
Tetsworth Parish Council
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**ANNUAL VILLAGE REPORT 2020/2021**

Due to the continuing Corona virus restrictions, although the end is in sight, we were again unable to hold our annual meeting in person this year. We instead asked everyone who would usually present their information at the meeting to provide information for this report. Thank you to everyone who took the time to send in their news.

**TETSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

There have been a few changes in personnel on the Council this year. As of June 2021, your Councillors are Kim Bhagat, Paul Carr, Seb Mossop, Sue Rufus and Chris Thompson. We have a vacancy for the sixth Councillor so we'd love to hear from you if you'd be interested in filling the post. I'd like to express our gratitude to both Kirstie Andrews and Karen Bennett for their time and efforts during their time on the Council. NHS commitments have meant that the Parish Clerk, Helen Croxford, has also had to leave the team and we wish her all the very best for the future. That has given rise to another vacancy that we are now advertising to fill.

John Gilbert and his colleagues on the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group were rewarded for their many years of hard work when the Plan was adopted following the referendum in May; it now forms part of the national planning system and has formal bearing on the outcome of planning applications in the Parish.

In the way it has for so many of you, Covid-19 has influenced the way that the Council has had to carry out its business with its monthly meetings carrying on virtually, though happily with less national impact than some. Because of a conflict in the legislation governing local government and that dealing with the pandemic, the summer break that the Council usually takes in August has been moved forward to June. Meetings, hopefully in person, will restart in July and run monthly until the next council year begins in May 2022.

We were delighted to have the solar-powered vehicle-activated speed signs installed towards the beginning of this reporting period. We hope that, in combination with the school warning signs, they will continue to have an effect on the speed of vehicles through the village. We are passing the data from them on to the County Council and to Thames Valley Police to make the case for a mobile speed camera van to be deployed to Tetsworth from time to time. The break between lockdowns in 2020 allowed a team to carry out the refurbishment of the bus shelter, which now looks much more presentable.

Thankfully, the playpark, skate ramp and adult gym equipment were eventually permitted to reopen, albeit with restrictions. Thank you all for bearing with us whilst they were closed and for understanding the rules that have had to be put in place since they've been back in use. Hopefully we'll soon be able to remove the remaining signs and replace the two swings that have been removed for social distancing.

We hope that our posts on the Tetsworth Facebook page have been useful to you and thank you for your positive comments to them. Between that and the Council website at https://www.tetsworthparishcouncil.co.uk/ I hope you feel that you are in touch with what's going on. There are some improvements to the website in train and we still publish our agendas, minutes and important notices on the noticeboard. Any ideas as to how we might better communicate with those villagers without internet access would be very welcome.

If you have any questions or comments for us, you are welcome to attend one of our monthly meetings or pass them to us by email at clerk@tetsworthparishcouncil.co.uk, which we are still monitoring.

Paul Carr

Chair

Tetsworth Parish Council

**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL -THAME AND CHINNOR DIVISION**

Councillors Jeannette Matelot and Nick Carter, who both retired from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in May 2021, provided a comprehensive ‘end of year’ report covering the Council’s wide range of recent achievements and initiatives as they applied to the whole county and the Thame and Chinnor Division. Some of the themes were particularly relevant to Tetsworth, and these are reported below.

**Councillors’ Grant Projects**

From her 2020/21 £15K Councillor Priority Fund, Cllr Matelot provided laptops to Tetsworth Primary School and supported the Parish Council with funding for signage at the edge of the village. The 2021/22 OCC Community Priority Fund only allocates £7.5K to each councilor.

