

## **Community Governance Review**

Residents will be aware that Cherwell District Council (CDC) is currently undertaking a Community Governance Review to decide whether Adderbury Parish Council (APC) and the Parish should be split into two divided areas; East Adderbury (with Twyford) and West Adderbury. CDC is consulting all residents of Adderbury on this proposal and it is important that all residents respond. It is a consultation process, not a vote.

Adderbury Parish Council (APC) is against this split of the village and will be responding to the consultation accordingly. These are the reasons why Councillors think a separate Parish would not be a good idea or benefit the community. The Parish Council would like you to take the following points into consideration when you respond to Cherwell District Council:

- The area of the west of Adderbury is not separate, it is part of the existing village of Adderbury. It does not have a clear identity nor any central focal point to delineate it as a village. There is a clear centre for the whole of Adderbury village as being the area around the Church and High Street.
- There is no separate identifiable community of West Adderbury. There are no separate West Adderbury societies or groups and no separate community events have been held.
- The proposer of the split, claim it speaks for 250 west Adderbury residents who are its members. However, by their own admission, there are 750 residents in the west of Adderbury so they will still be a minority view.
- The Parish Council has twelve Councillors who are from all parts of the village. They are all hard working volunteers, who represent the interests of all of Adderbury, irrespective of which particular part they live in.
- The Parish Council has an excellent working relationship with Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell District Council, Thames Valley Police and many other organisations which support the Council's work on behalf of the whole community.
- The existing Parish Council is pro-active in working with residents to benefit the community and there are a number of successful on-going projects in the village, supported by many residents who are actively involved. These include traffic calming, Adderbury Lakes Local Nature Reserve, the Biodiversity village project, the Forest School project with Christopher Rawlins Primary School and the Milton Road community pavilion and sports pitches. All of these were initiated by the current Parish Council and create many benefits for the residents of the whole village.
- The Adderbury Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) was also initiated by the Parish Council and involved residents from all parts of the village working together to produce a Plan. The ANP includes policies specific to the west of Adderbury as well as those which apply to the whole community.
- Traffic calming in Adderbury includes the Parish Council working with the County Highways Authority to: paint new road markings; investigate the closure of the western arm of the Oak Tree junction to reduce traffic speed into the village on Milton Road and potential chicanes for Milton Road and Berry Hill Road; provide 30mph repeater signs; move some of the VAS signs; and also to make adjustments to the traffic lights by the school. It is being funded by the Parish Council, the County Council and Section 106 funds allocated to traffic calming in Adderbury. Section 106 funds allocated to the Milton Road Community and Sports Project or any other project cannot be reallocated to traffic calming as they are designated via legal agreements, agreed between a number of parties, including Cherwell District Council, the developer and previous landowners. Irrespective of this, when this question was asked in the most recent Parish Poll (which incidentally, was

## **Community Governance Review**

instigated by the proposers of the Community Governance Review), the majority of residents wanted Section 106 funds to be used for their designated purpose and not to be used in other areas.

- The Parish Council supports many village organisations, financially and practically, such as Morris Men and Woman with Day of Dance, Party in the Park, Photographic Society, Adderbury Library, Christopher Rawlins Primary School, Adderbury Park Football Club, Adderbury Institute and many more. Many Councillors also support village societies and attend events for village charities like FOCAL and FOSMA and WFAC.
- The Parish Council provides support to local residents who live within the flood plain, which includes the sourcing of sandbags and checking on residents who are affected by adverse weather. Councillors are also recruiting volunteers to be 'Snow Wardens' for the village to clear footpaths in poor weather and the Council has established an efficient system for the refilling of grit bins in the winter.
- Adderbury Cemetery is managed by the Parish Council. Despite rumours to the contrary, there is plenty of space for further burials and the Parish Council has managed this well (see the statement on the PC website for more information).
- Parish Council meetings are well run and give all residents of the Parish the opportunity to address the Councillors regarding issues which affect them and the community. All residents who contact the Clerk, Chairman or any Councillor receive an answer and action is taken where possible. Residents are never ignored.
- The Lucy Plackett Playing Field was bequeathed to the 'Parish of Adderbury'. If this no longer exists because there is an East and a West Adderbury Parish Council, there will be a need to work together for its continued maintenance. Current Councillors spend a lot of time looking after the Lucy Plackett Playing Field, including undertaking minor works like cutting back bushes, watering newly planted trees, litter picking, inspecting the play area and zip wire. This may be a potential extra expense for both parishes and it may also be a cause of delays.
- The issue with the Lucy Plackett Playing Field and the sharing of one facility across two parishes also applies to other areas such as the Church, Methodist Hall, village hall (Adderbury Institute), Adderbury Cemetery, library, School and community events such as Day of Dance, Party in the Park, School and Church fete (held in the Lucy Plackett) and the Community Days. How would use of these facilities and the fundraising for these village events be affected?
- There is potential for an increase in Council Tax for all residents of the Parish – the splitting of responsibilities will not automatically translate into an exact split of costs. Often it is better for costs to be shared across a larger number of residents. Other costs may also occur for instance the upkeep of the historic Friends Meeting House (FMH) and The Pound, both in the west of Adderbury. The FMH has to be maintained by the Parish and as a Grade 2\* listed building, the work can be costly.
- The case for a new West Adderbury Parish Council is based mainly on the grand gestures of stopping the Milton Road project and implementing traffic calming measures, which the Parish Council is currently working with OCC to achieve (see the statement on the PC website for more details). The group promoting the CGR have said they would like to use the Milton Road site for community uses 'better suited to the residents of West Adderbury', but with no details. However, this project is for the whole of the community of Adderbury and the land has been provided for all of Adderbury to use for 'Sports pitches and a community facility' under clear legal agreements. There has been considerable support for this facility in two Parish Polls and as a policy

## **Community Governance Review**

in the Adderbury Neighbourhood Plan, including from many residents in the west of Adderbury who want the land to be used to provide an exciting venue for village sport and for the whole community to use for a range of activities.

- In the justification for the CGR, there does not appear to be any consideration of the many other day-to-day tasks carried out by Councillors; meetings with residents, meetings with contractors, litter picking, checking play equipment, liaising with other bodies, arranging the installation/filling of grit bins, arranging repairs/replacement of street furniture, ensuring dog bins are emptied...plus many more. This lack of forethought could have a serious detrimental impact on residents of all areas of the Parish, not just in the west of Adderbury.
- There is no evidence that the proposers of the West Adderbury Parish Council have considered the costs of running a Parish Council, including staffing costs, or the many policies they would need for employing a Clerk and how services such as grass cutting, weed control, dog waste collection, litter collection, plus many more, would be accounted for and split between the two. This would all take time and effort from Councillors willing to undertake such matters.

The Parish Council hopes that the above has provided an insight into the hard work which the Councillors put into running the Parish of Adderbury and that splitting the village would only cause upset and division.

The proposed divide of the village would not be as straightforward and easy as the proposers are suggesting and there would be no benefit to the residents of the village. It is not clear that the proposers have the best interests of residents at heart. They merely appear to be focussed on two main projects and have wrongly criticised the Parish Council on other issues including Adderbury Cemetery. There appears nothing positive in their campaign and the Parish Council believes that if a separate Parish Council for the west of the village is established, the whole community will be the poorer for its creation.