

The Sandford Link

Autumn 2026 Issue 181



HARVEST FESTIVAL see page 3

HISTORIC SANDFORD see page 7

VILLAGE MEMORIAL SERVICE see page 3

TREAT YOUR FEET see page 5

CANDLES see page 7

VILLAGE QUIZ see page 10

APPLE PRESSING see page 11

WINE TASTING see page 7

September 2 nd	Afternoon Tea p.6
September 9 th	Community lunch p.4
September 17 th	Photo competition prize giving p.6
September 17 th	Historic Sandford p.7
September 18 th	Love Songs for a September evening p.3
September 26 th	Apple pressing p.11
September 27 th	Harvest Festival p.3
October 7 th	Afternoon Tea p.6
October 13 th	Village Hall AGM p.5
October 14 th	Community lunch p.4
October 15 th	Candles p.7
November 1 st	Village Memorial Service p.3
November 4 th	Afternoon Tea p.6
November 7 th	Village Quiz Night p.10
November 8 th	Remembrance Sunday
November 11 th	Community lunch p.4
November 19 th	Wine-tasting p.7
December 2 nd	Afternoon Tea p.6
December 9 th	Community lunch p.4
December 17 th	Wreath making p.7

SUNDAY CLUB

meets at 10.0 a.m. on the last Sunday of the month in the Harris Room next to the church.



THE MERRY MOPPERS

Is anyone interested in joining the cleaning team at St Andrews church? We have a rota, which means you would only be required to clean for about two hours, a maximum of 3 times a year. There is absolutely no need to be a church attender – we are a mixed bunch! It's a great opportunity to help to maintain our beautiful, historic church and keep it clean and welcoming for our church services and community events, as well as visitors to the village. Contact Trudie Ball 07704429249 if interested and would like more info.

[Editor's p.s.: I have noticed that laughter, coffee and cake all play an important role in this task.]

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

www.sandfordchurch.org.uk

Bob Morgan (associate priest) 01865 748848

robert.morgan@theology.ox.ac.uk

Teresa Morgan (associate priest)

John Findon (associate priest) john.findon@jesus.ox.ac.uk

Andrew Allen

Church Wardens: Christian Bradley; Clive Tasker

Director of Music: Christian Bradley

Sunday services

Every Sunday: 10.0 a.m. Parish Communion
6.30 p.m. Evening prayer

Every Wednesday: 11.0 a.m. Holy Communion (BCP)

Last Sunday of the month:

10.0 a.m. a more informal Westward Communion service

LOVE SONGS FOR A SEPTEMBER EVENING

Friday 18th September at 7.0 pm in St Andrew's Church

Diana Beckett, soprano Cecily Lock, piano

Brahms, Massenet, Rachmaninoff, Lehar, Hahn,
Neapolitan & English folk songs

Retirement Collection for Charity

Harvest Thanksgiving

Sunday 27th September

10.0 Parish Communion
followed by Harvest Brunch
in church.

Gifts for the Food Bank
may be brought to church
any Sunday or left in the
church porch.



Village Memorial Service

The annual remembrance service, at which many departed family and friends are remembered with candles, will be on

Sunday 1st November at 6.30 p.m.

If you would like, please give names of those to be remembered to Bob.



Agnostics Anonymous – the group is due to restart in September – please contact Bob if interested (748848).

Looking back over the hot summer there is much to be thankful for locally and much to regret internationally. Among my positives, distributing raffle tickets is always time well-spent – catching up with many I hadn't seen during the three years John did that, and so getting to know a bit better our rapidly changing population. Buying a book for £10 instead of the fiver over the past 20 years (before that it was £2), during a cost of living crisis is generous. I see it as a way of inviting people (whatever their religion or none) to have a stake in the church building as a valued part of the village. Some who do not attend services are glad it is there doing what it is there for, and some are glad it is unlocked during the week for private quiet time. So thanks to all who responded to my door-knocking.

And thanks to the Fete committee and all who made 18th July such a good occasion. And to those involved in the four concerts so far (one to come) in church this summer, especially Diana, and Christian's orchestrating everything and Clive and Carole as ever producing food and drink. Another joy for me personally was listening to Teresa's sermons each week – always something fresh that even a cleric who has been doing it over 60 years can learn new things. Some are available on the sandfordchurch.org.uk website so others can benefit if they wish.