**Road Repair Investment**

The County is planning to invest more than £30 million this year in improvements for local motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. Roads, cycleways, bridges, drainage, and pavements will all benefit from the programme. Planned projects include resurfacing, embankment repairs, road edge strengthening, surface dressing to waterproof and extend the life of roads, and recycling schemes using new techniques that make use of old road materials. Oxfordshire’s roads are generally better today than they were four or five years ago, and the highway team’s brief is to get resources to where they are needed most. Repairs are identified either through reports from the public or during OCC’s own routine inspections. People can report any defect at any time using Fix My Street. Between April 2020 and March 2021, the County treated about 1.5 million square metres of highway at more than 220 sites, with works valued at just over £20m.

**Primary School Admissions**

More than 93% (6,409) of applications have been awarded their first choice of primary school in Oxfordshire. Last year’s figure was 90.6%, so there is a higher proportion of children starting at their first choice of school for 2021/22.

**Secondary School Transfer**

For secondary transfers in the Thame & Chinnor area, 249 pupils out of 271 (92%) received their first choices, which either reflects the continuing popularity of Lord Williams’s, or demonstrates that there is little alternative in this part of Oxfordshire.

**Devolution and Council Tax**

In response to residents questioning the recent above-inflation increase in council tax, Cllr Carter responded to residents and parish councils as follows: “I argued long and hard that the County should do some modelling based on a ‘zero increase’ for 2021/22 as one of the key options in its budget calculations. My argument was principally that a tax increase could not be justified after residents and businesses had endured a year of such hardship. I gained a degree of support for this, but not enough to make the County change direction. However, my arguments did influence its decision not to pursue the maximum allowable 5% increase. By levying a 3% increase instead, it was effectively deciding to forego a potential £8 million of additional income. The reason for a succession of above-inflation increases in council tax during recent years is that successive Governments have been gradually shifting more of the tax burden from national to local. During the last decade, the Government has steadily and dramatically cut its funding to Oxfordshire, initially as part of the necessary austerity measures. It promised instead to allow the County to retain an increased element of new business rates, but this policy has not materialised so far. It also allowed the County to increase its local tax base by up to 3% each year, and for the last couple of years an additional 2% threshold has been added specifically to fund adult social care (a potential 5% total). The cost of social care continues to rise by leaps and bounds because of the rapidly changing demography of the local population. In the face of inadequate central funding, local authorities such as our County Council are having to reduce their levels of care to the bare minimum, and I’m sure you will have noted the media headlines on this subject during the last couple of years.”

**Household Waste Recycling**

The County has again been named the best-performing waste disposal authority in England, according to Government figures released in March. Last year in Oxfordshire, 1.6% more of household waste was recycled or composted than in the previous year. Nationally, the average for recycling in England rose by just under 1%. Overall, 59% of household waste was recycled and composted in Oxfordshire last year, compared with 57% the previous year. The national average was only 45.5%, according to the latest figures from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. In Oxfordshire, nearly 21,000 tonnes of food waste were recycled in 2019/20, but a large amount of food waste is still being placed in general waste bins. The County is keen to see further improvements in its drive to become a carbon-neutral authority by 2030 and to increase recycling to 70% by 2030. For residents looking to reduce their waste further, the Community Action Group network and ‘Replenish’ project offer tips and opportunities to get involved with local schemes. OCC also has the Waste Wizard, an online tool that can suggest places where items can be repaired or donated, or which bin to use for different waste.

**GP Practice Website Review**

Healthwatch Oxfordshire has published the findings of its recent survey looking at how easy it is to use the county’s 67 GP practice websites. During 2020, patients were recommended not to attend surgeries for appointments. Healthwatch heard from patients that it was taking longer to get in touch with their GP surgeries using their surgery websites and by telephone. Given that patients were being recommended to use their practice website, the independent health watchdog decided to see how easy websites were to navigate for patients. All 67 Oxfordshire GP practice websites were surveyed between November 2020 and January 2021 to assess their ease of use and the clarity of information on the sites. The subsequent report recommends that all surgeries should review and update their websites by the end of July, and that all of them must make it easier to find information about how to register with the practice, in line with NHS guidance.

