

# The Mouthpiece

Culham's Newsletter  
**April 2023**



## Dates for your Diary

Sun 2 Apr	11am	Palm Sunday Service	St Pauls Church
Sun 2 Apr	12.30am	Annual Parochial Church Meeting	St Pauls Church
Sun 9 Apr	9.45am	Easter breakfast rolls and coffee	St Pauls Church
Sun 9 Apr	11am	Easter Sunday Service	St Pauls Church
Tues 11 Apr	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting	St Pauls Church
Sun 30 Apr	10.30am	Team Service	St Mary's Church, Long Wittenham



# Village News

Village website: [www.culhamvillage.org.uk](http://www.culhamvillage.org.uk)

# Plant Sale & Church Fete

Culham Green

## Saturday May 20th

**1pm**  **4pm**

Plant Stall  
Cake Stall  
Bar  
BBQ  
Bouncy Castle  
Raffle  
Books  
Refreshments  
Children's Activities



## St Paul's Annual Parochial Church Meeting

St Paul's APCM will take place on Palm Sunday, 2nd April, in the church at 12.30 pm.

Applications are invited for the post of churchwarden and for membership of the PCC

Please contact Ruth Ward on [stpaulsculham@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsculham@gmail.com) if you are interested.

### Charlotte Storrs – exhibited works

Charlotte will be exhibiting in the Earth Trust Gallery <https://earthtrust.org.uk/events/earth-trust-gallery-oxfordshire-artweeks/> with a lovely group of other local artists - Site 77.

## Charlotte Storrs Stoneware



### Oxfordshire Artweeks



From 6 to 14 May except 10th and 11th May  
11am to 6pm Site 28

Pots will be displayed in a large gazebo in our beautiful secret garden. Ample parking by the Green. Lovely walks from the Green across the fields, over the weirs to Sutton Courtenay, along the river or past Culham lock. There are good pubs for lunch in Sutton Courtenay! Children are very welcome and can have a go on the swings or slide. Visitors might like a beaker of home pressed apple juice, wander around the garden and look at the hydroponic greenhouse

The Pottery, 8 The Green, Culham, OX14 4LZ



[www.charlottestorrs-stoneware.co.uk](http://www.charlottestorrs-stoneware.co.uk)  
[pots@charlottestorrs-stoneware.co.uk](mailto:pots@charlottestorrs-stoneware.co.uk)





# LADIES OF CULHAM

## Next Dates:

- 5<sup>th</sup> May – Mindfulness Session
- 9<sup>th</sup> June (later date due to half term holiday) – Floral Crown Making

All meetings are at St Paul's Church, Culham. Questions?

Email

[ladiesofculham@gmail.com](mailto:ladiesofculham@gmail.com)

## Can you help?

There is a vacancy at The Mouthpiece for someone to look after our advertising!

The role is not arduous – it primarily involves keeping an eye on emails to [advermouthpiece@gmail.com](mailto:advermouthpiece@gmail.com) and sending invoices to our Advertisers once a year. Please contact Anne or Gordon if you can help (see Who's Who on back page for details).

Following ad-hoc discussions around the village about the future of The Mouthpiece, the general feeling seems to be that The Mouthpiece, in paper copy, is a valuable resource for the village and the main conduit for information from our Parish, District and County councillors.

We are very grateful to all those who distribute the copies for us, those who have done so for many years and those who are new to the role!

## CULHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### PHOTO ID NEEDED TO VOTE AT THE LOCAL ELECTIONS

The government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at some elections.

This will apply for the first time at the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023, so please spread the word.

Accepted forms of photo ID will include, but are not limited to, passport, driving licence (including provisional license), disabled parking blue badge, certain concessionary travel cards and proof of age cards with a PASS mark.

To help spread the word, the Electoral Commission have provided a Voter ID Resources Pack, which includes links to posters, copy for newsletters and other content that you can download.

Anyone who doesn't have accepted photo ID can apply on the government's website now for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

For more information, visit the Electoral Commission website:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id>

or call their helpline on 0800 328 0280.

### Culham Parish Council (CPC) – March 2023

Minutes of meeting of 14 March 2023 unavailable at time of going to press please see [www.culham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.culham-pc.gov.uk)



# **Culham calling...**

## **Your village needs you!**

**Are you interested in local issues? Do you wish to improve the quality of life and the environment in the area? Are you passionate about community?**

If so, then join us to help make the right decisions about issues about Culham and the surrounding area!

