

## East Hagbourne Annual Parish Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> April,2011.

The Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish of East Hagbourne was held at the Village Hall at 7.30pm on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2011.

Present were :-

- 6 Parish Councillors ( Mr D Rickeard (Chairman), Mr C Alberry, Mr R Dawson, Mr I Duff, Mr R Emery and Mr Harding).
- Clerk (Mr R Parsley).
- District and County Councillor. (Mr P Greene)
- 25 Members of the public.

An apology was received from Mr Button.

### 1.Chairman's Address and Introduction.

Mr Rickeard welcomed everybody and introduced the current Parish Councillors and prospective candidates and Mr Greene our District and County Councillor.

### 2. Chairman's Report.

Mr Rickeard presented the Chairman's report – See Appendix 1.

### 3. Financial Statement

Mr Rickeard presented a financial statement, prepared by Mr Button, covering Parish Council activities in 2010-11(See Appendix 2). These were unofficial figures, subject to audit, but gave an overview of the financial year to the end of March. Total income was £39225, and running costs were somewhat lower than this, allowing a further £10000 to be transferred to reserves for future projects.

Mrs Emery asked how much money had been set aside for Sports facilities. She was informed that £75,000 was currently allocated, but that there was no specific plan at present.

### 4. District and County Councillors Reports.

Mr Greene congratulated the Parish Council and the vibrant community in East Hagbourne.

He circulated reports on Oxford County (See Appendix 3) and South Oxfordshire District Council (See Appendix 4). A question and answer session followed.

Mr Emery asked if it was possible for extra funding for the road infrastructure for Great Western Park. Mr Greene stated that he was unable to predict how much money was needed from the Government for the infrastructure for new sites.

Mrs Harrison queried whether the new houses on Great Western Park will be environmentally friendly. Mr Greene said that all new housing was constructed to high environmental standards, but that the actual requirements depended on the time approval was granted. Mr Rickeard promised to investigate.

Mrs Harrison also questioned the statement in the SODC Report that “The number of homeless people in temporary accommodation is falling with just sixteen, well below the government target.” Mr Greene confirmed these figures were correct.

Mr Townsend questioned Mr Greene regarding gravel extractions. He stated that the gravel extraction proposal plan was to dig at Cholsey. He suggested if it would be better to use the Didcot area. Mr Greene stated that if it was not a favoured site it would not be considered. New areas would only be opened when needed and stated the need was not so great now, since the estimates for the amount needed in Didcot expansion had reduced.

Secondly Mr Townsend asked about the Localism Bill and Mr Greene stated that nothing was likely to happen for at least 1-2 years.

Mr Rickeard said there was no information on the website on the OCC boundary redistribution and asked for information. Mr Greene replied that later this summer we will receive comments from the Boundary Commission, and that background information could be found on their website.

Farther Jason congratulated all those involved with the new Recycling System. He also stated there was a need to maintain the bus services in rural areas. Mr Greene stated the subsidised bus routes for rural areas were reviewed every four years but not all at the same time. He thought that services could be improved if all the local services were reviewed at the same time.

Mr Lawson asked whether there was any chance of the introduction of 20mph speed limits along Main Road. This idea has been discussed with OCC Highways but without any success.

Mr Greene stated that the Thames Valley Police will not enforce speeding penalties in these areas but he had in the past discussed the possibility of 20mph speed restrictions outside schools.

#### 4. Parish Plan.

Mr Rickeard stated he had received written comments on the draft copy from OCC, SODC, Mr J Jones and Mr R Jones, Head Teacher of Hagbourne School.

Mr Townsend congratulated the parishioners who produced the Parish Plan. However he thought to ensure purpose of action the plan should be examined, linked and if possible integrated with the following :-

- (i) The Localism Bill.
- (ii) The Core Strategies
- (iii) The Transport Plans for OCC.
- (iv) The strategies and policies of the various Drainage Authorities and associated Agencies.