**Pavement Parking to be Banned?**

A ban on pavement parking is being considered by the Government. The rule is already in place in London, and the Department for Transport is expected to introduce a system of fines elsewhere later in the year. Exceptions would be granted for emergency service vehicles or highway maintenance vehicles.

**New County Councillors**

On 6 May 2021, Nigel Champken-Woods (Conservative) and Kate Gregory (Liberal Democrat) were elected as new OCC councilors for the Division. Overall OCC leadership passed to a coalition of the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Green parties.

**SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - HASELEY BROOK WARD**

**COVID-19**

Work at SODC has been dominated over the last year by the pandemic. Early in the first lockdown, many of the decision-making powers of the council were delegated to the Chief Executive of SODC under emergency rule, and SODC intensified its cooperation with neighbouring local authorities and public services. All official meetings of the council have been taking place virtually, and most officers are still working remotely. At the start of the pandemic many officers were re-deployed to COVID-19 related roles (eg supporting vulnerable people and coordinating the payment of business grants); and in the early stages of the vaccination programme, they worked closely with the health service to achieve rapid progress here in Oxfordshire.

**Planning**

Whilst this year has been anything other than business-as-usual for SODC, officers have tried to ensure the planning service remains on track in the face of a heavy workload.

Local Plans 2035 and 2041: Councillors voted to adopt the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 in December 2020. This is the strategic development plan for the district which determines where housing, business and infrastructure will be focused over the next 15 years, and the development policies that will shape them. The main development sites will be around the city of Oxford, Culham, Berinsfield and Chalgrove Airfield. The plan, which identifies locations for 28,000 homes, including over 4,000 for Oxford City’s ‘unmet need’, was controversial amongst residents and councillors. The council administration’s ultimately unsuccessful attempts to demonstrate that the numbers were too high absorbed hundreds of hours of senior officer time; and the QC bills alone amounted to almost £250,000.

Work now begins on the next iteration of the development plan - the Local Plan 2041 - which is due to be adopted in 2024. The administrations at SODC and the Vale of the White Horse District Council have agreed to make this a joint local plan. The scale of LP2041 will be driven by the longer-term ‘Oxfordshire 2050’ strategy being determined by the Oxfordshire Growth Board (a high level body which brings together businesses, local authorities and civic bodies from across the county). 'Oxfordshire 2050’, in turn, has to conform to Government’s plans for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc - including Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire which is projected to be a zone of high economic growth in the next period. We expect to hear the level of housing numbers in June/July 2021.

Chalgrove Airfield: Like most local residents I have been most concerned about impact of Homes England’s proposed development at Chalgrove Airfield. The Civil Aviation Authority, in its response to the outline planning application, has stated that housing development on this site is not compatible with the continued operation of Martin Baker Ltd. It is now for Homes England to respond with a plan that mitigates these concerns.

Harrington: LP2041 is likely to require the district to identify the need for further housing, and that re-opens the possibility of the Harrington development which is being promoted as a site for 6,500 houses. I am working with colleagues in parish councils across this ward to ensure that this site does not go forward into LP2041.

**SODC Corporate Plan**

During the year the council adopted its corporate plan which will cover the period up to 2023. It is remarkable for its focus on sustainability, nature recovery and the ‘green agenda’. SODC has a target to achieve carbon neutrality in its own operations by 2025, and in the district more broadly by 2030.

Cllr Caroline Newton

**TETSWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The overwhelmingly positive result of the 6 May 2021 referendum means that the final hurdle to adoption and ‘making’ of the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) as part of the South Oxfordshire local Plan 2035 has been successfully negotiated. It is therefore timely to record the milestones and frustrations encountered during its years of development.

During 2016, a Steering Group (SG) of volunteer residents under Tetsworth Parish Council (TPC) oversight launched a project to create the Tetsworth NDP. Preparation of such plans had been encouraged by the Government’s Localism agenda, itself published in 2011. As the third formal tier of planning policy (below the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plans), NDPs set local policies for future land use in a neighbourhood area. With statutory status, NDPs aim to reflect community wishes on such issues as the extent and location of future growth and the preservation of a community’s character and setting.

