EB for Section 73 application to continue the development of the erection and use of an open

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

windrow composting facility (permitted by permission P13/S1971/CM (MW.0076/13)), without complying with condition 1, in order to vary the approved plans and documents to allow for a higher annual waste tonnage throughput at Battle Farm, Benson Lane, Preston Crowmarsh, Wallingford

Planning permission has now been granted for the above development 2nd October 2018

iv. **BPC99/18 P18/S2452/HH**

Application proposal, including any amendments: Two-storey side extension and single-storey rear extension

Site Location: 4 Lower End Benson Road Ewelme OX10 6HB

Planning permission GRANTED 8th October 2018

v. **BPC119/18 P18/S3256/LDP**

CERTIFICATE OF LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT FOR: Formation of habitable room in roof space with rear dormer and front velux rooflights

Site location: 30 Passey Crescent Benson OX10 6LD

Unable to take any comments on the planning merits of the proposal into account

vi. **BPC107/18 P18/S2416/HH**

Application proposal, including any amendments: Rear conservatory extension with structural opening to rear wall. (As amended by drawings received 13th September)

Site Location: April Cottage 69 Brook Street Benson OX10 6LH

Planning permission GRANTED 9th October 2018

vii. **BPC108/18 P18/S2417/LB**

Application proposal, including any amendments: Rear conservatory extension with structural opening to rear wall. Internal wall opening and en-suite bathroom to top floor bedroom. As amended by drawings received 13th September, following conservation officer's recommendations). Removal of the Portland cement pointing and repair of the lime mortar pointing. (As confirmed by Repointing Method Statement received 19th September 2018)

Site Location: April Cottage 69 Brook Street Benson OX10 6LH

Listed building consent GRANTED 9th October 2018

7. Benson Parish Council Finance Committee

a. **Minutes of the last meeting**

To approve and sign minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 16th October 2018

Members who were present at the meeting unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting with no amendments. Cllr R Jordan signed the minutes as a true record.

b. To receive a report from the Chair of the Finance Committee

An additional meeting of the Finance Committee has been arranged for Thursday 1st November 2018

c. Recommendations to Full Council:

i. **Recommendation to Full Council to grant Millstream Day Centre £250 as a one-off payment rather than the full £500 requested due to concerns about the high levels of reserves shown in their accounts (see item 17.c.i)**

Members voted unanimously in favour of approving a grant of £250 to the Millstream Day Centre in addition to the annual grant of £1,300.

ii. **Recommendation to Full Council to adopt the new Investment Strategy**

Members voted unanimously in favour of adopting the new Investment Strategy.

8. Benson Parish Council Halls Committee

a. **Minutes of the last meeting**

To approve and sign minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18th October 2018

The signing of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting as not enough members present at that meeting were in attendance.

b. To receive a report from the Chair of the Halls Committee

There was nothing to report.

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

c. Recommendations to Full Council

- i. **Recommendation to Full Council to accept the quote of £6,860 plus VAT from Kennington Flooring Limited to carry out the remedial works to the Youth Hall Floor**

Members voted unanimously in favour to **suspend standing orders** for the purpose of discussing the Youth Hall floor.

Following discussion on the current state of the floor, the recommendation was withdrawn.

Action: Further inspection of the floor and sub floor to be carried out and additional quotes sought based on the findings **Cllr B Pattison and T Ellis.**

Action: Halls committee to resume Youth Hall replacement project .

Members voted unanimously in favour to **resume standing orders.**

9. Benson Parish Council Recreations and Lands Committee

a. **Minutes of the last meeting**

To approve and sign minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13th September 2018

The signing of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting as not enough members present at that meeting were in attendance.

b. To receive a report from the Chair of the Recreations and Lands Committee

Councillors signed a get well card for Delia who has recently been unable to tend to the Parish Hall flowerbed due to ill health.

c. Recommendations to Full Council

Members voted unanimously in favour to **suspend standing orders** for the purpose of voting on the recommendations from 13th September 2018.

- i. **Recommendation to Full Council that Benson Parish Council spends a further £1,085 plus VAT to have the lettering on the War Memorial repainted rather than re-cut as suggested by Matthew Beesley from GEM and Benson Parish Council would then seek to recover as much as possible of this spend from the War Memorials Trust**

Due to a misunderstanding, the painting of the War Memorial letters took place without confirmation of the works.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation.

- ii. **Recommendation to Full Council that Benson Parish Council obtains a Trees of Remembrance free sapling and commemorative plaque from OCC and The Woodland Trust to be located between the tennis courts and the B4009**

Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation with the amendment that the location of the tree is to be decided.