He recommended the Parish Plan be considered to be provisional until his suggestions have been carried out. In discussion, Mr Rickeard felt that these aspects should be considered in the implementation of the plan and that adoption of the plan should not be deferred.

Mr Rickeard said that he considered the Plan now complete, but was conscious that those present had not seen the (fairly small) changes incorporated in response to comments received

during the consultation period. He therefore asked that the plan be endorsed, subject to any final comments, to be received by by May 12<sup>th</sup>. This proposal received unanimous support.

The final plan will be posted on the web-site and reference copies made available at the Shop and Village Hall

#### 5. Elections.

Mr Rickeard reminded everybody of the forthcoming elections on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2011. In addition to ballots on the national voting system and elections for the District Council, the Parish Council would also be up for reelection.

He stated there three candidates Mr Emery, Mr Button and Mrs Knipe for the three seats in the Millbrook Ward so there would not be an election. For the East Hagbourne Ward there seven candidates, being (in alphabetical order) Mr Alberry, Mr Dakin-Norris, Mr Dawson, Mr Duff, Mrs Elliott, Mr Price and Mr Rickeard for six seats - therefore there would be an election. Brief personal statements from the candidates were displayed at the back of the hall.

#### 6. Any Other Business.

Mr Rickeard stated there were representatives present from many village activities including the Village Shop, HAMS, Village Hall, Church, Archives, Neighbourhood Watch and Hagbourne Environment Group who would be pleased ot provide information during the informal session to follow.

Mrs Harrison thanked the Parish Council for their years work.

Mr Greene reported that he is not standing for the District at the election but will continue to be our County representative for the next two years.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be the Annual Meeting on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2011.

Chairman :-

Date:-

## Appendix 1 – Chairman’s Report

Welcome to the 2011 Annual Parish Meeting. This is not a Parish Council meeting, but a meeting of parish electors. In presenting the Chairman's Report I am conscious that I should both report on the Parish Council's activities over the past year and also highlight significant activities in the wider community.

We have held nine Parish Council meetings this year and as always, much work has gone on outside the meetings on issues such as the Didcot development and general planning applications, Butt's Piece, flooding and the Parish Plan. I thank all the councillors for their support and involvement over the year, and our clerk Robin Parsley who keeps the machinery of the Council turning. I must also thank Syd, until recently our village hall caretaker for coming to lock up after our meetings. Thanks also to Patrick Greene for his continued support, even through his health problems, which are now hopefully improved.

Two councillors, Rob Rendell and Malcolm Wilkins left the Council this year after many years' service having moved away from the Parish. David Harding, who has been our champion for responsible dog ownership has also announced that he is stepping down from the Council. The current Council's term of office expires in May, and with three vacancies looming, it is gratifying to see that four new candidates have emerged for the elections on 5 May.

The past year has seen steady progress on the Council's objectives. The Parish Plan was posted for comments in December, and will form an umbrella for the diverse challenges and aspirations within the Parish. Even while the plan was being formulated, we have not held back from making progress in some areas where the necessary action was clear. Communication of information was one topic raised in the Parish Plan questionnaire, and was the driver for the special free issue of the Parish Magazine sponsored by the Parish Council in January. We continue to believe that the Magazine is a central pillar for news and information and would like to see even more people subscribe. We recognise, however, that the Magazine on its own is not enough. Over the past year a contract has been established for a new-look web site thanks to a small group led by Chris Alberry. The new site should be in place over the next year. It will retain all the current content, but also bring new features and make the site easier to maintain.

The year has not been without event. In the spring of 2010 we had to take legal action to evict squatters from Butt's Piece. Some planning applications in the Parish have been contentious, and there have been numerous complaints about pavements blocked by vegetation or poorly parked cars and damage to grass verges by vehicles. This is perhaps the point to recognise the many people around the parish who care for roadsides, verges and paths around their home and to encourage everyone to play their part to keep the village looking smart. Continuing the positive news, the Neighbourhood Watch scheme has been revitalised and an evening arranged recently by co-ordinators Myra Hardiman and Di Duff to hear some good professional advice was attended by over 50 people. The litter blitz on 2 April was also very well supported, including a number of families.