By 2017, the neighbourhood area had been defined by the parish boundary and an extensive village questionnaire had provided solid evidence of residents’ views and aspirations for Tetsworth’s future. By 2019, the SG had assembled an even more extensive evidence base to support land use policies which would respond to the vision and objectives that had been developed for the Tetsworth NDP. They prepared a very detailed Character Assessment of defined areas of the village and its surrounding countryside, and drafted Housing Analysis and Sustainability Overview documents for Tetsworth. They also engaged a specialist landscape consultant to conduct a study and report on Key Views towards, within and from the village which merited protection from inappropriate development.

The draft NDP document included policies supporting infill housing development together with required design features, and measures to protect the village’s heritage, green spaces and setting. This was reviewed by a specialist planning consultant ahead of a 6 week period of consultation which started on 21 October 2019. In accordance with Regulation 14 of the NDP regulations, TPC, as the NDP qualifying body, invited statutory consultees, local residents and others with an interest in the area to comment.

​Agreed feedback from this consultation was incorporated into a revised version of the NDP alongside preparation of the required Consultation and Basic Conditions Statements. By mid-January 2020, the whole of the Tetsworth NDP document package was ready for submission by TPC to SODC. Submission under Regulation 15 of the NDP regulations occurred on 23 January 2020.

SODC launched the second 6 week publicity period of consultation in accordance with Regulation 16 of the NDP regulations on 25 February 2020. However, just a week or so before the planned closure of this consultation period, SODC advised that it had suspended all consultations in response to the coronavirus pandemic crisis. As a result, the Regulation 16 publicity period was extended until 28 July 2020.

Meanwhile, TPC and the SG agreed to SODC appointing Andrew Ashcroft as the external examiner of the Tetsworth NDP. Working on the submitted Regulation 15 document package, he was able to issue his ‘Note for Clarification’ on 30 July 2020, and TPC and SODC were able to respond by the middle of August.

​By this time, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan examination in public was underway with all of its stages to eventual adoption required to be completed by the end of the year. Tetsworth’s NDP was based on the then current SODC Core Strategy and retained policies, but with an eye to the emerging Local Plan. By 11 September 2020, TPC had agreed with SODC to ask our inspector to keep his examination open until the outcome of the Local Plan examination firmed up. This avoided the risk of our having to go through two rounds of post-examination amendment, first against the existing policies and then against new Local Plan policies.

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 was adopted in December 2020 and the NDP examiner’s report was issued on 19 January 2021. After amendments required by the examiner’s recommendations had been incorporated, SODC formally decided on 24 February 2021 that the Tetsworth NDP should progress to referendum. This milestone signalled the NDP acquiring substantial planning weight. The local referendum was held on 6 May 2021 alongside Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner elections. 254 votes were cast for and just 18 against representing 93% in favour on a turnout of 47%.

​On formal adoption and ‘making’ by SODC on 20 May 2021, the Tetsworth NDP became an integral part of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. As such, it has achieved full planning weight and triggered an increase to 25% in TPC’s share of any Community Infrastructure Levy payments made by future housing developers.

​Further details of the Tetsworth NDP can be found on the SODC website at: www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/emerging-neighbourhood-plans/tetsworth-neighbourhood-plan/

John Gilbert

Chairman

Tetsworth NDP Steering Group

**TETSWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL - UPDATE FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021**

As in previous years we remain fully subscribed and have worked hard to accommodate new families as they move into the village. At the present time we have 70 plus pupils on roll catering for pupils from Nursery (3 years of age) to Year 6 (11 years of age).

