

Update from the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Thank you to everyone who attended our meeting on Monday 10 June in the Village Hall. This was an opportunity for local residents to ask questions about the scheme and its construction and for us to listen to your concerns. It was well attended and the meeting was passionate and constructive. For the people who weren't able to attend, we have summarised the main points raised below.

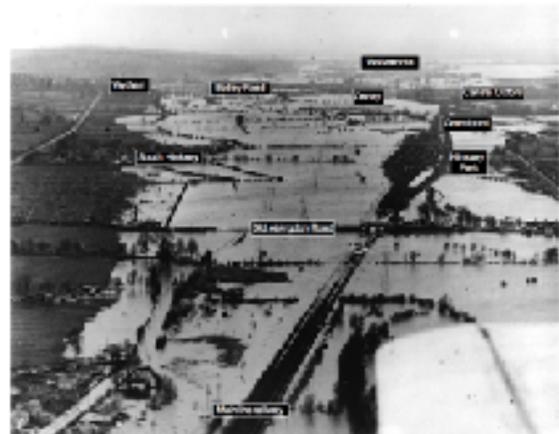
We fully appreciate that the construction phase of the scheme will cause some disruption to residents of South Hinksey and we are working to minimise disruption and inconvenience as much as possible. We are looking into the suggestions raised at the meeting and through correspondence with parish councillor Patricia Jones.

Currently the village is vulnerable to flooding. Many residents know first-hand the disruption and trauma that flooding can bring. The floods of 2007 caused extensive property damage and cut off roads and railway. There have been frequent floods in recent decades, with homes in the Oxford area being flooded in 7 of the years between 2000 and 2014. Yet these floods have been nowhere near the scale that we expect in coming decades due to the effects of climate change.



Floods in Oxford, 2014

We have to look back to 1947 to gain some sense of what a major flood looks like. As you can see in the photograph below, South Hinksey was inundated and remained underwater



CAPTION IN THE FLOODS OF 1947
Looking north, with the village at the bottom of the photograph.
The flood peaked around 21 April 1947, the photograph was
taken 2 days later, on 23 April 1947.

for some considerable time. With climate change, floods like this are expected to become more frequent and more severe.

We have designed the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme to cope with floods of this major scale. Our aim is to future-proof the Oxford area as best as possible from the devastation that such floods bring. With the scheme in place, local residents will be able to enjoy improved peace of mind from the fear of floods. As well as reduced property flooding, the scheme will also keep roads and railway lines open in times of flood. Without the scheme, the current flood defences are not adequate to prevent the large scale damage and disruption that major flooding can cause.

As South Hinksey is so vulnerable to flooding, the Environment Agency has been working on a plan to ensure the village can be equipped with temporary flood barriers. This is an interim measure until the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme is completed. The plan has been developed with the help of your community, from the original concrete blocks that were used to mitigate the 2014 floods. The temporary flood barrier will help reduce flood risk to the village as best we can in advance of the scheme being constructed. Barriers are effective in smaller floods, but would not be able to cope with the vast volumes of water seen in a major flood. With the increase in large floods predicted with climate change, a reliable, long-term solution is needed for the village.

How the scheme will work

At the meeting we presented a summary of how the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme will work. We will lower the natural floodplain to the west of Oxford to create more space for floodwater away from built-up areas. We've carefully

designed the scheme to blend into the natural landscape and enhance the existing floodplain. It will look and behave like a natural river, with associated green habitat and wetland features that will benefit wildlife and improve biodiversity.

To create enough space for floodwater, we will need to excavate a large amount of material from the floodplain. Wherever practicable, we will re-use excavated material on site. For example some of the material will be used to build earth embankments, and gravel will be reused in the new channel to create environmental features. We will retain topsoil to help maintain plant species and promote vegetation recovery after construction. Due to the amount of material we need to remove to reduce flood risk adequately, we will still need to transport around 365,000m³ of material from the scheme area. We cannot leave it in the floodplain and so it needs to be moved off site, and will be used in environmental restoration projects that already have planning permission.

Construction compound

We understand the village's concerns in relation to the construction compound, particularly for those residents whose gardens are near to the field. We chose to locate the compound in this field as the most efficient place to move material from the scheme area onto the A34 and away, to minimise impacts on the local road networks. It would not be permitted by Highways England to put in an additional road junction onto the A34 here, and so we are constrained with the entry point onto the A34 being fixed. To minimise the distance lorries need to travel, we located the compound as close to this access point as possible, whilst also ensuring lorries were kept away from local roads within the village.

We appreciate the level of concern in the village around the location of the compound, and we have agreed with South Hinksey Parish Council to investigate whether we can move the compound one field further away.