Local councillors are the champions of their community who invest time in local projects and issues to the benefit of residents and the neighbourhood. Use your skills and experience to make positive changes in our village, provide a voice for people living in the area and invest in the future of the community.

Apply to be a local councillor in the upcoming May elections. To find out more, speak to one of your friendly team of councillors

[culham-pc.gov.uk/parish-council-election](http://culham-pc.gov.uk/parish-council-election)





# Referendum on the adoption of The Culham Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Council has completed a Neighbourhood Plan for Culham. The village will be asked at a referendum on May 4<sup>th</sup>, the same date as the council elections, to decide whether it wishes to adopt the plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan aims to provide a local framework for national and regional planning policies.

The Plan itself is on the Culham Parish Council website at:

<https://culham-pc.gov.uk/np-submission-document>

The benefits of having a Neighbourhood Plan include

- Enabling communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work
- providing the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop
- Communities that have a Neighbourhood Plan will receive 25% of planning levy charged on new developments in their Neighbourhood Plan area.

Please use your vote.

Culham Parish Council



Abingdon Operatic Society's  
**CAROUSEL**  
Tue 11 - Sat 15 April 2023  
Tickets now on sale!  
[www.abingdonoperatic.co.uk](http://www.abingdonoperatic.co.uk)

The advertisement features a background image of a carousel with a white canopy and ornate details. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.



# CULHAM NIGERIAN NIGHT



Join us for an evening of  
Nigerian food on  
Culham Village Green

4pm

Saturday 3rd June



**£10 PER TICKET**  
**£5 FOR CHILDREN**



tickets available by emailing  
[stpaulsandculhamvillage@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsandculhamvillage@gmail.com)





# District Councillor's Report March 2023– Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye

## Community well-being and climate action in South Oxfordshire's 2023/24 budget

We approved a budget for 2023/4 that shows a financial position in a **much healthier state** than previously forecast thanks to our careful budgeting work in recent years. It also means the council needs to draw over a million pounds **less** from its reserves to balance the budget than it had prepared for a year ago.

This year the council will increase its share of the council tax by £5 a year for an average Band D property, so for 2023/24 the Band D rate is £141.24 per household which is a below inflation increase of 3.6 per cent.

Whilst the short-term position is more positive, there is uncertainty around future local government funding, especially from 2025/26 onwards. Financial pressures in the medium-term which will affect all councils are the state of the national economy and the lack of clarity on local authority funding.

We have continued to focus on allocating funds on our priorities such as £1 million over the next two years in an active communities grant scheme, to continue to fund the Community Hub which provides wide-ranging support and advice for residents on cost-of-living help etc, to fund help for refugees and asylum seekers, and other projects like the 'Everyone Active' subsidised sports classes.

The budget also allocates £4.6 million, linked to the government's Local Authority Housing Fund, to assist housing those fleeing war. This money is the council's share of the cost of providing 'move-on' and settled accommodation, initially for refugees and asylum seekers but owned by the Council as part of its own housing stock. This is in addition to the £2 million of funding to secure homes for people in need that was formally agreed in December, allocated in last year's budget.

Other capital expenditure planned will be to improve South Oxfordshire's infrastructure, including flood prevention, leisure centre improvements and resurfacing and lighting replacement at the council's car parks. Decarbonisation funding, including some Government support, will contribute to retrofitting energy saving measures at Cornerstone Arts Centre.

The budget also includes funds to continue priority projects that have already begun, including tree planting and meadow creation, an extension of last year's No Mow May called 'Let it Bee' and supporting water quality work.

Budget papers are available to view on in the Council meeting for 16<sup>th</sup> February papers:  
<http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=3057>

## Work with developers on the Culham Strategic Housing Site

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February I attended a presentation and discussion with the landscape architect, developers and planning officers on the masterplan for this large site for new housing. District Cllrs Robin Bennett and Sue Cooper were also there and Cllr Duncan Enright from the County Council as well as parish councillors from Clifton Hampden. The presentation focused on the layout and the design to enable as much green space, walking and cycling provision as possible, and good connections with existing facilities, such as the railway station, Abingdon and the Science centre.