Covid 19 restrictions have proved challenging but by using our hall as a classroom and the staff carpark as a play area we have been able to group pupils as recommended in the Government Guidance to Schools. We have had to undertake very rigorous infection control measures including introducing staggered start and finish times and a one way system for parents when on site. Unfortunately we have not been able to have parents or visitors in school for meetings or school events and this face to face communication has been sorely missed by us all. Despite upgrading our Broadband, remote meetings have sometimes proven difficult and I think that it would be true to say that we are still perfecting our ZOOM presence. Within the classroom we have been able to offer a broad and diverse curriculum but with some restrictions on the use of equipment – particularly in the Autumn Term.

During lockdown we were able to offer face-to-face teaching for the children of parents who are Key Workers. For other pupils we provided remote learning via our web-site and ZOOM. Home Learning did entail having a very different approach to teaching. When planning work to be accessed at home we did try to scaffold the learning to help parents and pupils access it and also to allow independent learning, especially with pupils in our older year groups. As far as possible we did deliver subjects in line with our Long Term plans. On our return to full time schooling in March we were delighted by the resilience shown by pupils and staff and their motivation towards their learning.

Covid restrictions have also had a big impact on fundraising for the school. However we are extremely lucky to have a very creative TPSA who have battled on regardless, organising such events as a remote Balloon Race and a Rags to Riches collection.

We have always encouraged our pupils to participate in exercise believing that it is important from a well-being as well as a healthy living point of view. Throughout the year but especially during lockdown our Sports Co-ordinator set a variety of challenges to encourage us to take daily exercise. One of these was taking part in a National Street Tags challenge which we won (with a whopping 23,132,615 points) despite being one of the smallest schools in Oxfordshire that had enrolled. Once allowed, we took part in local inter-school events. These included Cross Country against our federated school (John Hampden in Thame) gaining three of the top positons and the Thame Schools’ Partnership Football Challenge where our Year 3 /4 mixed girls’/boys’ team reached the final round.

Going forward we hope to be able to expand our provision for the children and for the wider community by having a hall built on land that is adjacent to the school in Judd’s Lane. At the present time we understand that this land is still owned by the developers and remains their responsibility but the Local Authority is carrying out a feasibility study to determine how the long term ambitions of the school can be met.

As a school we feel privileged to be part of such a welcoming community and hope that next year we can again become more involved in local events and be able to take advantage of the facilities within the village that are available to us.

Alison Charlton

Head of Teaching and Learning

**TETSWORTH MEMORIAL HALL**

 It has been a most difficult year for us. The hall has been closed for the majority of the time and then open under restrictions which changed almost daily. At one stage every week we had a different set of guidelines to work. They were often contradictory and always changing even to the point of one week having to use paper towels not hand dryers and the following week not using paper towels and only using hand dryers then the next week reverting back to paper towels and not dryers.

We have also had to be mindful that with the office rented out in the hall is also a workplace, which operates under completely different guidelines to a community hall.

Because of the anti bac cleaning that is required before and after each hire there has been an increased cost to us which we had to pass on to our hirers. This increase meant that some hirers did not return as early as they could have. We have been lucky and received the business restart grant which we are using to cover the additional costs that we had to pass on to our hirers.

Whilst we were closed we carried out a lot of planned and unplanned maintenance, which included treating all the external wood and re painting the main hall.

Just as we locked down we received to news that we had been given a grant from SODC towards our refurbishment project which includes works to the car park, audio equipment, building works to the kitchen, new kitchen, reinstating doors to the back garden and replacement heating. Unfortunately lockdown has meant that we haven’t been able to do much fundraising towards match funding the SODC’s grant and the other grants that we had applied for changed their funding criteria away from community capital project to Covid recovery projects. This means that if we can’t match fund SODC’s grant we could lose it. On a positive note we have match funded the reinstating of the doors to the back garden which have now been installed.

We have been applying for grants and fundraising. We held a fundraising event to sell 100 slices of cake that was so successful that we stopped counting at 250 slices.