And now into Autumn and a big welcome to Andrew Allen to our ministry team. Andrew lives in Germany but works here term-time when Teresa is in America – so one is around when the other is away, and we benefit from the wisdom of both. As always, all welcome, and more information on the website or tel. 748848.

Bob



SANDFORD COMMUNITY LUNCH

A delicious meal using perfectly good food that would otherwise go to waste –

A family friendly event, with children's play area, to which all are welcome, no need to book! Turn up and pay what you can.

**Second Wednesday of each month –
see facebook.com/TalkingShopSandford**

We are delighted to report that
Lynn, foot care professional,
will be running a clinic in the Village Hall on the 3rd Friday
morning of each month, starting on October 23rd.

Book your appointment at
lynnfootcare@gmail.com or 07793 813382
Lynn is able to assess an individual's foot health and provide advice on footwear. The treatments she offers includes routine nail cutting, reduction of thick nails and fungal nail treatment, minor ingrown toenails, hard skin reduction and corn removal. She treats the elderly, people with diabetes and peripheral neuropathies.

And more good news

The small room inside the front door of the Village Hall is now available for hire at a reasonable rate. Maximum 2/3 people, so suitable for counselling, tutoring, one-to-one meetings – or anyone who would like a quiet working space away from home.

Newly improved wifi,
and excellent coffee at Talking Shop next door.

Book online via
sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk/our-community/village-hall/

We are very fortunate to have a huge village asset

In our Village Hall and Talking Shop

If you have ideas about events and activities
you would like to see at the Village Hall,
come along to the AGM at

6.0 on Tuesday October 13th
and help us to make the most of this great resource.

Sandford Arts Craftsand Skills (SACaS)



Summer saw two excellent and well-attended events. Daniel McGinness gave a superb, highly informative and entertaining introduction to bees and beekeeping which everyone present found utterly compelling. And then we were amazed by Tom Hughes's introduction to the magic of drone photography and the astonishing demonstration which followed. We are also delighted to say that there has been a follow-up bingo session organised by Smitha and Talking Shop.

We are very keen to welcome new people to lead sessions on a skill, art or craft of their own, so please email Edward if you feel you have something to offer.

It is helpful if anybody planning on attending any of the SACaS sessions could email Edward on sandfordhallevnts@gmail.com to give us an idea of numbers.

Thursday September 17th 5.0 -6.0 pm

Prizegiving and reception

for the photographic competition:

all welcome to view the entries, join us for a cool drink and stay on for Liz's talk on Rock Farm Lane



AFTERNOON TEAS

in the Village Hall on the first Wednesday of the month 2.0– 4.0. A community event for over 18s – homemade cakes and teas, and a raffle on the day. Cost £4. Join us by booking with Prue Reynolds on prue.reynolds96@gmail.com

SACaS Events confirmed for the Autumn:

Thursday September 17th

6.0-7.30 pm

Historic Sandford: the story of Rock Farm

After the great success of her talk last year, Liz Shatford will be sharing with us her invaluable knowledge of the village with a particular focus on Rock Farm.

Thursday October 15th

6.0--7.30 pm

Making scented candles

Michele Tighe will offer a taster session and demonstration of the skill of making beautiful, scented candles. Further practical workshops will follow. Please sign up for this session at the above email address to give us an idea of numbers.

Thursday November 19th

6-7.30 pm

Wine-tasting

Edward Williams will lead a blind tasting of prize-winning wines from this year's Decanter World Wine Awards. Come and discover what you really like and guess the price! (£15 per head: booking required.)
<https://www.ticketsource.com/sandford-on-thames-village-hall/t-njdjqya>



Thursday December 17th

6.0 -7.30 pm

Wreath-making

Natalie Ellett returns by popular acclaim to lead another seasonal wreath-making session. All materials will be provided but please feel free to add your own.
(£4 charge per person for materials)

TALKING SHOP NEWS

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?



According to a large-scale study of British values by public policy researchers Public First, there's a surprising amount of consensus across all ages, demographics and political groups about what makes people proud to be British. "When you talk to people across Britain

"Community is closely tied to feelings of optimism. **62% of those who had volunteered in the last month felt optimistic or very optimistic about the future of their local area**, compared with just 25% of those who had never volunteered."

<https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/>

it's clear they have a shared set of values – if fairness is Britain's moral compass, hard work is its character and community the thing that binds us."