Members voted unanimously in favour to **resume standing orders.**

10. Benson Parish Council Technology Committee

a. **Minutes of the last meeting**

To approve and sign minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd October 2018

Signing of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting as the Chair was not in attendance.

b. To receive a report from the Chair of the Technology Committee

Cllr P Baylis reported that the Committee is planning a brainstorming meeting for all Councillors to attend and give thought to the Council's IT systems. Meeting to be arranged.

11. To receive reports from Benson Parish Council Working Groups and Outside Bodies

a. Parish Hall Extension Working Group

The deadline for tenders has now past and four tenders have been received. The Working Group will meet with the Architect to discuss the tenders.

b. Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Group

The Working Group is currently arranging a meeting with CALA Homes to discuss matters that have not been addressed in the amended application submitted.

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

- c. WWI Event Working Group
No update

12. Benson Community Association dissolution and Warwick Spinney ownership

Discussed under item 4 on the agenda, public session.

13. To make a decision on permission for the tenants of the Paddock to install fences at their own cost

Members voted with 5 in favour and 1 abstention to grant permission to the tenants of the Paddock to install two 2 or 3 string fences 8 metres apart on the condition that they are not barbed wire fences.

14. To allocate Cllr J Sharman to a committee

Cllr J Sharman was allocated to the Recreation and Lands committee.

15. To discuss and agree any proposals or approvals

There were none

16. Correspondence

- a. To review correspondence and post received

Post/Emails Received	Circulated	Action
1. Parishioner complaint re dog fouling along Littleworth path and the in the Bertie West Field, and request for no dog fouling signage	27.08.18	Recreation & Lands Agenda
2. Benson Voluntary School Trust, Fr P Gilday The Trust is interested in further discussing giving the Parish Council a new lease of the Youth Hall land at a fair rent	To halls	Awaiting further response for Trust, Halls agenda
3. Oxfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations (Aug18) Response by PAGE	01.10.18	Noted
4. Gavin Belcher, OCC Interim Road Safety Audit 3 report	24.10.18	Awaiting further from OCC re hedge by crossing
5. Parishioner complaint re road issues and Littleworth footpath overgrowth	To OCC	Passed to OCC, response sent to resident & overgrowth cut back
6. Bensington Society History Group Request that BPC ask CALA Homes to reinstate the Wells Crossing Plinth next to the Albert Wells commemorative bench	08.10.18	Request CALA to reinstate
7. Bensington Society History Group Request to display a set of models of the village which have been offered to the History Group	08.10.18	Request further detail and pictures Next agenda
8. Parishioner complaint re speeding at chicane and asking where to take complaint	Responded	Noted
9. Tenant of The Cuckoo Pen Request to renew lease from February 2018	To Lands	Recreation & Lands Agenda Action

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

10. SODC & VOWH Proposing changes to "Housing Allocations Policy" Comments invited up to 26 th November 2018	15.10.18	Noted
11. Veronique Bensadou, Grundon Waste Management Next liaison meeting Monday 19 th November 2018 10.30am Minutes of previous meeting 21 st May 2018	18.10.18	Liaison Cllr & Clerk to attend
12. Nicky Warden BBOWT Survey Monkey questionnaire asking to what degree parish and town councils have been consulted on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway	16.10.18	Response by 21 st October
13. Derek Ady, Thomas Sands Building Surveyors Terms and conditions, hourly rate and agreement of appointment	22.10.18	Next Finance agenda
14. OCC, The Oxfordshire Resilience Group "Community Plans and Contact Directory" events 30 th October 2018 and 15 th January 2019 6-8pm Aim to help communities with community response plan and information cascades	24.10.18	Noted

b. To review Parish Office notes

1. The new CCTV cameras have been installed around the Parish Hall. The old equipment is not required back by Camerascan so needs to be disposed of	Dispose
2. The overgrowth along the Littleworth path (at the School end) has been cut back and cleared	Noted
3. The Scout Hut no parking sign has been retrieved from the Bertie West Field and reinstated	Noted
4. Delia has been doing a wonderful job maintaining the flower bed outside the Parish Hall which receives great praise	Noted
5. The owners of the property backing onto the Bertie West Field have been contacted with regard to their new fence	Noted
6. Grundon has kindly donated daffodil and bluebell bulbs again this year and they are in the Parish Hall awaiting planting	Next R&L agenda – Warwick Spinney, The Cedars

