

- Attendance at the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford followed by a reception and musical event at Woodley's hosted the ABF Soldier's Charity.
- Opening the extension to Bicester Village 22 years after officially opening the Bicester Village International Shopping Outlet.
- On Saturday 11th November attended a Remembrance Service held by the local branch of the Royal British Legion at the Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery at St Lawrence Church Caversfield. This was a moving ceremony with those of us in attendance each laying a cross and single red rose on two of the 25 war graves. The Last Post/Reveille was played by a bugler for the Royal Green jackets.
- As Bicester's Mayor, honoured to lay a wreath at the war memorial on behalf of the people of the town at the annual Remembrance Day Service and Parade held at St Edburg's Church to pay tribute to the fallen soldiers and victims of war.
- Accepted a kind invitation from Neunkirchen Germany the town twinned to Bicester to attend their annual advent ceremony.
- 'Evening at the Proms' charity concert at St Edburg's Church in February. The music was provided by the Waterloo Band and Bugles of the Rifles led by Major Peter Clark.
- Would like to take the opportunity to say a big thank you to local businesses, community volunteers and organisations and especially the Bicester Town Council staff, who seamlessly work together tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the planning and smooth running not only of the Mayor's fundraising events but most of the other Town council events as well.

RESOLVED that the report of Cllr Les Sibley be **NOTED**.

4 REPORT BE RECEIVED FROM THE PARENT COMMITTEES FOR 2017/2018

Cllr Richard Mould gave the report of the Parent Committees' report which covered the following points:-

Policy Committee

- We have now had a full year's service from our Chief Officer which has given her the opportunity to get to know the area and the various community groups that operate in the town. We are confident that the work the Mrs Shippen has done over the year stand us in good stead for the future.
- Over the past year we have reviewed all Policy Documents and brought them up in line with current legislation and best practice. All policies will be reviewed to an agreed schedule or when legislative changes require. We are currently reviewing our practices around the data protection act that comes into force in May and planning training for staff and councillors.
- Following the changes at Oxfordshire County Council when the Outreach staff moved from Garth House to the Resource Centre we have commissioned architects to review the use of Garth House and recommend changes that will allow the Council to let our spare office capacity to generate a source of income to support our expenditure.
- The Council are continuing with plans for a new burial ground at North West Bicester and close to commissioning a pre-planning application which will be followed by a tendering process to appoint a contractor to carry out the building works. The land is expected to be available to be available late in 2018.

Planning Committee

- It has been a busy year for the Planning Committee with a large number of

planning applications considered at each meeting. The number of individual householder applications continue to rise as residents decide not to move but to expand their own property.

- We have also had a number of applications for large scale developments which the Committee have made their recommendations on and we expect the number to remain high as the development areas in the Local Plan attract developers.
- When making their recommendations, the Committee takes into account representations made by members of the public who are always welcome to attend meetings.

Environment Committee

- Three play areas at Shakespeare Drive, Bure Park and Southwold were refurbished at the beginning of the financial year with new equipment being installed at each site. We have unfortunately had some acts of vandalism which has entailed repairs to be carried out. We would ask people living near play areas to be vigilant and report any acts of vandalism. Going forward we have planned to refurbish three further play areas this spring, these are located at Launton Fields, Villiers Road and Kestrel Way.
- Grounds maintenance has caused a few problems this year with many complaints being received regarding the poor standard of work. In October the contract handed suppliers with a noticeable improvement in service. The contract was retendered over the winter period and the contract has been awarded to our temporary supplier on a permanent basis. We continue to cover the cemetery and recreation areas with our own staff.
- The committee have overseen the years events which were all well attended and have plans in place for a similar programme in 2018. There will be a band concert by the Rifles Band to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ending of WW1. They will be assisted by the RAF Cadet Band who will help celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the RAF.

Finance Committee

- The Finance Committee have again performed their task well this year with expenditure expected to be maintained within the budget. We have instigated steps to produce a 3-year finance plan to enable the Council to forecast budget requirements going forward. The plan will ideally look at planned maintenance of play areas, equipment replacement and projected capital requirements and will produce a rolling 3-year forecast. The Committee continue to monitor expenditure to insure it is in line with the budget.
- The precept for 2018/19 has been set at 1.63% which is approximately 2-4p a week per household.
- Over the coming weeks the Committee will look at our earmarked reserves to ensure we build funds towards the two projects mentioned above whilst maintaining adequate reserves for other planned maintenance areas.

RESOLVED that the report be **NOTED**.

5 REPORT BE NOTED FROM OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS SERVING THE BICESTER WARD

Report was read by Cllr Les Sibley and covered the following points:-

- Two years ago, Oxfordshire County Councillors made some very tough decisions and none of us would downplay the impact these had on particular

county services. However, the county's finances are in good shape and we have reduced bus subsidies, re-organised family support services and day services for adults in order to deliver a balanced four-year budget.

- Since 2010 OCC will have saved £360million, most of which has been re-invested into services, particularly those for vulnerable children and adults. This should be set against the backdrop of the number of adult care packages OCC provide nearly doubling since 2010. The number of 'looked after' children has increased by 60% and demand for child protection services continues to grow.
- Given these sorts of budget pressures OCC has targeted resources to provide vital services to those who need them most.

