

## Hendreds & Harwell Division

# Annual Report

**1** 2 months as flown by in a blink of an eye, and what a year it's nearly been. The division is diverse and with pockets of issues where ever you turn, much of which is down to real lack of engagement, listening to residents and parish councils concerns. I have been shocked at how slowly the cogs turn in local government and how hard it is to turn the tanker around, but we are finally making progress. Whats been amazing to see is the number of community groups, volunteers, covid response, sustainability and environmental groups, food banks and larders, children and youth and so much more! Sometimes it can feel like my heads sore from banging it against a brick wall of bureaucracy, and whilst I appreciate the full accountability of public funds, I am as frustrated as my residents on the time scale and costs of things, and use my scrutiny role to question these. We are in a climate emergency, and the big organisation needs to move faster....I am working on it!

So here is my review of 2021/22 and sharing hope for the next 12 months.



*Sally - working hard all year round*

## Parishes Represented

East Hendred

West Hendred

Ardington & Lockinge

Harwell

VOWH side of Great Western Park

Steventon

Chilton Village (inc Chilton Fields)

Upton

Blewbury

## OCC Committees and Representation

Full Council

Pension Fund Committee

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee - VC of Climate Working Group

Adoption & Permanency Panels & Fostering Panels

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Wantage and Farrington Localities Meeting

HIF1 / Didcot CAG and Transport Masterplan

\*Biodiversity Verges (\*informal project / influencing change)

Political - Group Deputy Chair and Whip (elections May 2022)

Military Champion - Shrivenham Defence Academy

## County Hall Representation

**Sept 2021** - I seconded Hannah Banfields motion on Fire & Rehire, and also made my maiden speech on a motion in debate

**Nov 2021** - Tabled my first motion on COP26, sadly it wasnt read due to timing....

**Dec 2021** - to be a busy month as my COP26 motion was on first followed by my equality motion (sadly not read)

**Feb 2022** - Budgets - spoke on several items in budget.

**April 2022** - Equality motion is first up and also am seconding an amendment.

## Steventon Reservoir

I have been supporting the campaign to stop the Steventon / SESRO reservoir long before I was elected to the County Council, and one of the reasons I stood for election was knowing this “Megavoir” was coming back on the cards again, and it did. In 2021 we had to contend with the OFWAT RAPID process, which is a multi gated consultation formed to help accelerate the development of new water infrastructure and design future regulatory frameworks. SESRO and the STT (Severn Thames Transfer) are both featured. In Nov 2021 I submitted a 6,000+ word technical response and worked closely with OCC officers, Parish Council and GARD. Sadly, as we expected it was a tick box exercise and SESRO made it to gate 2. WRSE (Water Resources South East) then appeared in January 2022, and we have all just submitted responses, accordingly to the WRSE MD they have been overwhelmed with submissions!

Politically, I have been working at a local and national level to push the importance of the data flaws, and questioning the need for this facility given the projected population decrease and also the insanity of a non flex provision like SESRO over the demand controlled infrastructure like STT. I helped word and shape the County Council motion to strongly voice our opinion cross party against the reservoir and also spoke at Vale of White Horse on their motion against the reservoir scheme. I attended the GARD public meetings in Steventon and East Hendred, and also organised a briefing and discussion with local MP's, as well as spent the day in Steventon for the WRSE ‘pop up’ consultation exercise to support local stakeholders, residents and came with my own bag of questions.

I am absolutely and categorically against the Steventon Reservoir and will keep fighting over the coming 12 - 18 months as we enter more periods of consultation in Q3 2022.

<https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/regulated-companies/rapid/>

<https://wrse.uk.engagementhq.com>

## Rowstock Relief / Featherbed Lane Project

The design continues, and it has shown me very clearly the fragility of some of the previous administrations decision making and processes at County Hall. There is a call again for a Parish Council collaboration meeting over the coming weeks and to start looking at the Milton Interchange lights to Steventon Lights, to include a Bus Lane and also a protected cycleway, we have had one meeting already. There is ongoing discussions and concerns voiced by me over Featherbed Lane and Rowstock roundabout itself. The designs need to be right, first time, and time proof, this needs to be a 50yr plan, and not just a 5 year solution. We know there are many local planning threats as well as the commencement of Valley Park and the expansion of Harwell Campus. So whatever is done, needs to be done right, and now. Thankfully this project is now back in the hands of a County Council employee and not more agency staff, and its triggered my voice to the mass of voices within the administration about the endless and costly reliance on contract staff and agency engineering and design, when we should be investing in teams and staff internally and a design code which matches our vision for the future!