Each year, the Parish Council makes many small donations to charitable bodies who provide services to people in our community. I am pleased to report that this year the Council was also able to make more substantial grants towards projects within the village. The new Village Hall extension improves the practicality and comfort of the hall for all users, including the Pre-School, who recently reported that 45 children are benefitting from their services. We also supported the new school changing facilities which are currently being built, and made a donation to the church towards their clock-winding project. Iain Duff is representing East Hagbourne in discussions with West Hagbourne on a specially designed bench in memory of Monica Lawson to be placed on the boundary of the two parishes.

We are still conscious of the many contributions Monica made to our community. One of her activities was in guarding and significantly extending the village archives. A small group, including John Lawson, the current custodian, is working to preserve this information and history for future generations, as a resource

for research and reference, and to continue extending it as new events unfold. A new storage cupboard is being installed in the Village Hall, funded by the Parish Council, and it is hoped to hold an exhibition of some of the material in the summer.

Turning to Didcot's development, work has now started on Great Western Park. For the next phase of development, adoption of the development site to the north of Didcot in SODC's Core Strategy has relieved the pressure for building houses and roads closer to East Hagbourne. However, the government's plans to liberalise the planning system may present new challenges, and we will need to remain vigilant. Special thanks to Roger Emery who has co-ordinated and led the Parish Council's responses through the various stages of the planning process, and to John Townsend who continues to provide valuable assistance. We are still concerned about the rapid rate of Didcot's growth and the likely impact on an already stretched infrastructure, particularly the road system. A traffic survey was carried out in the village last summer, and discussions will continue in the context of the Parish Plan.

Efforts to maintain the stream and minimise the risk of future flooding are showing good progress. A volunteer Flood Group is established for the Tadley area, and I would like to see this idea extended to other critical areas, especially Parsonage Lane. Last summer a big effort was made to remove himalayan balsam from the main stream channel throughout the village; I thank all those householders who helped with this task. Links with the authorities have also been maintained; we have been represented at 2 training seminars with the Environment Agency, OCC have carried out work on the surface water drains in Main Road and SODC/Monson cut the vegetation on lower channel. All this work is ongoing, and continued efforts will be needed.

Since the last APM, the work at Butt's Piece has come to fruition. Rob Rendell, before he moved away from the village put in a tremendous amount of work on this project. The allotments are well tended and already producing crops, and day-to-day running is in the hands of an able and vigorous committee, with Derek Button providing the link to the Parish Council. In the wild area, Cynthia Napper has led well-attended working parties to clear overgrown scrub and plant new coppice trees over part of the area, providing a new habitat that will benefit both people and wildlife. Wood from the clearance has been sold for firewood, covering the costs. Cynthia is also co-ordinating efforts by those who would like to install solar panels under the current government scheme.

In the wider community, the shop and Post Office remain a valuable resource thanks to the efforts of the many volunteers in the shop and to Terry and Margaret in the Post Office. It is important that we use the facilities if we want to keep them. I think you will find the shop provides variety and value as well as convenience.

The last year has also been impressive in social activities. There have been several concerts in the Village Hall and the Church, and the HAMS put on their second successful theatrical production - Canterbury Tales. At the Fleur, the music sessions have been supplemented by occasional themed evenings and the newly formed Aunt Sally team has had great success. In such an active village it is impossible to mention all the activities, but as examples, the more established activities like the book clubs and gardening club continue to thrive as do activities such as ballet classes and scout/cubs/beavers in the Village Hall. I should also mention the privately organised charity event held at the Great Mead Recreation Ground last summer.

I also remind you that all Parish Council meetings are open to the public, and you are always welcome to attend.