Talking Shop is largely run by volunteers.

We believe that everyone has something to offer, so

we aim to create a space where everyone is welcome, and it is easy to get involved. We enable people to share skills, knowledge and experience, and to build their own confidence and skills.

Volunteers say, "If you want to meet new people in a friendly and warm environment, and have fun, this is the place for you". Some volunteers told us that they most valued talking to people, and getting to know people, for example by working in the café or the garden. Others prefer a quieter role, behind the scenes, such as delivering leaflets, cleaning the shop, or helping with cooking. But everyone told us that they valued working with a

friendly team, feeling that they are part of the community, and playing a part in something important and useful.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE,

volunteering helps to develop a sense of community and accountability. It builds skills like communication, adaptability and perseverance, as well as practical know-how. We can offer young people of 14 or over a shift in our busy, friendly Saturday market – they can deliver food and drinks to our customers, help with the washing-up, or learn how to use the till or cook our famous breakfast baps. Whatever they do, they'll be part of our lovely team and they'll have the support of our Saturday market manager, Smitha.

To find out more, drop in to talk to a manager or email volunteering.talkingshop@gmail.com

OUR NEW SILENT BOOK GROUP, 'BOOKS & BINDINGS'

Have you ever wished for a quiet spot where you could enjoy the book you're reading undisturbed? This is the book club that is not a book club – there is no prescribed reading, just bring your own book or delve into one of the wonderful books that have been donated to Talking Shop, and treat yourself to a tea or coffee and a cake!



Tuesday 1st September at 7pm

GINA ASHBURNER, who has recently died, was involved in Talking Shop from the very beginning, as part of the initial steering group, and as a Director until last year. She volunteered at the Saturday market for many years and all at Talking Shop will miss her dedication, cheerfulness and good humour.

Rest in peace, Gina, and thank you.

AUTUMN QUIZ NIGHT

at Sandford Village Hall

7 for 7.30pm: Saturday 7 November

£5 per person: £30 per table.

Booking essential (individual or group)

at judithgodsland@btinternet.com

Vale House Family Support

The Family Support Team at Vale House facilitates a monthly Support Group for carers of people living with dementia. We meet over coffee at 1.30pm at the Kings Arms at Sandford Lock on the first Thursday of every month. It is a relaxed space to meet others who are going through similar experiences and to have a chat.

Over the years, the group has played an important role in building a supportive community for people navigating the emotional challenges and uncertainty that can accompany dementia. These meetings are informal, the conversations can range from light-hearted discussions about day-to-day life, to more vulnerable conversations around anticipatory grief, loss and adapting to change.

The group is open to relatives of current Vale House residents, bereaved relatives, and those whose family members are living with advanced dementia at home or in other care homes.

About us:

Vale House is a specialist dementia care home in Sandford which provides nursing care of people living with advanced dementia.

If you would like to find out more about Vale House or plan on dropping by at the group at some point, please email FamilySupport@valehouse.org.uk or call 01865 718 467 to speak to the Family Support

Apple pressing day September 26th.

It's that time of year again so bring any fruit you can spare to Talking shop and we will turn your apples or pears into juice. After last year's glut, there don't appear to be many on the trees so please gather from wherever you can to make it a successful day again.

Looking forward to seeing you again.

SOMETHING THAT NEEDS FIXING?

Clive Shorter can help with painting and decorating/
Gardening/DIY and more **07765 666625** commius@hotmail.com

SANDFORD-ON-THAMES TALKING SHOP

CHRISTMAS

Gift DONATIONS

To help more local families enjoy Christmas, we are collecting donations of clothes (all sizes), toys, games, children's books, jewellery, toiletries, festive food and other gifts.

New or as-new and
not gift-wrapped,
please

Drop off at the Talking Shop
Mon-Fri 9.30-4 or Sat 9-12
From Nov 7th to noon Dec 5th

Address

Village Hall
Henley Rd
Sandford-on-Thames
OX4 4YN

We are looking for volunteers to help organise a Childrens' Christmas Party for the village

in December. These parties have previously been held at the Village Hall and it would be nice to restart it.

We are looking for people to help with the organising but also for sponsors of the event.

Please contact Abi Reynolds
on maise_life@hotmail.com



a chiropractic health centre in Nuneham Courtenay
www.continuum-chiropractic.co.uk
at The Old Smithy, Yew Tree Courtyard.
Online booking available.