17. Finance

a. To sign off the reconciled bank statements for the current account as at 30th September 2018

Members unanimously resolved to approve the bank reconciliations as at 30th September 2018.

b. To sign cheques as detailed

Cheques

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Cheque Number	Amount
15/10/2018	GEM Conservation	War Memorial lettering	300032	1302.00
30/09/2018	Grundon	Waste wheelers September	300033	100.08
25/10/2018	OCC	Pensions October	300034	1322.56
28/09/2018	Clarity Copiers	Photocopier September	300035	26.40
25/10/2018	Clearview	Window cleaning October	300036	140.00
29/09/2018	Richard Irwin	Slate chip for war memorial	300038	20.00
06/09/2018	Cutler Architects	Professional fees and	300039	13279.2

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

		expenses		
01/10/2018	Cathedral Leasing	Hygiene services	300040	433.66
28/09/2018	Executive Alarms Ltd	CCTV installation	300041	4716.00
05/10/2018	SSE	PH elec q3	300042	349.50
04/10/2018	SSE	PH gas q3	300043	443.43
17/10/2018	Oxford IT	Shortfall in October Standing Order	300044	7.56
25/10/2018	G Stock	Oct wage	300045	148.30
02/10/2018	Viking	Stationery – archive boxes, wall planner, pens	300046	164.57
14/09/2018	T Stevenson	Reimburse plants for Bertie West garden	300047	41.84
03/10/2018	C J Whittingham	New boiler programmer and thermostat	300048	675.00
03/08/2018	Colliers	Strimmer cord and gate catch	300049	8.88
26/09/2011	Donovan Bros Ltd	Cleaning consumables	300050	199.04
27/09/2018	Moore Stephens	External Audit	300051	750.00

Bank payments

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Cheque Number	Amount
25/10/2018	Coop Bank	Oct salaries	tfr	4237.20
25/10/2018	HMRC	Oct PAYE NI	tfr	627.04

Direct debits and standing orders

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Date of DD	Amount
25/10/2018	British Gas	College Farm elec 02/09-04/10/2018	25/10/2018	15.44
16/10/2018	Everflow	16/11-15/12/18 YH, Rivermead, Allotments, PH	24/10/2018	141.13

Barclaycard payments

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Date of DD	Amount
27/08/2018	Keep&Share	Hall availability software	05/10/2018	10.91
30/08/2018	Land Registry	Search for Cedars transfer	05/10/2018	6.00
21/09/2018	erecep	E Reception services	05/10/2018	9.00
28/09/2018	Barclaycard	Card fee	05/10/2018	78.00

c. To consider the following grant applications payable under powers of the Local Government Act 1972 s137

i. Millstream Day Centre £1,800

£1,300 to fund the ongoing running costs of the Centre and £500 to finance the initial phase of the Centre's "Way Forward" development plan.

See agenda item 7.c.i. - Members voted unanimously in favour of approving a grant of £250 to the Millstream Day Centre in addition to the annual grant of £1,300.

ii. Benson Royal British Legion £150

Includes donation for Civic Wreath to lay at the Memorial during the Remembrance Parade.

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

Members voted unanimously in favour of approving a grant of £150 to Benson Royal British Legion.

iii. **Be Free Young Carers £200**

To continue the provision of expert practical and emotional support to young carers in Benson. During the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 Be Free Young Carers supported a total of 5 Benson young carers and their families, who attended 5 trips. Support is continued for these 5 young carers and their families.

Members voted unanimously in favour of approving a grant of £200 to Be Free Young Carers.

iv. **Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice**

Application to the Parish Council for a grant for 2018/19.

In 2017/18, 127 residents from Benson Parish Council were advised in face-to-face meetings or by phone. Each advice session costs on average about £36 so the total cost of this service was an estimated £4,572.00. About 70% of this amount is supported by District Council grant but this is reducing year on year.

Members voted unanimously in favour of approving a grant of £150 to Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice

v. **Benson Little Acorns Baby and Toddler**

Request for the cost of hall hire to be waived or reduced further or a grant to pay towards this cost.

OCC Cllr M Gray requested the Council's support of the group.

Members voted unanimously in favour in principle of providing a grant to cover the cost of hall hire.

Action: Annual cost from January 2019 to be verified. Completed grant application form will be submitted by the group. **Next Agenda**

vi. **Samaritans Oxford**

For the continued support of people who are unhappy, desperate, or contemplating suicide. Any contribution gratefully received. Costs per day are £150, per week £1,050, per month £4,500 and the cost of training £6,000.

