

## OXFORD FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme team have written an update below. We (Oxford Flood Alliance) are meeting members of the team again soon to continue discussions of the 'environmental vision' for the scheme.

While the scheme is primarily for flood relief we and partners want to see a scheme that is an asset for people and wildlife, so that after the upheaval of construction, things end up better than before.

Oxford is a national freshwater biodiversity hotspot - but is in a slow decline. The scheme provides the chance to halt and to reverse this. A two-stage channel creates a gradient of heights above the water table, providing a physical framework for new freshwater and wetland ecosystems. As well as the graded channel there can be ponds and scrapes, and existing watercourses can be retained as backwaters.

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme team is working hard to minimise the impacts on floodplain meadow (such as MG4 grassland), trees and the existing watercourses, but there will be an impact. Plans are in place to create several hectares of new high quality floodplain meadow and plant new trees, woodland, scrub and hedges. The wildlife reserve on Chilswell may be extended (see article on Parish Woodland).

We are hoping to develop future opportunities for environmental education and research around the scheme. For example:

- WE Have been working with The Freshwater Habitats Trust who are keen to foster 'citizen science' in which local people can be involved. It looks likely that grant funding for this will be forthcoming.
- A small group of Oxford University postgraduate students is looking at opportunities to enhance the scheme's legacy in terms of academic research and public engagement. For example, understanding the effectiveness of habitat management and creation, increasing our knowledge of floodplain function, the ability to create clean water, restore meadows and other floodplain habitats, and to understand whether we really can protect freshwater biodiversity at a landscape scale.

Last, but by no means least, we are discussing how all this can be managed in perpetuity for flood relief, people and wildlife.

*Oxford Flood Alliance*

## **An update from the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme**

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme partnership is pleased to announce the scheme has now secured full funding and will now move to the next stage. Thanks to increases in contributions from the scheme partners, a total of £121 million has now been committed to the scheme. We will submit the planning application in March and currently expect work to start in early 2019.

The final piece of funding brought the total partnership contributions up to a record £55.3million. Investment has been secured from partners including Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and Thames Water Utilities. The remaining £65million of the funding had already been committed by Government.

## **Iron Age origins of South Hinksey**

You will have seen the archaeological work which was carried out across the whole of the scheme area last autumn. The team at Oxford Archaeology have been busy dating and analysing the finds and will produce a full report very soon. One of the most intriguing findings was uncovered in a field close to South Hinksey. Here, the trenches revealed evidence of roundhouses that date from the Iron Age. This was a totally unexpected find. Archaeologists found evidence of post-holes in

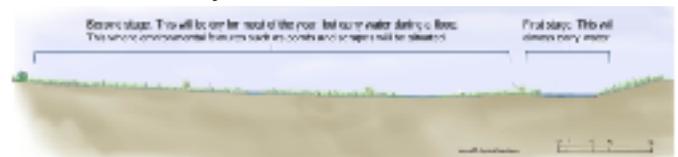
the ground, as well as circular gully's called drip-gulley's, which channelled the water which ran off the roofs. There are a number of roundhouses suggesting a small settlement which probably extends under the existing village of South Hinksey. The results so far suggest the roundhouses date to the Iron Age and so it's likely the settlement of South Hinksey dates back over 2000 years.

The full archaeology report is expected soon, and will be used to ensure the impact of the flood scheme on any ancient remains is minimised.

## **Pegging in Hinksey Meadow**

Our project team has been working closely with landowners throughout the design process to understand their thoughts and feedback on the scheme design. Recently some landowners requested that we mark out the extent of the channel on their land. Hinksey Meadow, owned by Oxford Preservation Trust, is managed by a hay cut and then cattle grazing, creating a species-rich grassland. We have marked out the proposed channel and locations of the two bridges in this area with pegs and hope this will be useful to visualise the scheme and help in our ongoing discussions.

**This is an artist's impression of what the lowered 2-stage channel will look like normally.**



### **A chance to meet the Project Team**

Members of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Team project team will be attending the South Hinksey Parish Council meeting on 5 March. **Please do come along, we will be very happy to answer questions and provide more information about the scheme.**

## **PARISH WOODLAND**

The woodland is doing well and in a few weeks will be bursting into leaf. Brambles are being cleared in stages and the path through has been cut recently. Do visit!

The woodland is owned by the Parish Council for the parish; we are hoping that the management can be led in future by the local nature trust, BBOWT, as the area becomes steadily more mature and like a real wood.

If (and it is still far from certain) the arable field above the woodland, which goes to the top of the slope, is used to deposit spoil from the flood scheme excavations on, it is then in turn possible (but again nothing is decided) that the whole field might become a nature reserve. This would be continuous with the existing Happy Valley reserve at the top, and our parish woodland below, providing a substantial area /corridor for a wide variety of wildlife. We will have to wait and see.