David Rickeard  
Chairman EHPC  
14 April 2011

## Appendix 2. Parish Council Financial Statement

Provisional figures, subject to audit.

	<b>East Hagbourne Parish Council Budget 2010/11</b>	<b>Actual Totals year to 31/03/11 2010/11</b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		
Precept	37,108	36,743.00
Lease Income	1,050	1,050.00
Wayleaves	42	43.61
Allotments		668.63
Other Income		4.00
Interest Received		716.50
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>38,200</b>	<b>39,225.74</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Office Expenses	250	280.00
Village Website	50	29.99
Village Newsletter		228.12
Training Costs	100	25.00
Meeting Room Hire	135	138.00
Parish Clerk's Remun.	5,500	5,811.15
Car Park - Repairs	500	417.00
Car Park - Electricity	300	210.10
Play Equipment	150	126.00
Village Archives		246.75
Repair & Maintenance	2,000	1,424.44
Allotments		109.23
Grass Cutting & Plants	4,500	3,059.23
Dog Bins	600	685.51
"In Bloom" entry fees	60	-
Insurances	1,750	2,445.92
Subscriptions	425	400.01
Audit Expenses	550	650.00
Legal Expenses	575	2,777.00
Business Rates	-	0
	<b>17,445</b>	<b>19,063.45</b>
Contingency Allowance	3,000	0
Donations & Grants	3,000	1,315.00
	<b>23,445</b>	<b>20,378.45</b>
Allocation for Special Projects	10,000	10,000.00
	<b>33,445</b>	<b>30,378.45</b>
<b>Surplus for the Year</b>	<b>£ 4,755</b>	<b>£ 8,847.29</b>

## Appendix 3 – Report from Oxfordshire County Council

### Oxfordshire County Council Report 2010/11

#### THE OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Conservative controlled that provides around 80% of the County's local authority services. These include social care, schools & children's services, waste management, trading standards, roads, transport planning, land use, countryside, the registration service, the fire and rescue service, countryside service, libraries, museums, emergency planning, public health and Youth services.

#### Cabinet Membership - Councillors

Keith R Mitchell CBE	Leader of the Council
David Robertson	Deputy Leader of the Council
Arash Fatemian	Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Ian Hudspeth	Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure
Jim Couchman	Cabinet Member for Finance & Property
Kieron Mallon	Cabinet Member for Police & Policy Co-ordination
Louise Chapman	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families
Michael Waine	Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement
Rodney Rose	Cabinet Member for Transport
Mrs J Heathcoat	Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities

#### BUDGET SETTING

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Property's report to Cabinet on 25 January 2011 set out the strategy that this administration has taken to deliver a well planned and financially sound budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the authority whose key aims are delivering high quality services to the residents of Oxfordshire within a challenging and necessary period of public sector spending constraint.

The Council set its budget on the 15<sup>th</sup> February'11 that made £119m of savings across most of its services, preceding this was 18 months of careful forward planning to deal with the inevitability of Government grant reductions. These savings plans cover the period from 2011/12 to 2015 with an agreed financial framework.

Even though this year has seen an unprecedented reduction in the resources available to the Council, it still delivered a budget within the framework set out in the Corporate Plan. **Council Tax has been frozen (0% increase)** owing to our long-term prudent planning and to the grant from the Government; **Real choice is** still being provided in many of the services, although that choice has had to be reduced in some areas; and the Council is continuing to provide those services with **improving cost effectiveness** year on year.

The Council's medium term objectives have been reviewed and it has been concluded that they remain broadly the drivers for growth in Oxfordshire through which the Council can provide leadership and ensure a prosperous future for its citizens. Understandably, in the current economic climate, the Council needs to ensure that services are efficient and modernised. The Corporate Plan sets out the detail of the Council's vision and the delivery plan proposed for the coming year based on:

- (a) Growing our World Class Economy
- (b) Promoting Healthy & Thriving Communities
- (c) Combating Climate Change & Improving Our Environment
- (d) Delivering Efficient Public Services

With the cross-cutting theme of Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation.