I pointed out that there needs to be consideration on whether some land needed to be put aside for a cemetery, that walking and cycling facilities needed to be robust as there will be around 8000 people living there in a decade or so and access to leisure/nature needs to be easily accessible for all the residents.

Other questions were about provision of water and sewage, traveller sites and sites for worship/burial of different faiths, and the siting of schools. The architect proposed greater density of housing will be nearer the main road, getting less dense to the north of the site. The area near the river, that floods frequently, would be

left as 'green infrastructure'. They also proposed that the smaller pylons across the site would be put underground. The secondary school will be on west of the site, quite near the Europa school. The next step is for a master plan to be agreed and then the start of a planning application.

If anyone has any comments or questions, please get in touch with me, details at the bottom of the report.

### **Electric Charging for Vehicles**

SODC's Electric Vehicle chargers at its car parks has seen charging volumes triple in its first full six months of the [Park and Charge scheme](#).

The number of charging sessions has doubled since the chargers were first installed. During the same period the average amount of electricity consumed has tripled, meaning that people are now using them for longer charges.

This represents a saving of 90,397kg of CO2e if those miles had been driven in a petrol or diesel car.

Judging by the feedback we have received, people who have used the chargers are very pleased with this facility in our car parks.

### **£1 million for community and neighbourhood facilities**

South Oxfordshire has been allocated £1 million from the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund to provide better community and neighbourhood facilities and improve public open spaces to help increase the health and wellbeing of residents.

With the new funds, the council is already starting work to support community facilities to reduce their energy bills and lower their carbon emissions.

Plans include increasing access to green skills courses to help residents gain a new qualification and bespoke decarbonisation advice for businesses to help everyone to move towards a low carbon or net zero economy. A new strategy is also being developed to promote tourism and encourage visitors to stay in the area to enjoy local attractions.

To help businesses further, the council will be offering opportunities for local organisations to tender for contracts to help deliver the projects taking place in both districts.

To find out more, visit [southoxon.gov.uk/UKSPF](https://southoxon.gov.uk/UKSPF)

### **South Oxfordshire's response to the Oxford City Local Plan consultation**

We have made it very clear in our response to Oxford City Council that we think it is time that they stopped trying to export housing development to its rural neighbours and that the city's plans for housing are unsustainable and hostile.

Both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse district councils have responded firmly to Oxford City Council's consultation that appears to be attempting to exceed the city's remit and force more development across Oxfordshire's rural countryside.

As well as nearly doubling the required number of new homes within its own boundary, the City Council is claiming that Oxfordshire's rural district councils should also use an alternative calculation that leads to inflated housing numbers when determining their own housing need.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils believe the city council is acting outside its authority and described this misguided attempt at *forcing development* in areas outside of its boundaries as hostile. They are requesting that Oxford City restricts its aspiration for unjustifiable housing development to its own borders.

All authorities undertaking a planning process of this nature must work with their partners under a legal test called the 'Duty to Cooperate'. This means that Oxford City Council should constructively engage with the surrounding districts. Sadly, in previous consultations, South Oxfordshire has provided detailed feedback to Oxford City Council on the Oxford Local Plan Preferred Options (November 2022), but the concerns we raised didn't even get a response.

I believe this approach of an unjustifiable scale of development, lack of engagement with its neighbours, and inappropriately attempting to dictate the housing need of surrounding areas is unreasonable and does not accord with the requirement that Oxford City Council has to work with its neighbours.

### **South Oxfordshire's response to the Government Consultation on on Planning and 'levelling up'**

SODC's response to the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation can be read on the council website, submitted on 2 March:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/external-planning-consultations-our-response/>

That is the 'external planning consultations, our response' page. We have said we think the '5 year housing land supply' test should be abolished, that District/City council's should not be held responsible for developer's failure to build and as long as a District has an up to date plan, the area should not be penalised but supported by legislation.

### **Council performance report**

Work to improve people's lives by creating healthier communities has been highlighted in a council's performance report as well as allocated funds for projects to improve Didcot as part of its Garden Town status.

Garden towns focus on providing community benefits, improving the high street, encouraging healthy lifestyles and helping to tackle climate change.