*Maggie Rawcliffe*  
Parish Councillor

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

Parishioners (and particularly those on St Lawrence Road) will be aware of the longstanding problem of HGVs and coaches mistakenly entering the village and causing significant structural damage as they attempt to reverse or turn around on the narrow roads in the village.

The problem appears to arise when drivers, glued to their sat-navs, take what they mistakenly assume to be the A34 exit for the Southern Bypass and London-bound M40, but instead find themselves entering the village along Parker Road.

Past attempts to improve signage at the entrance to the village have had little or no effect. So, with advice from a Principal Officer of Oxfordshire County Council's Traffic Division, we hope that a new traffic island being constructed at the entrance to the village will mean HGV incursions become a thing of the past.

The island will split the road by the mini-roundabout into an 'entrance lane' and 'exit lane', forcing HGVs to slow right down before exiting the mini-roundabout. '*Unsuitable for HGVs*' signs will be placed either side of the lane with the intention that HGV drivers could not fail to see these signs BEFORE coming off the mini-roundabout.

The cost of the island is just over £6,000. The County Council's Highways Department originally said it could not afford to spend anything on the new traffic island so the Parish Council developed a match funding proposal with £3,000 coming from the Parish Council and £3,000 from the County Council's Communities Fund.

County Councillors voted the money at a meeting in January where the Parish Council presented a powerful dossier put together by Dr Christine Madsen, and Maggie Rawcliffe spoke on the Council's behalf.

We expect the work to be completed by the end of March, and would encourage feedback from Parishioners in the coming months as to whether or not they continue to observe unwanted incursions from HGVs.

Spending £3,000 on something for which nothing had been put aside in the 2017-18 budget has been a major reason for an increase in the Parish Council element of your 2018-19 Council Tax, which you may notice when you receive your bills for next year. The Parish Council firmly believed the danger from HGVs justified the spending of this large sum.

*Matthew Frohn*  
*Vice Chairman*

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm in the Village Hall. The meeting can discuss resolutions put forward by parishioners on the Electoral Register but it's usually more of a time to take stock of things in the parish.

The Council invites representatives from the Village Hall Committee and St Laurence's Church to present reports. Do come. The Annual Parish Meeting will be followed by the Council's Annual Meeting.

The Council is back to full strength after co-opting Linda Goodhead to fill the vacancy caused when Liz Le Fevre resigned due to moving out of the area. The Council hoped a suitable candidate would come forward from the Hinksey Hill part of the parish and

had no doubt Linda would make an excellent addition to the Council.

The Council held its January meeting in the Westwood Hotel at the top of Hinksey Hill, which was the first meeting outside the village for a long time – or perhaps the first one ever, who knows. The meeting happened on the same evening as one of the gatherings the Hill residents hold at the Hotel, so the councillors saw and were seen by a large number of parishioners even though only a couple of them were attracted into the meeting.

The Council has decided it will probably hold its October meeting at the Hotel to strengthen its connection with this part of the parish.

In May 2019 when the whole of the Parish Council is up for election, the new Council will be elected in two parts, a Hill ward and a Village ward, each with three councillors. The A34 will be the dividing line between the two wards, which don't in fact have an equal number of parishioners: the Hill ward has quite a few more people on the Electoral Register than the Village ward.

The aim of the change is to recognise the distinct characters of these two communities within the one parish and ensure they have an equal voice in the Council.

*Geoffrey Ferres*  
*Parish Clerk*

## **CHRISTMAS**

Christmas is in large part about bringing people and communities together, and the carol service at St Laurence shows this is something we are pretty good at in South Hinksey.

Decorating the church involves anyone who is willing and allows the children to have a proper explore of the gallery while claiming to be putting up

holly, baubles and tinsel, while the adults actually do the work.

And then, rather as though he is in charge of a benign firework, Father James lights the touch-paper and stands back to watch as the service proceeds without further intervention and (almost) exactly as planned; readings by different people (Master J Barron deserves a mention here), alternated with carols, some supported by the church organ, others by the Donkey House Band, who also play some traditional songs. A soloist sings from the back, a guitarist serenades from the front, everyone gets a candle and Father James produces the world's largest Christmas Cracker, containing among other things the baby Jesus for the nativity scene!

If you are not one of the many participants your job is to sing, and with our musical talent that of course involves an unplanned, but perfectly glorious descant section.

And if the interest of some of younger children did start to wane, there was always the laser light show being projected on the ceiling throughout... and the promise of a mince-pie at the end.

Suddenly it is all over and wine is being poured to reward those in good voice and for everyone to wish each other a Merry Christmas.

Thank you to Father James and Father Ben for giving us the best service of the year and to Pearl and everyone else who looks after St Laurence for all of us.

