

## **Statement from the Parish Council**

**The Parish Council is working very hard for our community:**

### **Key Policy Matters**

- Convened the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan working party, the body for formulating planning and development policy for our village, in consultation with residents.
- Responded to an invitation by South Oxfordshire District Council to consider and suggest parish boundary changes. Successfully negotiated with Kidmore End Parish Council the transfer of Chiltern Edge School to Sonning Common Parish.
- Publish the annual Precept (local Council Tax) details and the rationale behind it.

### **Recreation**

- Purchased land for a skatepark and organised the fund raising for the park and for a mini skatepark for younger children. (£85,000 raised: £15,000 to go).
- Provide maintenance and regular inspection of three play areas. Fencing and gate improvements to Churchill Crescent and Baskerville Road play areas.
- Maintenance of the Widmore Pond area and the installation of seating donated by a resident.

### **Village Hall**

- Provided new windows to improve ventilation. Improved sound system. Replaced ceiling to improve acoustics and reduce heat loss. Plan to modernise the central heating system.
- Provide an illuminated Christmas tree outside village hall annually – decorated by local children.
- Installed a plaque on the wall to celebrate our twinning with Guichainville and Saint-Luc.

### **Improving Our Facilities**

- Improved and extended the parking area behind village hall, working with the Co-op.
- Provided a uni-sex public toilet.
- Installed CCTV cameras in and around the car park area to aid personal security and help prevent anti-social behaviour.
- Worked with our county councillor, David Bartholomew, for the welcome provision by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) of more kerb drops to help mobile chair users and people with push chairs.
- Successfully negotiated with OCC for a new bus shelter at Essex Way.
- Organised with 'Community Payback' the radical clearance of the Baskerville Road play area and the scout hut area, creating much needed extra space for outside activities.
- Installed new seats in the village centre.

### **Environment and Care**

- Provided a tool room, access to water and a bowser for the Village Gardeners.
- Provision for pavement ice-clearing equipment and salt and organise volunteers for snow/ice clearing.
- Organise overgrown hedge cutting, regular grass cutting and fence replacements.
- Organise, fund and supply equipment for street cleaning.
- Maintain and clean the Wood Lane bus shelter.
- Provision of extra dog hygiene bins, waste bins and a waste wheeler.
- Painting of bollards and railings outside the Co-op to match the village hall.
- Write to residents to advise them when their hedges impede use of pavements.

### **Communication**

- Replacement of dilapidated parish notice boards and the installation of a new, interesting information board at Widmore Pond.
- Parish Council website expanded.
- Purchase of a dedicated Parish Council page in the bi-monthly Sonning Common Magazine to help keep residents better informed and consulted.
- Extended the public opening hours of the Parish Office to cope with the increasing number of visits from residents, asking for help or advice.
- Established a close working liaison with our local police.
- Convened the public 'Save our Library' meeting (three councillors served on the successful library campaign group).
- Organise the annual parish meeting e.g. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> bridge, changes to the Post Office, consultation on future projects.

### **Financial / Other Support to:**

- The Village Gardeners – purchase of phone box, containers etc.
- Our youth club – Club SC. (Without a substantial annual grant from the Parish Council the club would probably have to close).
- Neighbourhood Development Plan - help with consultancy, public exhibitions and administration.
- FISH – a substantial contribution towards the purchase of equipment for the new bus.
- On Your Bike – help with general costs.
- Skatepark Working Party – purchase of land for the park and associated legal costs.
- Residents' Twinning Working Party - help with hospitality.
- Widmore Pond Committee – improvements and maintenance.
- Horticultural Society - donation of 'The Village Cup'.
- Grants to a range of community groups and organisations.

**Council Committees and Working Parties** (The council consists of 12 members)

- The full council meets once a month.
- Six councillors are on the Finance Committee (meets monthly)
- Seven councillors sit on the Planning Committee (meets fortnightly and considers, on average, 60 planning applications each year.)
- Four councillors are on the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan working party.
- Two councillors are on the Widmore Pond Committee, four on the Skatepark Working Party, and two on the Footpaths Working Party.

**Membership of External Bodies**

- Parish councillors serve on nine external bodies linked to the life of our village:  
Allotments Committee, Village Hall Management Committee, Sonning Common Magazine Committee, Club SC, Sonning and District Welfare and Educational Trust, Chiltern Edge Community Association, Poor's Land Trust, On Your Bike Committee, Neighbourhood Police Action Group, Scout Group Management Committee.

Douglas Kedge (Chairman, Sonning Common Parish Council)