Some £100,000 has been allocated for tree planting, £54,000 has been set out to improve cycling and walking routes, £30,000 for public arts and culture and £45,000 for projects to increase health and wellbeing. £20,000 has been earmarked for a retail strategy to help local businesses thrive.

Other key work highlighted in the latest report, which covers the period from October to December 2022, included £730,000 of funding secured to support rural businesses and communities, plans for tree planting at five sites across the district and more than £1.3m paid to parish councils through the Community Infrastructure Levy – money developers pay when building in the local area.

### **Climate Action Plan: progress**

The council has published its Climate Action Plan quarterly performance report for quarter 3. The report looks specifically at its performance delivering the council's commitment of taking Action on the Climate Emergency and its target of becoming a carbon neutral council by 2025.

Among the actions highlighted were an application made for greener technology to lower energy bills and carbon emissions at Cornerstone Arts Centre, awarding £34,000 to town and parish councils to take climate action, and including energy efficiency and carbon reduction in considering contracts with external partners.

The full reports can be found at [the South Oxfordshire District Council datahub page](#)

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01235 635566



# County Councillor's Report March 2023 – Cllr. Robin Bennett

[robin.bennett@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:robin.bennett@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Our 'Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance' successfully passed its 2023/4 budget last month, which included funding for:

- community transport initiatives in both rural and urban areas
- extension of the current (very well used) discount ticket at park and rides
- expanding the supported transport team to work with young people and their families to develop active travel options for getting to school, and expanding School Streets to make it safer to do so
- investment into transport hubs including e-bike hire, car club promotion, and improvements to travel information
- flood resilience across Oxfordshire including practical projects with parish councils and proactive ditch clearance in areas prone to flooding
- £1m for local priority improvements to highways, cycle paths and pavements.
- funding for SEND educational and health care plan (ECHP) assessments
- investment in community hubs to support children and families.
- A Council Tax Support Scheme to help those most in need in Oxfordshire – ensuring that they do not have pay the full increase in council tax this year

**The new CEO at the County Council, Dr Martin Reeves**, has now started in his new post. Martin is very experienced at leading large council organisations. I look forward to getting to know him and making him aware of our local and rural issues.

## **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for Abingdon, Didcot and surrounding areas**

Residents of Abingdon and surrounding areas are set to benefit from improvements that will encourage cycling and walking in and around Abingdon, now that OCC has adopted the town's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which will set out how to improve the local active travel network and cut congestion. This will soon be complemented by the Didcot LCWIP and the Strategic Active Travel Network plans, currently in progress, eventually forming a coherent network for the whole area. Both LCWIPs will extend as far as Culham.

## **Thame Lane and Tollgate Road junction crossings.**

I recently met with OCC Highways cabinet member Andrew Gant, as well as parish councillors and District Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye, to look at what could and should be done to make these crossings safe for children at school times, and for everyone trying to use the A415 cycle route. I am keen that these improvements should not have to wait for the major new development and will look at all potential funding avenues.

## **Energy Bills Support Scheme**

On 27 February, the [Department for Energy Security and Net Zero \(DESNZ\) announced](#) that households across England, Scotland and Wales will benefit from the government's £400 help with energy bills, by applying through an online application portal. Households without a direct relationship to an electricity supplier, such as those living in **park homes** and **care homes**, can now apply through a secure online portal to receive the support as a one-off, non-repayable lump sum under the 'alternative funding' route of the government's Energy Bills Support Scheme. For those without online access, a dedicated customer helpline is available to assist eligible customers - 0808 175 3287. The government is urging all eligible households to apply as soon as possible for their support. The payment will be provided directly into people's bank accounts.

## **Supporting Oxfordshire careworkers: funds still available**

We're funding the Care Workers' Charity hardship fund, which was set up last spring and offers quick financial support to people working in Oxfordshire's care sector. It has paid out more than £260,000 to over 440 people and there are still funds available for those who need it. In response to the increased cost of living, the maximum individual

funding allowance has now been increased to £750 for requests made by 31 March 2023. For more information and to apply, go to [thecareworkerscharity.org.uk/oxfordshire-grants](https://thecareworkerscharity.org.uk/oxfordshire-grants)

### **Looking for an affordable long term place to stay in Oxfordshire?**

Our friends at Age UK Oxfordshire have an innovative programme for people who would enjoy living with an older person and are happy to lend a hand.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/homeshare-oxfordshire/>

### **Oxford Station and area upgrade**

The Oxfordshire Connect project is being led by Network Rail to increase capacity at Oxford Station from 2024. As the local highway authority, OCC are a key stakeholder and we are working with Network Rail to finalise plans for the work, which includes replacing Botley Road bridge. The county council is assessing the impact this may have on the timing of its own schemes in and around Oxford.