The Plan links to the Business Strategies for each of the directorates that have been updated and are available on the internet ([www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/businessstrategies](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/businessstrategies)).

### **LOW TAXES – THE LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX**

The Council's Medium Term Plan reflected the Conservative Party manifesto that promised a freeze on Council Tax for two years, with the provision of a grant to support those authorities that restricted the effective increase to 2.5%. Having found the national finances to be in a much worse position than expected, the coalition Government has still been able to provide that grant for 2011/12 and this has made it possible to freeze the Council Tax for the residents of Oxfordshire.

The previously planned increase of 2.5% for next year is reflected in the Council's revenue plans, in the hope that the Government may yet find a way to maintain the grant to enable the freeze on Council Tax to be for two years. In the future, though, it is expected inflation to have risen by 2013/14 and that will mean that the Council Tax level may have to rise to maintain services.

### **PRIORITISATION**

The two areas that have been protected from front line service reductions are Children's Social Care and the Fire & Rescue Service. Both of these are life saving services that help those at their most vulnerable. For other service areas, the Council is prioritising, through the service and resource planning process, the challenges facing the County Council. This ensures that the County Council will continue to deliver excellent services to its customers within a greatly reduced financial envelope.

### **Other Service Changes**

The Council's budget has been examined line-by-line, debating priorities and looking across directorates. Consideration has been given to the needs of the many communities, including those through an overarching equality impact assessment. As well as scrutinising the three large directorates, the Council has also scrutinised senior and middle management, the corporate core, shared services, property and elected members' costs. Consistently looking "outside the box" for innovation and different service delivery models that are able to meet need from a much reduced resource base. Senior management posts will have been reduced by 40% by the end of the current financial year. The process continues through the management structure, considering levels of management and spans of control. Assessment of management will continue for some time to ensure that the Council has an affordable and effective structure in the new financial regime. Elected members have contributed to savings by sharing the staff pay freeze and reduction in travel expenses; by deleting the political assistant posts for the three main parties and by a successful bid to the Boundary Commission to reduce the number of Councillors by approximately 10 from the next elections in 2013.

Careful thought has been given to relative priorities for those service areas that have not been ring-fenced. It was found to be unacceptable to exempt other areas from cuts and it has been necessary to work on the basis that all services needed to start from a broadly similar level of cuts.

Public attention has inevitably focused on those services nearest to them in proximity if not always in usage. Libraries have dominated the media and the post-bags of members. Despite the fact that the library service has gross expenditure of only £8.7m compared to £973m for the Council as a whole. The library service is asked to find the same level of savings as other services and has been able to show how



those savings could be delivered by offering a radical new approach to a 21<sup>st</sup> century service with more emphasis on electronic provision and community engagement.

Many libraries with the lowest footfall may have to close if not taken over by local communities and help provided by the Big Society Fund. There are many difficult issues that will have to be addressed with great care after the consultation stage.

The youth service faces significant change from a generic service to one based on seven hubs but designed to provide significant outreach, targeted at young people and their families with the greatest need. This will require a significant culture change from staff currently working in different Council areas. Many youth facilities already operate without County Council funding or intervention and it is hoped that communities will apply Big Society principles where they see a local need that the Council cannot afford to fund. Early plans anticipated closure of youth facilities with effect from 1 April 2011, however recognising that decisions will take longer to implement, the Council has set aside some of the recently identified additional funding, to allow more time to deliver plans for the Early Intervention Service, including the impact on the Council's property portfolio.

It is hoped that the consultation process will help communities to develop Big Society solutions and new models, enabling them to retain the best attributes of their local library or youth centre that the County Council can no longer afford to fund in whole or in part. It is anticipated that the Council will support serious community bids in relation to these and other Council services.

