

## **SODC Newsletter – June 2019**

As the Council is issuing up-dates directly to Parish and Town Councils, our letter should now be much shorter as we wish to avoid duplication.

As the rather late summer starts, we have been looking back over the last few months as the country struggles with CoVID and we have reflected on the work that has been done by the councils to support the communities in organising the vaccinations, distributing the various grants provided by government, often at very short notice and with regularly changing rules, and the support provided to individuals and families. It has been a mammoth task, with very little public visibility of the work done by the council officers. At times, things haven't gone as smoothly as we might have liked, but where we can, Lynn and I have helped residents and businesses get their grants through as quickly as possible.

There has also been an army of volunteers supporting the NHS and Lynn and I have both volunteered to be CoVID vaccination stewards, although we have yet to be called, which gives an idea of how successful the call for volunteers has been. As I write this it is the end of Volunteer Week UK and we thank everyone who has helped.

We have also reached the end of the Council's annual grants cycle and Lynn and I have been glad that we have been able to agree a number of grants. From our Councillor Grant funds, we have agreed £5,000 to help the Parish Council install electric charging points at the Community Pavillion, £4000 towards the cost of additional out-door gym equipment for the recreation grounds and just under £800 towards equipment like bike racks and seating for the Tennis Club. In addition, we have been able to provide grants totalling £4,000 of support for people seriously impacted by CoVID.

May also saw the review of the Neighbourhood Plan for Chinnor and Sydenham's new plan formally accepted by Referendum, and Adoption by Full Council, strengthening our position deciding how our community develops. The question of a Chinnor Bye-pass has been raised again by a number of residents in our Parishes. The question of the bye-pass has been in the air for many years now, and really, we hope that it remains there. You only have to look at the many examples where bye-passes have been agreed, like the ones at Thame, Crowmarsh and Wallingford, to see how developers then build out to the bye-pass and then beyond. We have also seen that the 'Edge Roads' for both Benson and Watlington have been agreed, but only with large numbers of houses a condition of their provision. A bye-pass would probably mean accepting a further 1,000 plus houses in Chinnor and the surrounding villages and studies by various universities have found that the increased flow also generates additional traffic on the surrounding network of minor roads.

The solution to traffic may be for people to make more use of the public transport that we already have, walk or cycle when they can instead of driving, and for us to explore weight restrictions for HGVs using the roads through Chinnor and Kingston Blount as rat runs. Unfortunately this is outside the remit of the District Council.

The third year of this Council has now started and membership of Committees has been reviewed.

Lynn retains the Chair for the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee and is on the Grants Committee and the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Committee and also retains the Council's seat on the Chilterns Conservation Board.

Ian remains on Scrutiny and South and Vale Joint Scrutiny, and he retains the Chair for these. He has however stood down from Planning Committee at this time, and his place has been taken by another

member of the Conservative Group. This does not mean that he is giving up his interest in Planning, only that in future he will only attend meetings at which applications within the Ward are discussed and decided.

Previously we mentioned Grants and the new cycle will be starting soon, so perhaps now is the time to be thinking about possible projects that fall within our remit. Keep your eyes peeled for announcements!

Anyway, we hope that you enjoy the sunshine (if summer does get started!)

Lynn Lloyd and Ian White