*Adrian Porter*

## St LAURENCE CHURCH

Dates:

Easter Sunday 1st April 2018 9.15am Easter Eucharist and Easter Egg hunt for children

### **The Conversion of Hinksey and its Saints**

You might be surprised to know that our Parish Church in South Hinksey was not always dedicated to St Laurence! It is confusing enough that our dear neighbours (rivals!) in North Hinksey have a church dedicated to St Lawrence (same saint, different spelling!). There was in fact a third church dedicated to St Laurence built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, on the site of what is now New Hinksey School playground. When the New Church of St John, New Hinksey was built the dedication of the church in South Hinksey was changed to St Laurence, before that it had been St John.

In the middle ages both North Hinksey and our parish of South Hinksey (including the fields and water meadows as far as the Thames that were to become New Hinksey) were under the patronage of the Abbots of Abingdon Abbey; they appointed the vicars until the dissolution of the monasteries. The Monastery of Abingdon was founded in Saxon times (675) and endowed by many of the Royal House of Wessex.

Our dedication to St Laurence might tell us something about the origins of the foundations of our local churches, which could be even earlier. To us St Laurence, a martyred deacon - a deacon from Rome who was killed there - might not seem an obvious choice of dedication in Hinksey: but nor would St Agatha, another saint venerated in Rome but from Sicily, and yet she has several very early

Churches dedicated to her in North Yorkshire (Easby, Gilling West).

What links these surprising dedications is the work of missionary saints in the Anglo Saxon Period. St Paulinus was sent in 601 AD by Pope Gregory to the Kingdoms of Kent and Northumbria. Here down in the Kingdom of Wessex, a bit later in the same century, the work of converting the Saxons was continued by St Birinus, sent by Pope Honorius c. AD 634. Both Birinus and Paulinus were preaching, baptising and founding churches. Paulinus baptised King Edwin of Northumbria, and many other in the River Swale. Birinus baptised King Cynegils of Wessex, who gave him Dorchester as his seat of missionary activity. Both Birinus and Paulinus had strong connections back to Rome, where they had received their authority from the Pope. By Yorkshire's River Swale are found churches dedicated to Saint Agatha, near where Paulinus was baptising and those churches (one with a Saxon cross, the other the seat of a Saxon Earl) are likely to have been founded by him.

By our river, the Thames, we know that Birinus was active and near to our parish: he was Bishop in Dorchester, in Abingdon he founded the Church of St Helen, (the Roman Empress whose son would be the first Christian Emperor, Constantine), and at Checkendon near Reading he founded St Peter and Paul (both martyred in Rome). The Venerable Bede wrote: "Many churches were built and endowed by Birinus.": given the Saxon origins of the name "Hinksey" it's very likely that churches were built by Birinus in the Hinkseys. The dedication of St Laurence gives weight to this theory - a Roman saint celebrated by the mother Church in Rome to link a newly evangelised flock to their wider Christian family. The earlier dedication of St John would also be appropriate - John the writer

of the last Gospel, the evangelist - whose words Birinus would have been using to teach the Saxons along the Thames. St Margaret's at Binsey goes back to Saxon times also - beside it is the well of the Anglo Saxon princess and patron saint of Oxford - Frideswide. Beside St Laurence South Hinksey is another ancient well - perhaps it was once used by St Birinus!

*Fr Benjamin Drury*

## VILLAGE HALL

### Village Hall

The Village Hall is running smoothly, and is financially secure, with a mix of regular bookings and one-off events. It looks good after the redecoration that took place last year, and we have a detailed plan for ongoing maintenance and repairs. Outside, a few pansies are in bloom in the tubs, with daffodils and tulips coming up fast. Spring is on its way.

### Mock pub

The latest event was a reincarnation of the mock pub, which flourished during the previous closure of the General Elliot, when it was hosted in their own homes by people in turn. In fact it was so popular that it became a victim of its own success, when numbers simply became too big to fit easily into private houses and hosting came too expensive.

It was Louisa Nahhas who proposed to the Village Hall committee that the mock pub should move to the hall which, after all, exists to provide a venue for the benefit of residents of South Hinksey. It was Louisa, along with Maggie

Rawcliffe and Pat Jones, who organised the first session of the revived mock pub in the hall on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. It was a huge success, and the hall was packed with people from both Village and Hill. In fact it brought the community together in a thoroughly convivial atmosphere.

At the moment the suggestion is that the “pub” should meet roughly once a month. There are, however, a few things to sort out before a permanent arrangement can be made. After last night’s experience, it’s obvious that there is plenty of enthusiasm for the idea, and we look forward to seeing how it will develop.



**DONKEY'S DELIGHT**  
with the Donkey House Players & friends

A concert of favourite tunes,  
performed in aid of  
the Oxford Branch  
of PARKINSON'S UK

Friday 6th April 2018 at  
7.30pm  
St Laurence's Church  
South Hinksey  
Oxford OX1 5BA

Entry is by ticket only

Tickets  
(£7.50, includes refreshments)  
available from:

Richard King	01865 739406
Linda Sandford	01235 831482
Sally Bromley	01865 311302