### **Have your say on new council ward boundaries**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements. It is now looking to draw up a new pattern of divisions to accommodate an increase from 63 to 69 County councillors in Oxfordshire. You can contribute your thoughts here <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/686>

Current County Council consultations can be found at <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

## **Other News**

### **Oxfordshire Community Land Trust Hits Half a Million Pounds Investment Milestone to Build Affordable Housing. Can it Keep Going?**

The Oxfordshire Community Land Trust, a grassroots initiative providing sustainable housing solutions through a Community Land Trust model, has achieved a remarkable milestone – they have raised half a million pounds in investments to fund their very first development to house residents on the Vale of White Horse Housing List.



This ground-breaking achievement means they will now be able to reduce their reliance on costly debt finance, at a time when loan interest rates are rising.

Fran Ryan, the Trust's co-founder and secretary said: "I am incredibly proud of OCLT's achievement. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has invested in the trust. By investing, we can avoid rising loan interest rates and build more affordable homes for Oxfordshire."

Oxfordshire is in the grip of a severe housing crisis. Average house prices are 15.3x the average salaries, making it the second least affordable city in Britain. Over 900 houses are second homes, and the number of holiday lets is increasing.

OCLT are tackling this problem head-on by providing genuinely affordable housing that will remain affordable forever. Construction of their first development, Crofts Court, is due for completion this Summer. To complete the project and build more affordable homes, they are still looking for investors.

This is a unique opportunity to make a positive impact on the community and earn a return on your investment. The Trust has been overwhelmed by the response and has now reached 108% of their target of £500,000. However, they have extended their deadline and will continue their journey to secure further investment until 12th April 2023.

By investing, people can help OCLT create a lasting legacy of permanently affordable homes in Oxfordshire.

Investors can visit [www.ethex.org.uk/invest/OCLT](http://www.ethex.org.uk/invest/OCLT)

More information on the Trust's work can be found here <https://www.oclt.org.uk/> and with regard to the Share Offer here [www.oclt.org.uk/crofts-court](http://www.oclt.org.uk/crofts-court).

OCLT is run by volunteers. It will continue to depend on the generosity of grant funders and donors until we have a big enough portfolio of permanently affordable homes to generate a small income to support an office. If you would like to help this innovative, equitable and sustainable approach to housing please [join us](#), and/or become a [supporter member](#).

We are also always interested in land and housing opportunities for the provision of permanently affordable homes. *Capital is at risk and returns are not guaranteed*



SUTTON COURTENAY WI



## Spring forward ...

and join us for some great new events  
and activities! A visit from RNLI in April -  
Thames Valley Air Ambulance Unit in May  
A super 'historic' outdoor trip & experience in June  
and a great programme of events for the coming year

**Come and see, enjoy, join in!**

We meet every third Tuesday monthly in the  
River Room, Sutton Courtenay at 7.30 pm

For details contact our [Secretary](#) on 01235 847612





## Adwell Daffodil Day

Adwell House, Near Tetsworth, OX9 7DQ (jn 6, M40)  
(what3words: since.incur.edits)

As always Adwell House is supporting Sobel House who do so much in the community and yet again, are lucky enough to have secured the delicious Adwell Cream Teas provided by one of their stalwart fishermen and his wife.

The gardens are open on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, from 2:00 PM so please go along and have a good walk around the lakes and then have a huge cream tea!



## The Mouthpiece

Please note that any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors. We accept contributions and advertisements in good faith and cannot be responsible for errors therein.

Please send contributions for the May 2023 issue of the Mouthpiece by **April 15<sup>th</sup>** to:  
[generalmouthpiece@gmail.com](mailto:generalmouthpiece@gmail.com)

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# WHO IS WHO IN CULHAM?

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