## Steventon Bridge

Several surveys down and one to go, it has been challenge, and working with multiple stakeholders inside and outside the council and ensuring villagers voices are heard and disruption kept to a minimum. As I write I am still waiting for the 40mph from the Lights / A4130 junction to the 20mph in the currently 30mph zone. I cannot tell you how many emails I have written, and copied in cabinet members and beyond! I keep pushing. I know it's frustrating, and now the water leak has reappeared again. But I can promise you, its re-occurring on my email list weekly, sometimes daily.

Hopefully by the Steventon APM I may have some news, but don't hold me to it, I am sure those involved can understand the complex beast the bridge is! Which leads me to the fight against HGV's, because our villages simply are not designed for them, nor the speeding cars....more to come below!

The official latest update is below....

There have been two relatively short railway possessions granted by Network Rail so far, with a third planned for Saturday night/Sunday morning the 23/24th April 2022. The first inspection revealed a number of bricks on the elevations of the structure which were at immediate risk of falling onto the railway lines below. Time was very limited, and the worst of the loose bricks were removed, but other loose bricks remained, which could not be removed without the risk of destabilising much larger areas of brickwork. This gave little time to inspect the rest of the structure. One of the overhead electrification fixings to the arch was found to be partially detached.

It was planned that during the second possession that the majority of the resources would be used to stabilise the other identified loose bricks. This was intended to be done by filling the missing mortar between the bricks with a quick setting resin and installing stainless steel pins set in chemical resin. The time during this possession was again very limited, but this gave enough time to fill the worst of the missing brickwork mortar with a resin. There was however insufficient time to drill and fix any stainless steel pins especially with the brickwork being in such poor condition that it needed to be stabilised with the resin, before any drilling could be carried out. This also left insufficient time to inspect the rest of the structure.

A third planned possession of the railway was cancelled by Network Rail, to enable them to carryout urgent works in the area of the bridge.

The next planned possession on 24th April, will be utilised to carryout further stabilising work to the brickwork and also an inspection of other parts of the structure. The previous area of most concern the soffit of the arch barrel, including away from the elevations where the loose brickwork has been found is yet to be thoroughly inspected. This area from a superficial inspection during the first two railway possessions, indicated that this area was in a better condition than feared. A more detailed inspection is still required to confirm this, i.e. this area is covered in a thick layer of soot and the face of many of the bricks are spalling off, making it difficult to assess the structural condition of the brickwork beneath.

In addition to the loose brickwork there are several areas of missing brickwork to the bridge's spandrel walls and piers. Once the inspection of the structure is complete a package of work will be put together to carryout essential repairs to the structures. The load carrying capacity of the structure will be reviewed,

together with the appropriateness of the current width restriction. The repairs will require a series of railway possessions in order to carry them out. The booking of non-urgent railway possessions normally takes at least 16 weeks. Some of the repair work will be weather susceptible such that they will not be able to be carried out during winter months.

## Harwell High Street - Traffic Calming

We have not heard anything back from Taylor Wimpey or their design consultants on the revised proposals discussed with Harwell Parish Council 2 weeks ago. I am chasing this up with officers.

We have sought further clarification on the request to replace the 1.5m cycle lanes with carriageway cycle symbols and I attach comments on the scheme made by our active travel lead.