We will let the Parish Council know the outcome of our investigations and if a further field is a feasible option. If this is progressed, the access road will still need to be located in the same place, but made slightly longer to reach the further field. Lorries will still enter and leave the site at the same point, travelling a slightly longer distance.

We have explored the option of a buffer zone to provide a greater distance between the current proposed site of the construction compound and the homes that border this field. We can confirm that a buffer zone is feasible for the scheme and will be discussing the detail of this with Oxfordshire County Council planners, whose approval we will need.

During construction we would continuously monitor work for any noise, air quality and other unforeseen impacts. We will set up a liaison process to ensure the village has a voice through the parish council. To minimise disturbance, we are investigating the possibility of a screening bund and how the compound could be laid out. We would also monitor the roads to make sure the flow of traffic is maintained.

We will continue to keep the village informed as our plans progress.

Movement of material by rail

We are taking on board the views of residents who have suggested that to minimise disruption to the village, we look into moving the excavated material by rail. Before submitting our planning application in March 2018, we had looked into whether removal by rail was feasible. Our assessment is included in the Materials Management Plan of our planning application, which can be found on Oxfordshire County Council's planning website. There were a number of issues raised. For example, it was found that only one train a day would be able to be loaded at the South Hinksey sidings, which is not sufficient for the amount of material being moved. Constructing an access ramp from the sidings into the construction site would mean crossing the Hinksey Stream and lake, which is likely to be expensive and ecologically damaging to both the lake and trees alongside the railway.

We had also explored the use of conveyors rather than lorries to transport material short distances, but this was found not to be suitable for the sticky clay-like material being moved. This means a rail option would still need lorries close to the village to transport the material to be loaded onto trains. As detailed in our planning application, we concluded at that time that rail wasn't a viable option to progress.

However, as South Hinksey residents have asked us to re-look at this option, we have asked our construction contractor VBA to review this. They are currently discussing the option with Network Rail and their network operators

DB Schenker. They will investigate potential alternative routes for material movements to and from site. There are benefits for using rail for us, such as a potential reduction in carbon footprint, however, there are still a number of disadvantages, uncertainties and impacts that we will need to review again to re-assess whether this could be a viable option. It's also the case that even if we could take a rail option forward for the excavated spoil, there will still need to be a large number of vehicle movements to and from site for other needs, such as bringing in materials. We are reviewing the option of rail carefully once more and will provide an update when we have more information.

Flood risk to the village

There was a misconception raised at the meeting that the scheme could in some way increase the village's flood risk. The whole aim of the scheme is to reduce flood risk, and this includes to all properties currently at risk of flooding in South Hinksey. The new 2-stage channel running through the west Oxford floodplain will create more space for water away from built-up areas. This in itself will reduce flood risk in South Hinksey. In addition, we will also be putting in an earth embankment to the south of the village to ensure the most vulnerable properties here are protected further. The scheme will reduce risk from floods even larger in size and impact than those of recent decades. Once the scheme is complete, all residents of South Hinksey will benefit from reduced flood risk to the village.

We are passionate about the long term benefits the scheme will bring to South Hinksey and the

wider Oxford area. It will reduce the devastation of future flooding for generations to come. In addition to reduced flood risk, the scheme will create new and improved areas of natural habitat. Our aim is for the scheme to leave a lasting legacy for local communities. The scheme will be part of west Oxford's landscape and will be maintained in the long term to ensure it continues to benefit both people and the environment for many decades to come.

Water level in local streams and lakes

We have included measures in the scheme design to ensure the existing water level of the lakes west of the railway line will be retained. We are proposing to put in a fixed weir across the lakes, close to the point where we connect the new channel to the lakes at Coldharbour. This will also cause water to back up in the section of the Hinksey Stream between the lakes and our new channel to the north of South Hinksey, to maintain water levels in this section of Hinksey Stream as well.

When will construction start?

Before construction of the scheme can start, two separate approvals need to be in place. These are to have planning permission granted, and to have our Compulsory Purchase Order approved by government to ensure we have access to all the land needed for the scheme to work. As some landowners have raised objections to the CPO, it is a normal part of the process to hold a Public Inquiry. We are currently waiting for a date for the Inquiry to be confirmed. During this current time we would like to work with the local South Hinksey community to ensure we consider your concerns.

It was raised at our meeting that flooding is a ticking time bomb. We don't know when the next big flood will be, so we want to ensure we build

a permanent solution as effectively and as soon as possible. There have been repeated floods in recent decades in the area, which have brought devastation and they are likely to become more frequent and more severe. The scheme offers along term solution to flooding for local residents. We want to ensure the scheme is in place before the next major flood occurs and hope to have the local support to make this happen.

