

Eynsham Parish Council

Chairman's report 2020 – 2021

This report reflects on two of the most difficult years in our history. I wrote my first annual report in 1999 and some of the issues raised then remain with us today. Making progress with Thornbury Green, Hazeldene, plans for the A40, minerals together with plans for the north and west have taken large amounts of time and continue to do so. Support from both Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council and our local Member of Parliament has been thin on the ground and consultations appear to arrive each month, with our comments often being ignored.

Western and Northern Extensions

Like many in the village we remain deeply concerned at the manner in which WODC brought forward masterplans for both the west and the north and whilst planning applications have been lodged by developers, progress remains disjointed and slipping in time every month. However, we battle on and further consultations and public enquires creep ever nearer and we are now preparing to fight our corner based on our Neighbourhood Plan and all the work that went into it.

It is with regret that I must report we have still not had complete answers to matters raised with both WODC and the County Council at the public meeting but we continue to press.

The A40 and new Car Park

This has also made slow progress with OCC taking far longer than they promised to produce the “Business Case” for central Government. In the end we made a Freedom of Information request to force them to reveal the position. We remain troubled by a number of aspects of their proposed planning application which remains focused on more cars and traffic rather than looking at long term public transport solutions. They have produced no evidence that current ideas will do anything other than attract more vehicles through our village. The plans will cost a considerable amount of money and damage the environment in many ways.

Anti-Social Behaviour

We continue to see the impacts of this both on council property and on residents. In these difficult times I am reluctant to criticise the Police but despite many promises we still rarely see an officer in the village. We are now employing a security company to lock our car park at nights, a further burden on our finances.

Thank you to those residents who have reported activities. Please be careful if you are picking up drug related materials and please keep us advised of car registrations.

Sports Pavilion & Bartholomew Room

Work has now started at the Bartholomew Room and will be completed over the coming months. We are interested in finding a better way to use this building and to have it open on a more regular basis.

The Planning Application for the Sports Pavilion is now with WODC and if this is successful then we can start thinking about a new start for the building which is long overdue.

Thornbury & Hazeldene

Both these schemes are developments by Taylor Wimpey. Battling with the developer, WODC and OCC has taken up many hours and it is disappointing to report that we have a long way to go.

The roads at Hazeldene have still not been adopted, after almost ten years, and OCC and the developer continue to blame each other.

Thornbury has been a nightmare from day one. Residents have had to endure daily breeches of planning conditions. Help from both OCC and WODC has been poor. We continue to have major concerns about vehicles using Thornbury Road and what will happen if further houses are built to the west.

Despite a number of meetings with OCC & WODC progress is slow and both councils appear to be trying to take as little action as possible, a pattern repeated over the past three years.

Finally

The Parish Council remains short of Members and with the ever increasing workload, any help you can offer would be greatly appreciated. We are overdue to revise our Neighbourhood Plan and this remains a major task to help us influence the development of the village. We are also advancing plans to promote a 20mph scheme for the whole village and whilst this is likely to come in stages, it remains one of the items requested by residents when we wrote our existing Plan.

The continuing support from the village is very much appreciated. These are difficult times for Eynsham and for the Country as a whole but it remains important we raise our concerns about the future and the impact it will have on life in the village.

I have now been Chair of the Parish Council for more than twenty years and it has been an honour and privilege to hold that office. However, I have decided that it is time to retire from the Parish Council and I will leave at the end of April. Until then I will continue to press on all the outstanding matters and will offer support to whoever replaces me.

Please keep us advised of your thoughts on the matters raised in this report and anything else which we may be able to help with. When we form the new Council in May, we will have a number of vacancies, so if you feel that you have the time and skills to assist then please drop me an email or give me a call.

Gordon Beach