We have won a small grant of £500 from the postcode lottery magic little grants which also gives us a free online charitable giving page which we will be advertising very soon.

We have been accepted by Amazon as a charity that can be nominated by buyers to receive a donation from Amazon for the purchases they make. You can register with Amazon for the hall to receive monies from them at Smile.Amazon. We remain one of the charities receiving funds from SODC’s lottery SO Charitable from which we receive around £35 a month. The lottery is a weekly draw, each ticket is £1 and 50p of this is given to the hall and there is a £25,000 jackpot our supporters win regularly - unfortunately none of them have yet won the top prize.

We remain a very small Management Committee of just 4 trustees and are helped by 5 volunteers; we are in need of more help and are looking for people to help us fundraising, gardening and crucially we need a Bookings Secretary.

We hope to be able to bring you better news from the Hall over the next few months.

Caroline Cann

Chair

**TETSWORTh SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB**

1. With the pandemic causing us to close for 6 months, we received £21,950.55 in grants. This has been a lifeline for us. Our income has been halved by the pandemic. Our income was £81k in the year 2019-20; in the year 2020-21 it was £44k. With our expenditure being £79k in 2019-20 and £39Kin 2020-21. We are donating £2,000.00 to football to help them fund the coming year's fees. Cricket are comfortable but need to purchase a new or second-hand roller.

2. Aunt Sally has not been used for some years now.

3. Darts: we have not had a team for 2 years.

4. Children’s cricket coaching has not restarted since the pandemic hit us.

5. We are looking to set up a Tennis court on the green, but only if some volunteers would step up.

6. Membership is still only £15.00 (have you got yours?)

7. Cricket: We have 3 teams. 2 Saturday teams and 1 Sunday. We now play in the Cherwell District League. The 1st Team finished 4th in Division 2. The 2nd Team finished 1st in Division 5. The second team won the final of the Osberton Cup. The final was played at Tetsworth against Witney Swifts; both teams only lost 1 game all season.

8. Football: We play in the Aylesbury Football League. We have 3 teams 2 Saturday 1 Sunday. The 1st Team finished 4th in the Premier League. Finished 4th in Division 2. Sunday Team finished 2nd in the mini Covid league. The football pitch had major drainage works done and has been a benefit to games not being called off. There is concern that the pitch cannot cope with 2 games per week during when its wet.

6. Live bands: We have not had a band since the pandemic hit.

7. We have had several members use the club for Birthday parties.

8. The Green: We have a team of village volunteers cutting the green and trimming the edges. What an impressive sight it is. One incident occurred when someone drove onto the green in rally fashion and damaged the outfield. We have considered cctv but feel people will not feel comfortable being filmed while socialising on the green. The mobile fish and chip van seems to be popular with villagers.

9. Dog poo picking up seems to be a big issue we all know about. Currently we have a bin that we put in place and empty on collection day. We are no longer happy to do this. We have requested a dog poo bin be positioned by the club.

10. AGM. We did not have an AGM last year due to the pandemic. This year’s AGM is on Wednesday 14th July 7:30pm.

11. We purchased a new Garage door.

12. We are struggling with recruiting Committee members. Bar staff are mostly paid shifts because we just cannot get volunteers.

13. Chiltern Bike Club still use our venue as a meeting place on a Tuesday evening; they have approximately 20 members.

14. Membership. We had 54 paid members plus 20 Bike Club, Football 30, Cricket 22 - Total of 126.

Anthony Bottone

TSSC Committee

**TETSWORTH FACEBOOK GROUP**

One of the few positive outcomes of the Covid pandemic has been the success of the Tetsworth Facebook Group becoming a valued channel of shared communication for our village community, When the first wave of Covid hit England in February 2020, a small group of Tetsworth villagers volunteered to help out to make sure that no one was left without support. With the help of Craig Pearce, our local postman, we sent a list around to each house offering help and giving a volunteer point of contact for each street or area of the village. We also included a link to an existing Tetsworth Facebook Group that would prove invaluable to village life.