Members voted unanimously in favour of approving a grant of £150 to Samaritans Oxford

18. Questions to the Chairman

There were no questions to the Chairman.

19. Items for Councillors to note

Cllr J Sharman offered to assist with the writing of Parish notes for the Benson Bulletin

20. To confirm the date of the next Council meeting – Thursday 22nd November 2018

21. Dates of next meetings

- a. **Planning Committee** Thursday 22nd November 2018
- b. **Finance Committee** Thursday 1st November 2018
- c. **Halls Committee** Tuesday 13th November 2018
- d. **Recreation and Lands Committee** Thursday 8th November 2018
- e. **Technology Committee** tba

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Elizabeth Lemaire
Parish Clerk
1st November 2018

October 2018
SODC Cllr F Bloomfield

Three-year housing land supply

Following a consultation in July, councils in Oxfordshire now only need to provide a three-year supply of land for housing, instead of the five-year supply normally required by the government.

The government has agreed to this change while we work together with the other Oxfordshire Councils on a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, the document that will address how we collectively plan to deliver 100,000 homes across the county by 2031, which was agreed as part of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.

This means it is now much less likely for developers to win planning permission on appeal after we have rejected their applications.

Neighbourhood Plan updates

Benson and Watlington plans were adopted by council on 23 August.
Warborough & Shillingford and The Baldons on 11 October

Capital Grants applications open

Our Capital Grants scheme opened on Monday 1 October and we are encouraging any groups with a project which could benefit from this funding to get in touch with our Grants Team before they start an application.

There's £145,000 available to help fund a variety of facilities and improvements, such as upgrading a community hall or improving a play area. For more information see our grants pages.

New legislation coming for HMOs

New legislation comes in on 1 October, which affects landlords of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

As licensing authorities, both South and Vale grant licences to larger HMOs that are three or more storeys and occupied by five or more people forming at least two separate households.

From 1 October, the legislation changes so that smaller properties used as HMOs will also require a licence. Other changes to be introduced include national minimum sizes for rooms used as sleeping accommodation and the requirement for landlords to adhere to council refuse schemes.

If you have any information on HMOs in your area that may require a licence, please email our Environmental Health Team env.health@southandvale.gov.uk or by phoning 01235 422403.

It's a yellow letter day in South and Vale as residents are urged to confirm their details

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

More than 87,000 properties have responded to our 'Household Enquiry' letter which required people to confirm who currently lives in their property. However, we're yet to hear from 34,000 homes so we are sending reminder letters to those properties.

We need this information to make sure everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so in future elections.

If people get a reminder letter, or if they can find the original letter, they should visit householdresponse.com/southandvale to confirm their details are correct or, if not, provide the correct information.

If a household hasn't confirmed their details they could receive a visit from one of our officers to confirm the details.

£1.2million recovered

During 2017/18 we recovered more than £1.2million in council tax arrears. This was thanks to tough enforcement action we took against non-payers.

We issued 5,000 court summonses to people who had repeatedly failed or refused to pay their council tax.

Magistrates then granted liability orders against almost 4,000 of those individuals meaning we could take enforcement action, including the use of bailiffs, to retrieve the money. We of course offer support to those who are genuinely struggling.

Mountain Warehouse comes to Didcot

Outdoor retailer Mountain Warehouse have opened a new store in the Orchard Centre.

Perfectly located on the doorstep of the Chilterns, Ridgeway and Wittenham Clumps, the retailers offer a wide range of clothing and equipment for activities outdoors.

You can read the joint press release from Hammerson on our website here.

Recycling

Recycle Now national recycling campaign for England.

This year's theme is

'Recycling. We do. Because it matters.' with an emphasis on plastic items.

Up to 80 per cent of household waste can be recycled and the council offers lots of recycling information online, including our Binzone app which gives details of collections and of individual items which can be recycled.

More information about waste and recycling can be found on the councils' recycling pages

*WRAP – Waste and Resources Action Programme is a registered charity set up to promote sustainable waste management

Cooking oil recycling

We've just introduced a new cooking oil recycling service for residents as part of our food waste collections.

After cooking and once it has cooled, any leftover oil can be poured into a plastic bottle no bigger than one litre in size. The bottle and its contents can then be

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@benssonpc.org.uk

placed into the kerbside food waste caddy, along with other food waste, and put out for the weekly collection. For those who don't want to use a plastic bottle, oil can also be poured straight into the caddy along with other food waste.

One litre of cooking oil can generate enough electricity to make 240 cups of tea !