We are working with your parish council. We will keep in touch with you and hope to arrange further events once we know more about our options and any changes we are able to make, so we can share details with you and get your views. We are also very happy to help answer any further questions and can be contacted by email below. Thank you again to all those that attended our meeting despite the rainy evening, and we hope to engage with everyone further over the coming months.

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Church Parish News

Happy Pentecost! Happy Whitsuntide!

As many of you know, my time as your assistant curate is coming to an end, as I prepare to go to pastures new and take up my first post as priest in Charge in the Parish of St Luke's Prittlwell, in Southend On Sea.

As I look back on just over three years with you I give thanks to God for that time, for you, for the love and care I've received, for the challenges, for the learning and growing. I feel greatly privileged to have had this time with you. I am grateful to you and God for it. For three Easters and three Christmases. And three Pentecosts!

We have just celebrated the feast of Pentecost-when the Holy Spirit of God was given to the Church. A celebration of the presence of God with us wherever we go: I think these words from Psalm 139 put it best "If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost part of the Sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand hold me".

Just as I trust the Holy Spirit to be here amongst us - I trust that he will be also in the uttermost parts of Southend on Sea!

We trust that we will have a new parish priest soon, but in the meantime do be in touch with the churchwardens Mark and Gill for church matters and if you need a priest.

Every good wish, blessing and prayers to you all.

Fr Ben

A Note to Father Ben

Parishioners with reasonable memories may recall a street party we held in Manor Road to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2016.

Amongst the moderately sized throng (I seem to remember the weather was just about ok) there was a sociable young curate who arrived from the direction of New Hinksey on a bicycle. I hadn't encountered Fr Ben before, but I soon counted him amongst the many friends I have gained through our time in South Hinksey.

Father Ben was quite taken by our little community party and stayed to the very end - he was a very entertaining and likeable fellow with an enviable knowledge base from which to draw his anecdotes.

And this exemplified his character and his relationship with South Hinksey which grew over

the next three years. A regular figure in the village, often wearing shorts and still with his bicycle Fr Ben became increasingly prominent in the life of our church and community, eventually taking over at St Laurence following Fr James' move to the Diocese of Fulham.

As many of us know, the life of a curate extends well beyond the church building: the picture below was provided by John Tolson of Hinksey Hill when Fr Ben visited his mother last week.



Unfortunately his tenure here was only going to be temporary and it is now time for him to head east. On the 1st July, wFr Ben became the priest of the Parish of Prittlewell, in the Diocese of Chelmsford.

A very warm individual who clearly enjoys people and is open to debate as much as levity, he also has an excellent supply of home-grown almonds courtesy of his mother who lives in Greece...

I wish him all the very best and hope he thrives in his new parish. Somehow I think he will.

Adrian Porter on behalf of the parish

Service Dates

Services will take place in St Laurence on 7th and 21st July (both at 9.15 am), and 11 August at 11 am (patronal festival of St Laurence followed by bring-and-share lunch at St John's).

The New Vicar

The Revd Dr Ruben Angelici has been appointed vicar of South with New Hinksey as from 1 September. Fr Ruben is a Roman by birth, but read for his first degree (in Philosophy and Biology) at Southern Nazarene University in the USA before reading Theology at Manchester and training for the priesthood (while obtaining his PhD) at Cambridge. Fr Ruben is also a trained teacher and is married with two young children. He will be formally licensed to the parish in a service on 11 September at St Laurence.

Citizen's Advice

Universal Credit being used in new scam – Citizens Advice

Universal Credit has well and truly arrived - but now scammers are using the benefit as a pivotal part of a new sting to target vulnerable people.

Citizens Advice says scammers are offering loans to their victims and then using their personal banking details to apply for Universal Credit in their names.

The scam is usually carried out by telephone, so do not accept a loan if you have been contacted by cold calling. If you are contacted in this way, just hang up. In general, personal details should not be divulged on the telephone or in an email.

The Universal Credit scam is also being carried out in public places. As victims leave job centres and pubs, they are approached by smartly dressed people claiming to be from the Department of Work and Pensions, who then offer "government loans". Instead, the victim is signed up for Universal Credit. The scammers then apply for an advance payment of the benefit. This payment goes to the victim's bank account but the scammers then charge a huge fee, around 50 per cent, for this unnecessary "service".

Citizens Advice has its own free service to help those applying for Universal Credit for the first time. "Help to Claim" is available over the telephone, face to face, and online through "webchat" and internet content.