As we entered lockdown there were Covid Facebook groups cropping up across the country and linking together as part of a large self-help network. Each group offered a place where people could ask for help or offer support and it was often connected to a group of helpers who would assist if someone was self-isolating, needed a prescription collecting or some shopping doing.

I thought it would be good to set something up for Tetsworth but it was also a real opportunity to bring the village together and set something up that would endure beyond the pandemic. Rather than create a new group, I searched and found one called Tetsworth. It had been set up about 7 years earlier and had around 200 members which I thought was a great start. However, it wasn't active and hadn't had any posts for a number of years. I managed to track down the Group Administrator who was more than happy for me to take on the group and use it.  I messaged the members to let them know we were using it as a Covid coordination site. I also shared the link to the group with those I knew in the village and included it in a note sent around to all the houses.

During the most severe period of lockdown, people asked for help when they were isolating, and we collected and delivered shopping and prescriptions. Parents shared ideas of 'things to do with kids'. Villagers of all ages put up pictures of rainbows or placed teddy bears in the windows of their houses for children to find as they walked around the village as part of their daily exercise. We shared information about places that delivered food and provisions to people at home.  We rallied people to decorate their gardens for VE Day celebrations and for the Thursday NHS clap.

The Tetsworth Group was also publicised as part of the network of Covid Help sites allowing authorities and individuals across the country to be able to reach out if a vulnerable person or remote family member needed help. When that happened they contacted me as the Group Administrator and I reached out to one of our volunteers. Our little group of helpers reacted to calls for help in surrounding villages doing shopping for elderly relatives of those that made contact, or just to have a friendly chat. We were contacted by individuals needing help, by a housing association, and by family members with an elderly relative close by.

The Tetsworth Facebook Group has continued to grow beyond the immediate management of Covid and has become a real hub of communication for the village with people sharing information about village life and local activity too. Posts about the Village Fete, what's happening at the Swan and the Red Lion, Tetsworth Memorial Hall charity events, people asking for help or shouting out if they have something they want to borrow or something to give away. People have rallied villagers for a litter pick and to help spruce up the Forest School. The list goes on.

Over the 16 months between February last year and June 2021 membership of the Tetsworth Facebook Group rose steadily from around 200 to over 620 members – a fantastic achievement for a village community of about 350 households.

Rod Boundy

Group Administrator

**FRIENDS OF ST GILES’ CHURCH**

The congregation at St Giles’ Church remains small but continues to flourish under the care of Revd Peter Waterson. Under normal circumstances, we have a regular pattern of services throughout the year. Revd Waterson officiates at communion services on the first and fourth Sundays of each month and at the special services at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Remembrance. We have a Morning Worship service on the second Sunday of the month, led by Jeneva Paul, and a more informal service on the third Sunday led by members of the congregation. In addition, St Giles’ Church hosts a number of Marriage, Baptisms and Funeral Services together with services, assemblies and special facilities for Tetsworth School.

The average attendance at our services is still low (generally around 10-12) but the sense of community is strong. Although we were not able to gather in Church at times over the last twelve months, we continued to hold services via Zoom. The Church was closed from mid-March to mid-July 2020, for three weeks in November and then from January until the end of March 2021. We were very sad to have to cancel the Carol Service but felt that it would not be possible to safely restrict numbers in the church to maintain social distancing. Although congregational singing has not been allowed in Church since the start of the pandemic, we have been very grateful to Martin Paul who has sung all the hymns for our services. More recently, Jacqui Moore has been teaching us how to sign one of the hymns each week which has been most rewarding. We are looking forward to being able to sing again and to have coffee and cake after the service!

Financially, the contributions from the Friends of Saint Giles’ continues to cover the cost of the insurance, with a small surplus to pay for minor repairs, and the weekly collection pays the parish share and other bills for the day-to-day running.