A Big Society fund has been established to support such bids. It will be one-off funding designed to support change, not to perpetuate delivery models that are no longer affordable.

A considerable worry is that the largest single area of cuts lies in social care, including older people, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health. A service that accounts for some £250m of spending per annum cannot be exempted from the scale of cuts that the Council faces. Both the Adult and Children's directorates have taken the decision to exempt Support for Carers and Young Carers from any cuts. However, the rest of social care faces real challenges in delivering serious levels of cuts. Given the Council's close working with the NHS, this will require the most careful of monitoring.

Children, Education & Families have lost many specific grants providing the directorate with an opportunity to review and restructure so as to concentrate on its highest priorities. There is continuing investment of over £34m in schools through the capital programme, with priority being given to the provision of school places, and essential maintenance.

Environment & Economy is a critically important directorate if the Council is to support Oxfordshire's private sector in growing to fill the gap left by a downsized public sector. This does not mean it has been exempted from a fair share of cuts. The "easy" solution of making huge revenue cuts in highway maintenance has been resisted, conscious of the damage from the recent severe weather that needs addressing. The Council's new highways contract is expected to contribute significantly to real savings while continuing to address road condition. There is continuing capital investment in the transport infrastructure of over £19m. Although reduced from previous years, the Council has been able to continue to fund key road maintenance schemes.

Securing Secretary of State support for the energy-from-waste facility provides welcome relief from the costs of continuing to dispose waste to landfill. The Council is also investing from its capital programme in waste recycling centres, along with essential maintenance of its public buildings and provision of extra care housing.

It is anticipated that military repatriation will be returning to RAF Brize Norton soon and a modest sum, to deal with the public engagement and transport implications has been set aside. Similarly, the Council has planned for a small sum in 2012/13 to deal with the transport implications of the Olympic Torch passing through the County. The Council aspires to work with the military community in Oxfordshire to further the social and economic well being of service personnel and their dependents.

## ***EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES***

**Delivering savings targets and changing work patterns** – much work has already been done, with more to come. Top tiers of management have been reduced by 40%, and further work on the next tiers are being undertaken also reducing back office costs to ease the impact of cuts on frontline services. Changes are being made to the way the Council works, including re-engineering staff working practices and processes. The property portfolio is being rationalised to reduce the ongoing costs and achieve capital receipts where possible. This also links to delivering more joined up services with the Council's partners, looking at co-location or new ways of delivering services. This includes taking a stronger commercial approach and looking at strategic partnering options with the private sector. The conditions of service have been revised, including reducing redundancy payments and freezing increments for most staff to help meet our savings targets.

### **Conclusion**

The Council's Revenue and Capital Financial Plans for 2011/12 to 2015/16 delivers Low Taxes, Real Choice and Value for Money for Oxfordshire County Council. It achieves this in a prudent and sustainable form, against a continuing background of economic problems, a large structural imbalance in the national finances and anticipated severe cuts in public spending.

### **Your local Councillor**

Elected Vice-Chairman of Oxfordshire County Council on 6<sup>th</sup> April'10. Member of the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee. Presently serves on the following working groups: - Local Transport Plan No.3, and Minerals & Waste. A public combined consultation on the preferred spatial strategy for mineral working also for a preferred waste spatial strategy will take place during June/July 2011. Of local matters, has pressed for more road safety measures, and has been taking particular interest in safety issues on the Reading Road (A329) concerning the Fairmile development. Continues to press for better and a quicker response to road repairs. Has frequently requested for more speed checks and enforcement measures in 30mph limits within the Moreton Division.

Your Division member thanks the Parish Councillors for their co-operation throughout the year.

CLlr Patrick Greene - Moreton Division – Oxfordshire County Council – April 2011

## **Appendix 4 – SODC Report**

It has been another busy year negotiating further shared services with the Vale of White Horse District Council enabling reduced management and staffing costs of £500,000. The efficiency work delivered by ‘fit for the future’ work has given us a saving of £1.3m. These savings have enabled the council to again have no increase in council tax.