Sandford-On-Thames WI Autumn 2026



Our meetings are held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month (no meeting in August). Social events are arranged for members in August and at other times during the year, some just for members, others include family and friends.

The Women's Institute is a membership organisation. The annual subscription of £54 was due on 1st April, with half of that going to our own WI and the rest shared between our Oxfordshire Federation of WIs and the National Federation of WIs. After 30th June there is a tiered rate for joining.

Our June meeting saw us open the doors for a Clothing Exchange evening, with rails and tables laden with a huge variety of clothing, shoes and accessories, proving very popular both with members and visitors. In July we were preparing items for the Tombola stall at the Sandford Village Festival. Members and residents alike were very generous with their donations and we had a packed stall which was well attended. Some of our members met up for a "Picnic on the Rec" for our August social event.

Programme for Autumn 2026 (may be subject to amendment)

10th September – Talk: "My Life and Times as a Film Extra" by John Kinory

8th October – Pumpkin carving

11th November – Talk: "Pubs along the Thames" by Jane Shepherd

**10th December – our Christmas celebration
and wreath/table decoration making**

We welcome those who would like to sample a meeting. We are a friendly group of ladies with a wide range of ages and interests and our meetings include a talks and activities, tea/coffee, cake and chat. There are many ways to join, you do not need to be an able craft person or live in Sandford. Come on your own or with a member. On the second visit a donation of £5 is welcome or you may join SOTWI. We contact members by phone, email, WhatsApp and, of course, face to face. We only occasionally use post.

President Jill Love 01865 716557/07900 907477 (text is best as signal poor)

Rest in peace

We were sorry to hear of the death of **Mrs Gupta** of Rock Farm Lane in May/June and offer our sympathies to her family and our gratitude for such a lovely gentle woman living in the village for many years.

Gina Ashburner née Heery

born 15th February 1952,

died 5th August 2026, aged 74

Gina was born in the Royal Military Hospital at Wheatley and went to school there till the Heery's moved to Sandford when she was 11 - to 73 Henley Road, where she lived and died. She was nursed with great love and devotion by her family, who were gathered around her at a peaceful end of a long illness, endured with fortitude.



In 1972 she married Michael, had a son, Michael, and remained friends with Michael senior following their separation. Michael's partner Louise joined them 25 years ago and Gina became a happy grandmother and host to her three grandchildren, Shaun, Finley and Riley.

In the village Gina gave generously of her time, and was active on the Council, Village Hall, Youth Club, and Talking Shop, making many friends. For 25 years she worked with the Royal Mail, for a while with British Leyland and Blood donor collection, and as a swimming teacher.

Gina was unforgettable, with warmth, humour and kindness, and many of us treasure our memories of her. Her funeral will be St Andrew's at St Andrew's in September, and burial in Sandford with her father Joey – then afterwards in the Village Hall. Abi will give the tribute, and Gina chose the music. She will be very much missed – our sympathies go to all her family.

Geoff Surman

As the Link is going to press, we are sad to learn of the death of Geoff Surman. Geoff was for many years a smiling, friendly face around Sandford. He cheerfully carried out many maintenance tasks and repairs around the village for the parish council, such as fence repairs, grounds maintenance and building the bus shelter opposite Rock Farm, as well as caring for his own well stocked garden and greenhouse.

Current regular activities at your Village Hall



You can now book Village Hall rooms online via the Parish website <https://sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk>. For further information see www.sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk or contact Robert 07759 890696 or sandfordvillagehallbookings@yahoo.com

<i>Monday</i>	Sandford Toddler Group 10am to noon
	Sandford Table Tennis Club 7-9pm
<i>Tuesday:</i>	Junior Tae Kwon-Do 5.30-6.30pm
<i>Wednesday:</i>	Pilates 10-11am
	Afternoon Tea 1 st Wednesday – 2-4pm
	Sandford Community Lunch
	2 nd Wednesday 12.30-2pm
<i>Thursday:</i>	Sandford Womens' Institute 2nd Thursday of
	the month (not August) – 7.30pm
<i>Friday:</i>	Junior Tae Kwon-Do 5.30-6.30pm
<i>Saturday:</i>	Saturday Market 9am-noon
<i>Sunday:</i>	Oxford Guitar Society 2nd Sunday, 7-10pm

Michael Whitlock, Chair of the Village Hall committee, writes:
Regular hirers may not be aware that a routine gas inspection revealed a small leak and the inspector shut off the gas with immediate effect. This means there is no hot water in the kitchen or wash hand basins in the toilets and no heating. VHC and the PC are working hard to determine if we can have a system that does not involve gas and is more environmentally friendly. In the meantime hirers will have to use the kettle for hot water. The dishwasher does not depend on hot water and is working normally.