In conclusion, the congregation of the Church is strong and supportive and, now we are open again, we would welcome any who wished to join us on a Sunday.

Carolyn Carr for Tetsworth PCC

**TETSWORTH VILLAGE FETE – BACK ON THE VILLAGE GREEN! \***

The Fete Committee are pleased to report that the Fete will be back on the village green on Sunday 27th June 2021, from 1.00 pm – 5.00 pm.

We’re delighted that the fun-family dog show will return; and we’re very much looking forward to being entertained by Sol Samba, famous for their Cowley Road and May Day sessions. The BBQ, teas and cakes, and the very popular wood-fired pizza oven will be on site, courtesy of local resident Sam Stonehouse and her team. The Fete Committee will be hosting several rounds of a tug o’ war (pick your teams, everyone) and Tetsworth Memorial Hall will be managing their amazing Tombola stand. The Sports and Social Club and Swan Restaurant will be open on the day, supporting the Fete with games, food and fun. And there will be a range of independent stalls on the day, selling all manner of things you and your children never knew you needed. We’ve even managed to book a giant inflatable maze, the amazing frogs and spoon race will be run and there will be a great raffle too. Many thanks to folk around the village and at The Swan for their generous donations of raffle prizes.

The Committee worked closely with SODC’s Environment & Health team to ensure that the Fete remains COVID-safe (whatever the requirements may be by 27th June), whilst everyone still has a great time.

The proceeds from the Fete will be shared between the Primary School, St Giles’ Church and the Memorial Hall with support for the Senior Citizens’ Christmas Party.

\* Post submission note: Sadly, the delay in implementing Stage 4 of the Covid relaxation roadmap by another 4 weeks to 19th July resulted in the cancellation of the event. It is still possible that it will be rescheduled later during the summer months.

Sarah Griffey

Fete Committee

**TETSWORTH VILLAGE HISTORY PROJECT**

The ‘Tetsworth in Camera’ and subsequent ‘Tetsworth Take Two’ publications have established a rich and welcome photographic record of our village, and more detailed narratives of Tetsworth’s history and heritage are included in more academic documents such as ‘The Dorchester and Thame Hundreds’. Before the arrival of covid-19 restrictions last spring, with the support of Aidan Lynch and Caroline Cann, I had begun to assemble further evidence of Tetsworth’s past through searches of the Oxfordshire Archives and Thame Museum, as well as accessing a number of additional helpful information sources on the village through the Internet.

Subsequent progress in translating the pictures, maps and words that I have accumulated to date into a more definitive ‘History of Tetsworth’ has been sporadic at best. However, now that the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Development Plan with its limited research into the village’s heritage has been put to bed, I plan to devote more time to drafting a comprehensive ‘History of Tetsworth’. I have in mind sections which cover the origins of the settlement, land ownership over the centuries and more recent arrangements for local governance. Significant events during the Civil War, the golden age of coach travel and the Victorian period will clearly merit inclusion. I also plan to cover our agricultural, social and architectural past, and document the establishment of the church, chapels and schools in our community. The more detailed public records of the 20th century should also enable me to plot the growth, changes and development of the village through to the present.

However, the official records can only tell part of the story and undoubtedly leave gaps which might be filled by the personal knowledge of Tetsworth residents – particularly those whose families have lived in the village for a generation or more.

If you think that you could contribute information or would like to join in the project, please get in touch with John on 01844 281655 or by email to john\_c\_gilbert@outlook.com.

John Gilbert.

**VILLAGE BULB PLANTING PROJECT**

One of the so far unfulfilled Actions in the Tetsworth Community Led Plan 2015-2025 was to enhance the village’s environmental attractiveness by planting more bulbs in the green spaces within our settlement. With financial support from a Just Giving appeal and a grant from Tetsworth Parish Council, Anthony Bottone has been able to launch this project and expects to lead volunteer residents in bulb planting sessions in the autumn.