# Eye & Dunsden Parish Council

*Chairman’s report for 2022-23*

Clive Leake and Naomi Baylisstood down immediately before the recent parish council elections and are to be thanked for their service to the council and the local community. We are about to welcome Suzanne Abraham as a new member. There is an outstanding vacancy for a fifth member. The role is not an onerous one, with ten meetings a year. If you are interested, do please come along to one of our meetings to find out more.

**PLANNING**

The continuing saga of Cosmonaut Leisure’s flagrant breaches of the planning system at their swimming lake continues, with the issue of an enforcement notice by SODC. We understand that the site owners are taking legal advice. Otherwise the planning register has mainly been dominated by a series of applications by Tarmac which seek to extend gravel extraction closer to Sonning Eye and ultimately Shiplake. The Environment Agency has queried aspects of these plans in terms of the impact on flooding locally. This appears to be very much in line with the case made for many years by local pressure group Sonning Eye Action Group. A new house is currently being built in the Sonning Eye Conservation Area after several less acceptable plans were rejected by the District Council. It is hoped the NDP will in future provide developers with a clearer indication of what kind of new building the community welcomes in the area.

**ROADS & PATHS**

The Parish Council continues to press for better routes for non-motorised traffic and this has included some improved signage in Sonning Eye and by the Flowing Spring, and a request that the Phillimore Estate provide a permissive path between Playhatch and the pub and to Dunsden. The permissive route between Playhatch and Sonning Eye still needs better signage but is generally well-maintained by Tarmac. Some traffic surveys on the A4155 have surprisingly failed to establish there is a speeding problem there. In common with other parishes, the Council has requested 20mph speed limit in Playhatch and part of Sonning Eye following good evidence of local support. Tag Lane has seen some improvements in surface water flooding following efforts made by the Councillor Ian Pringle and other local people.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

A dedicated team deserve the community’s heartfelt thanks for their sterling work on the plan which is expected to go to public consultation later this year. They have been aided by some expert consultants, funded by the Government grants received. I have chaired this group until recently.

**JOINT PARISHES AONB ENLARGEMENT GROUP**

I have chaired this group which has commissioned landscape consultants to prepare evidence for the forthcoming Chilterns AONB boundary review. Progress has been encouraging.

**ALLOTMENTS & OPEN SPACES**

Allotment sites at Sonning Eye and Playhatch are flourishing. The parish open spaces at Dunsden Green and Furleigh bank are in good condition. The car park at Sonning Eye continues to be blocked by longterm overnight parking which reduces its availability to users of the Furleigh riverside. The maintenance of the A4155 verges at Playhatch is being addressed by Councillor Richard Berkley.

**WEBSITE**The parish council website has been overhauled to make it compliant with the WCAG accessibility guidelines.

**ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS**

I have continued to serve as a trustee of the village hall which is in good shape with very many wedding bookings and an attractive new brochure to advertise these. We urgently need new trustees. More at dunsdenvillagehall.org.uk and on Facebook.

I represent the council on the **Dunsden Owen Association** whichexpects to install a new window to commemorate Wilfred Owen this summer, with a inagural event on 4 November. More details at [www.owenindunsden.org](http://www.owenindunsden.org/) and on Facebook and Twitter.

Richard Berkley and I represented the parish at online meetings of the **Tarmac Quarry Liaison Group**. The **Playhatch Quarry Liaison Group** is due to meet to address considerable concerns over surface water flooding in Playhatch from the quarry.

I continue to help run the **Community Orchard** which has held occasional working parties with the fruit available for all. More volunteers are always welcome. More information at orchard.blogspirit.com.

**Sonning & Sonning Eye Society** continues to monitor planning applications and the gravel workings in the parish.

**CHARITIES**I have represented the parish council on the **Sonning Education & Welfare Trust** which has made a number of small grants to people in need. Applications from Eye & Dunsden are welcomed. I am also a Trustee of the **Robert Palmer Alsmhouses** in Sonning.

Councillors David Bartholomew (OCC/SODC) and Leigh Rawlins (SODC) have made significant contributions to our meetings throughout the year. Thanks once again to our highly capable Clerk, **Mandy Sermon**, for all her dedicated work during the year. She can be contacted on 0149 141 2908 or by email at clerk@eyedunsden.org.

The public continue to be most welcome at all our meetings which are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month: they are expected to resume at the village hall in May or June and a full schedule is available on our noticeboards and at www.eyedunsden.org.

*David Woodward, 16.5.23*