Plan	Active Travel Hub Comments
Speed reduction from 30mph to 20mph	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20 mph speed limit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Removal of centre line markings
Bleinheim Hill – Burr Street – CW widths 5.5m to 4.7m	A) use pair of 1057 mid-size (1100-1780) facing opposite directions in line with traffic, with nearside positioned 1000 from kerb. Additionally, these can be backed by thermoplastic square to make more visible (approximately 70m spacing)
Drewit Corner (Townsend)	B) Mark footway crossing in surfacing
High Street CW widths 5.5 to 8 m	C) Add ASL with cycle symbols at Pelican crossing
Wantage Road CW widths 5.5 – 6.2m	D to D) Uphill cycle lane 1.5 m wide – Downhill cycle symbols (rest of carriageway 4.5 m+)
Reading Road	F) Add blue directional cycle sign to Harwell Campus (1 mile) G) Add diagram 950 signs “Cycles crossing”

Please note we may not get everything requested on the attached, for example the works on Reading Road, as to date nothing has been proposed on Reading Road and therefore I might get resistance from Taylor Wimpey to now include additional works. However the build out near the memorial has been discussed to be removed and replaced with a table further down the high street, thus ensuring access to the memorial for ceremonial events and remembrance.

## 20mph

Safer and Healthier streets are needed throughout the division and I have pushed on with the 20mph schemes locally with great division sign up....I think at the time of writing **all** the villages have embraced the scheme, and I expect consultations around June / July for roll out in the late summer / early autumn. As we know, speeding can be helped with signs, SIDS (the digital speed flashers) and police enforcement but locally I want to give a huge thanks to Speedwatch teams at Harwell and Blewbury, your amazing and your work really matters and makes a difference, and I am excited to be involved with the Steventon Speedwatch team creation and supporting all that I can! We use the data, everything I am sent is sent on and discussed with officers in shaping solutions and changing policy.

Thank you to parish councillors who send me the SID data and reports, it really does help!

I cant 'make' people drive to the speed limit, and it is such a shame when people do break the speed limits in small villages and surrounds. I have personally experienced some horrific and frankly idiotic driving on the Hanney Road (Village side), A4130, White Road, A417, Burr Street and now been first on scene at 2 serious RTA's in the division. We are doing all we can, and evidence shows a combination of solutions leads to a positive outcome!

## Active Travel - AKA Walking and Cycling

Simply we need more, better surfaces, protected walk and cycleways and less cars on the road. It is literally that simple. For many reasons, climate change, air pollution, health, community safety, the list goes on. There are several schemes I have been working on since elected.

1. Icknield Way - Its a disgrace from surfacing to signage, how it won an award who knows, but what we want is a bonded surface, signage to be right and even directing into the right place and for it to be a credible alternative to the A417 - its going to be expensive and I am working on ideas, estimate £1.2m
2. Blewbury to Upton Cycle way - ongoing
3. Steventon - Milton Park - several options on the table

4. A4130 - safe spaces for cyclists - pavements that are safe, even and wide enough for wheelchairs and buggies! So people can access the businesses on this road without cars.
5. Got the sidings cleared on Steventon Hill, and on annual watch.
6. The new Streetlighting programme will see LED streetlight replacements, as well as looking into lower pavement / cycling lighting on sensors / dim settings.
7. Safer Crossings, Harwell (Winnaway / Reading Road) and West Hendred (Hare Pub) are on the table in design at present, for 2022 roll out.
8. Worked and still working on Valley Park low traffic, safer community design, its still not right on many many levels! Talking to GWP residents about desire for an LTN.
9. Contributed to the Street Design Guide as a member and through scrutiny - info here - <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/DesignGuidePublication.pdf>

## HGV / Traffic

It is horrendous, between storage depots, industry, construction, delivery, waste and materials and more, our roads are battered. There are several things happening at County Hall and I also voiced my concerns for Steventon and Rowstock at Full Council around the HGV Strategy. The strategy has just closed on consultation, but I will feedback soon. We need big and dramatic changes and fast! Details coming soon.

## Toad Patrol

Sometimes the smallest things have the biggest impact, and we finally got some Toad signs, thanks to Mark in Highways, for Ardington and Lockinge. The road toad patrol has a massive impact on local ecology and given the amount of frog and toad spawn locally, the habitats and amphibians have done well from getting a lift across the road and slowing people down! So when in the villages remember, could be a chicken, toad, frog, vole anything crossing our roads, so be careful and be kind!