Welcome

to **Tony Allan** and **Heidi Codes** to Heyford Hill Lane
to **Marwan** and **Kylese**, **Zac** and **Saf** to Pheasant Walk.
to **Christine** and **Ian** to Main Avenue

Welcome to the world

to the twin girls born to Liz and Alan, lately of River View

and congratulations

to **Meryl Stevens** of Henley Road on receiving the International Daisy Award for nursing (the equivalent of an OBE). For outstanding service - latterly at the Warneford - the staff there join us in the hospital's reflected glory of recognition for Meryl.

Casual Vacancy – Parish Councillor Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council

Would you like to make a positive difference in your local community?

We have a casual vacancy for a Parish Councillor and are seeking a motivated and community-minded resident to join the Council.

This is a rewarding opportunity to help shape the future of the village, represent local residents and contribute to decisions affecting the community and local environment.

No previous experience is required — just an interest in local matters, a willingness to work as part of a team and a commitment to serving the community.

Parish Councillors are involved in a wide range of local issues including:

- Community projects and facilities
- Planning and environmental matters
- Village maintenance and improvements
- Supporting local events and initiatives

The Parish Council meets regularly in the village and full support and guidance will be provided.

If you are interested or would like further information, please contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk T: 07496414987

Annual Festival

Sandford on Thames 18th July 2026 'PRE HEAT WAVE BUT HOT, FUN AND COOL'

When organising this year's festival, we seemed destined for good weather! How hot would it be on 18th July? Well, another fabulous festival and the weather was hot, but a cool breeze kept it cooler and lots of fun was had! In fact, it seemed the best weather enjoyed for some years. Little did we know the heat wave which was to follow for the

The Jubilee Oxford Brass Band opened proceedings at 1pm playing their traditional stirring, joyous music, with repeat performances throughout the afternoon. In the tradition of all good bands, they set the happy mood for the afternoon. Visitors enjoyed a fantastic selection of classic cars, community and trade stalls, delicious tea and cakes, Pimm's, Persian delicacies and a BBQ of the highest standards – this being attested to by a new visitor to the annual event. Verdict "Best BBQ ever".



Drinks and ice cream were definitely the order of the day!

This year a 'new' beer tent was welcomed, under the management of the local Catherine Wheel pub; it was nice to see this do well, although some visitors missed 'The Thirsty Queen on the Green' pub, which was given a 'holiday' this year. We also had a 'new' acoustic open-mic tent which was organised to run throughout the afternoon in tandem with other events. It proved very popular, with some amazing virtuoso performances!



The Strawberry Majorettes returned to the arena with some lovely routines and this was followed by the popular Dog Show – nearly a victim of the hot weather again but it was just 'cool' enough to put this on.

.-16-

At the top of the rec we had the fairground rides and stall provided by Lendrums Amusements, the first view for those who came in through the main gate in Church Road. The traditional children's races were held in the arena; a Wizard of Oz themed treasure hunt and fancy-dress competition were held for young visitors. We also had a last-minute call from the Oxford Fire Brigade who brought along a real fire engine and showed off their skills. The range of stalls gave a fine mixture of things to buy and things to learn about. We hope they had a successful afternoon.

The community atmosphere produced fun and laughs aided greatly by cold drinks, great ice creams and hot food and drinks. The Aunt Sally competition produced a male and female 'champion' and, with the Coconut Shy, was again as popular as ever. The ever popular Tombola and Water to Wine stalls sold out again as always.

In the classic car 'coral' we saw a rare 'modern' 1983 Peugeot classic mini 'van', which had travelled from far away to be with us, plus again our own 'local' 1956 Morgan and super looking, special Cobra and two 'new' 1937 and 1956 vintage Austin classics.