The national Freephone number for Help to Claim is **0800 144 8444**. Telephone and webchat services are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

For any other issues you might need help with, telephone Citizens Advice Adviceline on 03 444 111 444 or come and see us in person. For locations of offices and opening hours see www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale

Village Hall

The village hall is in good form, both financially and physically. After the major decorating and cleaning works the interior is sparkling.

Recent major expenditure has been on improving the heating. The under-floor system has not been satisfactory, partly on the ground of expense and partly because it was not really a suitable system to have under a wooden floor,

proving slow to heat up and difficult to control. We have recently installed two much larger radiators and are waiting until next winter to be certain that they provide enough heat. We can now control the heating remotely, meaning that Maggie, our bookings secretary, does not have to make so many visits to the hall.

We have installed broadband for hall users. The (new) password is on the notice board inside the hall.

The next major expense will be that the curtains will need replacing. If you can picture the number, size and shape of the windows you'll realise that this will not come cheap - we're working on it!

Just recently we have had to spend a lot on unblocking the drains. Waste from the toilets had backed up in the drain outside the hall, and we had to call a plumber to rod the drains and clear them. All is well now, but please, please be careful what you flush away. Wet wipes are a major part of the problem.

Most of our income comes from hiring the hall, often to people from outside the parish. We do try to keep charges as low as possible, and parishioners benefit from lower rates than outsiders.

The current rates per hour are:
Parish-based groups meeting in the hall; and fund-raising for charity £12/hour
Other hire by parishioners: £13/hour
Non-parishioners £17/hour. Regular users have negotiated individual rates.
Free use for local one-off events (see shinfo May 2018)

The arts weekend will be repeated in 2020. We felt that because we are such a small community and want to keep it local, it is asking too much to make it an annual fixture. If you are a creative artist, this gives you two years in which to create something!

Various other events have been suggested for the autumn. Watch this space.... and don't forget the South Hinksey fete on Sunday 15th September.

Of course there have been regular meetings of the mock pub, which goes from strength to strength.

Lastly Kevin, who has been caretaker for many years, is not able to offer us as many hours as previously, since he is now working in Oxford at nights. We would like to thank him for his good-humoured help over the years.

Linda Slater

*for the Village Hall Management Committee
(Peter Rawcliffe, Maggie Rawcliffe, Ann Allsworth, Linda Slater, Louisa Nahhas)*

Cricket

Getting a pitch is proving slow and difficult. But we're still hoping to go ahead if enough people are available (on both sides).

Peter and Keiron

News from the Woodland

The woodland is thriving. And not only the trees. It is surrounded by wild flower meadow. Sany Nahhas has been doing a great job mowing this

for some years. It is really coming into its own, with a wealth, in both varieties and numbers, of flowers and grasses. It is already a rather special place but there is plenty more to look forward to.

At the request of the Parish Council, Andy Gunn, for our local wildlife trust BBOWT, is now going to look after the whole site.

The meadow needs to be cut twice a year. The next cut due is in August or September, after the flowers have set seed, and again in April 2020. Sany will cut the paths skirting the wood as often as is necessary, leaving an edge of grasses and flowers, which will be cut at the same time as the meadow.

There are slightly fewer brambles this year, but, in spite of all our hard work in previous years, some remain, vigorous and rampant. In Autumn these must be cut back. Andy will be sending dates for working parties to do this. A chance for healthy and useful outdoor activity.

Some trees have died, and need to be replaced. Sam, the Forestry Commission Officer for South Hinksey, will advise on which species, and on planting. Replanting is best carried out in January - another opportunity for outdoor volunteer activity!

Maggie Rawcliffe (Woodland Sub-committee of the Parish Council).

Picnic and Wildflower Hunt - update

We are still hoping to hold this this year, by mid-August after which the wildflowers start to disappear. The children (and adults!) really enjoy

looking for the flowers they've been set to find, so the hunt is an important part of it.



The Parish Council has agreed in principle but there are some gravestones which are unstable and therefore unsafe. Before the picnic can go ahead these rightly have to be made safe. When this will be completed is not yet clear. Fingers crossed. Meanwhile above's a photo from the last one, in July 2014.

Peter Rawcliffe

TandemWow

A lot of the parish joined Rachael to see her set off on her quest to tandem cycle the globe. We wish her and Cat the very best and will see them in 10 months!

If you would like to follow their progress here is the link;

<https://www.followmychallenge.com/live/tandemwow/>

You can also sponsor them and read the blog through their website;

<https://www.tandemwow.com/>



Dates for your diary

Mock Pub

Friday 19 July

Friday 9 August

Fete

Sunday 15 September, 12.30 - 3.30.