## A417 Safety

A magic wand would be nice, but meanwhile I will settle for lower speed limits (in discussion), the new crossing at West Hendred, and the Children / School flashing lights and signage at Ardington. The fact our children have to cross such busy roads for school buses is top of my agenda, and we have had a close call recently, this cannot happen again! We need our roads and streets to be safe for all but especially the next generation!

## BioDiversity and Nature restoration

I was delighted to have supported Upton and the development of their Nature Garden with a donation from my Councillor Priority Funding, cannot wait for this to mature and open! Also have been working on the Biodiversity verges project, which I have taken on at County Hall, and we have just started the first experimental phases, and I have adopted the Verge between East and West Hendred from the Vineyard to the Hare pub. This is now ready for seeding as I type (2.4) and will hopefully mature over the coming 18 months of seasons and growing. Nothing when it comes to nature recovery is quick, we have frankly destroyed allot, but we can make a change and a big shout out to Sustainable Blewbury, Harwell, HUGS and Hendred Environment Group. I am delighted to run a monthly sustainability forum for the division where we come together and talk about ideas, projects and invite offices and local stakeholder groups. More of this to come in 2022 as the Nature Recover gets centre light in the Environment Act, news when I know what DEFRA plans are!

## Food Waste and Community Larders

I was so happy end of February 2022 to launch the Hendreds Community Larder. The HEG Larder has now processed and given out over 2.2 TONNES of food waste in just a matter of weeks. We have over 70 regular members, and its not just a great environmental project but increasingly becoming a lifeline for many to help reduce food costs. If you want to know more, just ask and its open to all local residents, not geographical, pop by, Mondays 330-6pm or follow on Facebook - @HEGcommunitylarder

## Councillor Priority Funding - Spend

Cllr Sally Povolotsky	Amount
Girls and young womens crickecoaching (East Hendred)	£1,500.00
Support programme for youth (YoCo)	£1,000.00
Purchase of outdoor shelters (East & West Hendred Scouts)	£400.00
Upton Nature garden	£2,500.00
Football equipment for girls soccer - Harwell / Boundary Park	£410.00
Repair of Snells Woodland path	£840.00
Whole school production Lion King - St Amands	£400.00
Chilton Community <b>Event</b>	£200.00
February half term respite activity - BFYC	£500.00
Community ecology and hedgerows - whole division - Wild Oxfordshire	£2,000.00
Harwell community orchard	£500.00
Activity trail in the play park - West Hendred	£1,500.00
Bike aid - Zero Carbon Food Bank Delivery Trial	£1,000.00
Action against the proposed reservoir - Steventon Parish Council	£750.00

**Currently in Discussion** - Blewbury Amazonians Girls FC and Biodiversity Verge / HEG project.

## Casework

I have dealt with over 200 specific cases in the division on behalf of residents in the last 12 months. From school spaces and admissions, to hedges and potholes. Hundreds of phone calls, and met up with groups and residents throughout the division. In 2022/23 I hope to schedule regular surgeries, which I haven't managed in 2021/22 due to Covid, restrictions and timings not working out for venues. I get allot of social media traffic and at least 2/3 messages a day from division residents with questions or in need of signposting. I don't take casework from social media and ask for an official email for obvious data reasons. As I type this its primary admissions day and sadly nearly all of our schools have a waiting list, another reason for pushing changes in the Planning Framework as we suffer with lack of Healthcare, SEN and Education places for our residents and children. Recently I have been engaged with the Homes for Ukraine host families and helping there, as well as still working and helping on the Afghan guests in the county.

## Being Accessible

Ive worked hard on being as accessible as I can to residents and parish councils. I tend to send a report to parishes every 7-10 working days, instead of monthly, so everyone is up to date, and I use Facebook for regular daily updates. I use a e-casework system for reminders and to keep cases safe and with reminders and my phone is answered regularly and all emails responded to in a MAX of 72hrs. I am taking some small breaks this year, but my phone and email will be checked, and I do have some massive group and county meetings coming up, so may miss some Parish Council meetings, but you can contact me whenever

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