### **Delivering homes**

- Great Western Park development in Didcot has had at long last started which means 3,300 new homes and much needed community facilities in the next ten years.
- Fairmile hospital Cholsey development with 354 homes have commenced
- Chinnor cement works 174 new homes have commenced
- The number of homeless people in temporary accommodation is falling with just sixteen, well below the government target.

We need to continue to protect the environment that makes South Oxfordshire a special place to live and work.

The building of new homes is a very sensitive issue as we all realised when carrying out the work on the core strategy. There is a need for houses and it is important that where they are built is decided through the core strategy and not where developers make planning applications.

The core strategy also includes how to create new jobs and the necessary infrastructure.

### **Funding**

This year we have funded three part-time market town coordinators to promote the distinctiveness of the three market towns, Henley, Wallingford and Thame working with the business organisations and town councils.

Car park charges were not increased and free parking at Christmas to encourage shoppers. It really is important to support all our local shops and local producers where ever possible.

Didcot should see a new station forecourt working with Oxfordshire County Council and network rail. This project has taken years of negotiation but work will start this year.

Phase II of the Orchard Shopping Centre should also be confirmed by late Spring.

Ladygrove Loop project has had £395,000 for four kilometres of continuous green walking and cycle route plus outdoor gym equipment.

### **Feeling safer**

We have continued to support PCSO’s which are now seen by residents in both towns and villages on a regular basis helping residents making them aware of problem areas. We have continued with town councils and police to fund 61 CCTV cameras which have been used to detect criminals.

### **Opportunities for young people**

- We are most fortunate to have a grant system that has enabled £12,300 to be awarded to 51 young people for their achievement in sports, arts and citizenship.
- A young peoples Xchange was launched giving young people the opportunity to speak directly with councillors on issues close to their hearts.
- We gave £500,000 to charity, voluntary not-for-profit organisations to help them with projects.

- 41 communities have been drawn up or completed and have selected implementation of their plans which we have been able help either by grant aid or officer time.

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### **Concessionary fares**

These have been transferred to Oxfordshire County Council from April 2011. The county council have requested that we carry out a one year contract for delivery of the service for which they will pay.

The county council made a decision not to continue the tokens for the 70 and over disabled carers. However they have honoured the use of the bus passes on community buses. South Oxfordshire District Council will continue to grant aid Handibus (Henley), Fish (Sonning Common) and Readibus. We are in discussions with Oxfordshire County Council regarding Dial a ride.

### **Leisure**

Nexus Leisure have introduced the leisure pass enabling residents to use any of the centres in South Oxfordshire. They have also held many new courses for all ages which have proved very popular especially as we all need exercise. The council has continued to invest in the centres to make sure that the equipment is what users require.

### **Recycling**

You will have read and heard many times but it is worth saying again we are now the top district council at recycling and have won three national awards. This is truly a great success thanks to you all and it means less landfill, less carbon footprint plus money for the council

### **Finance**

The council's finances are healthy because we have been taking efficiency steps for more than two years. The bad publicity regarding high salaries and high councillors allowances simply do not apply. Salaries are now shared between two councils. Councillors allowances are one of the lowest in the country as we have not accepted the independent panels recommendation for the last eight years. Interest rates being so low have meant a reduction of nearly £3m per year. The government grant will be £1.2m lower but no front line services will be cut.

We have many challenges ahead with new bills coming from the coalition government. The most exciting will be working with communities and organisations who may wish to run some services. We will no longer be target driven from on high.

We are fortunate that already many organisations in South Oxfordshire do wonderful work.

The council will continue to work with communities to carry out efficient services residents have told us are important

The council website [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) is easy to use and gives full details of all the services

Your ward member thanks the Parish Councillors for their co-operation during the year.

Cllr Patrick Greene – Hagbourne Ward – South Oxfordshire District Council – April 2011