Oxfordshire County Council currently delivers services that:

- Assess the care need of over 10,000 vulnerable people, and rising.
- Provide long-term social care for 6,500 adults.
- Organises a million hours of support a year, as well as assisting thousands of informal carers.
- Assess almost 4,000 children, including over 1,500 child protection issues.
- Supports 700 'looked after' children, and 600 on child protection plans.
- Work to 'turn around' 550 families with real problems so that they may thrive.
- Registers 20,000 births, deaths and marriages.
- Issues or re-news over 40,000 concessionary bus passes a year.
- Disposes of 300,00 tonnes of waste.
- Responds to over 5,000 fire and rescue incidents, many being road traffic incidents.

OCC also has the responsibility for maintaining over 3,000 miles of road, many potholed and in need of repair. Every effort is being made to make the most of the very limited finances available. The county, along with other county councils, continue to lobby government for more money to deal with what is a national problem. The recent announcement of £100million, nationally, will help but Oxfordshire alone probably needs nearer 200 million to bring all our roads up to standard.

Resolution of the rail crossing in the London Road is very much to the fore in our discussions and working.

We are also working with partners trying to safeguard current 'green space' in and near the town centre and to protect and grow our town centre.

Locally our councillors, working with partners have implemented a number of traffic parking restrictions to try and make our town safer. There will be a review later this year of speed and weight limits.

Our library continues to thrive, with more and more users, and in cooperation with Cherwell the facility is continuing to host a wide range of activities.

RESOLVED that the report be **NOTED**.

REPORTS BE NOTED FROM CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCILLORS SERVING BICESTER WARDS

Reports were given by Cllr Debbie Pickford and Cllr Lynn Pratt on behalf of Cherwell District Councillors which covered the following points:-

Report from Cllr Debbie Pickford – Lead member for Clean and Green

- Two new contracts starting in April, first the landscape awarded to Continental Landscapes and secondly the dry recycling has been awarded to Casepac based in Leicester.
- Putting in measures to improve our recycling and have Chairmanship of Oxfordshire Waste Partnership for the next two years. A Countywide strategy for plastics and increasing all recycling has been requested.
- Reviewing our public toilets and will try and incorporate changing rooms in Banbury and Bicester and getting quotes from manufacturers. In Bicester, the Claremont Car park will be the first to be refurbished and there will be a changing room incorporated.
- Private MOT testing is ahead of the same time last year.
- Fly tipping is treated very seriously and we would ask that residents report any as soon as you see it.
- Seeing a steady growth in commercial waste programme.
- Super and bulky waste collections are growing steadily.

Report from Cllr Lynn Pratt, Executive member for Estates and Economy

- The tax levied by Cherwell District Council has been frozen for the 9th year in succession. It was last increased in the tax year 2009/10.
- The Graven Hill self-build is proceeding at a pace with the first occupants now living on site. The uptake continues to be strong with the many options offered for self-build helping the public get on the housing ladder.
- In Bicester town centre the 'Perch' opened in February providing accommodation for people starting up their own businesses allowing them to rent the amount of space they need to get their business off the ground. A much larger building is under construction on the Exemplar site at North West Bicester which is expected to be ready for occupation at the end of the year, this again will provide space for people to grow their own business.
- The Symmetry warehouse development on the Aylesbury Road is progressing. The first unit was occupied in November and the second unit has also been taken. The other units will be under construction shortly.
- The first unit on Skimmingdish Lane is nearing completion and we are told that demand is strong for these types of buildings.
- Development continues on Kingsmere with Phase 2 commencing construction shortly.
- Further construction is taking place on the Exemplar site with phase 2 selling well and the next phase is starting soon. The schedule for the new bridge under the railway to allow the diversion of Howes Lane has been agreed. The construction requires some down time on the railway line and this is currently scheduled for Christmas 2019 subject to the progress on the off-line work.
- As stated in the Parent Committee report, the Grounds Maintenance contract managed by Cherwell District Council has been re-let after a tendering process over the winter. The work performed by the winning contractor over the winter months bodes well for the standard of work we can expect in the future.
- The Cherwell recycling contract has been renegotiated and we expect to see our recycling waste increase. It does of course need the cooperation of householders to insure the correct waste goes in the right box.

The following questions and comments were received raised from the floor.

- What are the plans for the Garth building now that Outreach are moving out of the building.
- Concerns with the environmental impact on the London Road with vehicles sat with their engines running whilst waiting for the train barrier to rise.
- Concerns about the number of shops closing in the Town Centre.

- Issue with parking in Hunt Close which is getting worse and what is being done about it.
- There should be more cycle routes and places to store bike in the town centre. Cycle routes done seem as well thought out as they could be.

RESOLVED that the reports be **NOTED**.

7 CONSIDERATION OF ANY WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH THE CHIEF OFFICER HAS BEEN GIVEN THREE DAYS NOTICE

No written resolutions had been received.

CLOSE OF MEETING: 8.10 pm

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