We are a family-run garage in Henley Road, Sandford on Thames

MOT testing ♦ Servicing all makes and models ♦ General repair ♦

Cambelt replacements ♦ Air con regas/Servicing ♦

Precise diagnostics ♦ Suspension repair/Tracking

www.tjhallandson.co.uk

facebook.com/tjhallandson/

For our music delight 'Vinyl Daze' returned to the early evening live music stage and their performance was tight, lively music with strong vocals and well appreciated by the audience. Some revellers danced into the evening with many happy to sit, drink, relax and listen. It was another terrific early evening of live music that all enjoyed until it was wrapped up around 7.30pm. Well done to Vinyl Daze for playing for nearly two hours in a very warm evening.



There was a terrific friendly, community feel throughout the day, all in the name of our local church, St. Andrew's, for whom the event is dedicated.

So, another 'annual' day for the village to enjoy with the main goal, as always, to have a good time whilst raising money for St. Andrew's church and local charities and good causes. Early figures show that around £2,000 was raised. This year in addition to St. Andrew's Church our chosen charity was the local 'Dementia Oxfordshire' charity – along with other local charities and good causes.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along and supported the festival. Thank you to all of our helpers, whose hard work and dedication before, during and after the event made the day possible. To the flower arrangers who created such a beautiful flower festival, to everyone who donated prizes, cakes, raffle items, to all the stall holders, performers, exhibitors and entertainers, to the Oxford Fire Brigade, to Wilson Blackwell Photography for beautifully capturing the day and to our generous main sponsor T J Hall, together with all others sponsors for their invaluable support. A special thanks to our compere Nigel, who once again did a great job.

Will we meet again next year, perhaps?

The tradition of the annual village festival appears alive and well

Traffic filter trial to start on 28 September

Oxfordshire County Council's traffic filter trial will start on Monday 28 September, replacing the temporary congestion charge. It will operate in a similar way to the temporary congestion charge, with the filters being at the same six locations and a permit scheme in place. The trial, under an experimental traffic regulation order, can last for up to a maximum of 18 months.

The key difference is that, from 28 September, car drivers will no longer be able to pay the £5 congestion charge to go through the traffic filters.

A six-month public consultation will open on 28 September.

Most people with congestion charge permits don't need to take any action as their permits will be automatically transferred to traffic filter permits. The permit's start date will revert to the traffic filter trial start date. Day pass allocations will automatically re-set to 100 for Oxford residents and 25 for Oxfordshire residents.

For people who don't yet have a permit, applications are open online. Sandford residents are eligible for 25 day passes a year.

About the traffic filter trial

- At each traffic filter site, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras will monitor and enforce the restrictions. There will be no physical barriers. Cars without a valid permit driving through the filters will receive a fine of £70 (reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days).
- During the first six months of the traffic filter trial, the council will send a warning notice the **first** time any car goes through a traffic filter without using a permit, instead of sending a penalty charge notice.

The locations and operating times of the traffic filters will be the same as the temporary congestion charge:

- Marston Ferry Road and Hollow Way - Monday to Saturday - At peak times between 7am to 9am and 3pm to 6pm
- Hythe Bridge Street, St Cross Road, St Clement's Street and Thames Street - Monday to Sunday - 7am to 7pm

HILLSIDE EXOTIC GARDENING

is a Sandford business run by Nicky and Lewis, with a wonderful range of exotic plants – see their website at hillsideexoticgardening.co.uk



Sandford to become part of 'Greater Oxford'

The Government announced on July 16th that a new Greater Oxford Council will encompass the existing city limits plus 49 specific parishes transferred from three neighbouring districts, taking effect on April 1, 2028. Sandford-on-Thames is included in the 25 South Oxfordshire parishes joining the new Greater Oxford Council. The Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council will continue to operate as a local tier of community representation beneath the new unitary authority. In practice this means:

Council tax: because we are moving into Greater Oxford tax bracket, our council tax rates will undergo harmonisation over a multi-year transition period. Instead of paying separate amounts to district and county, we will receive one unified bill from the Greater Oxford Council.

Bins and planning are currently handled by South Oxfordshire, while the County Council handles roads and social care. From April 2028, Greater Oxford Council will handle everything. There will be no immediate changes to our bin days.

Planning and the Green Belt: A core objective of the approved Greater Oxford layout is releasing 2.6% of the city's green belt to construct roughly 40,000 homes by 2040. This means planning policies for the rural fringes around Sandford-on-Thames will shift toward urban-fringe development strategies.

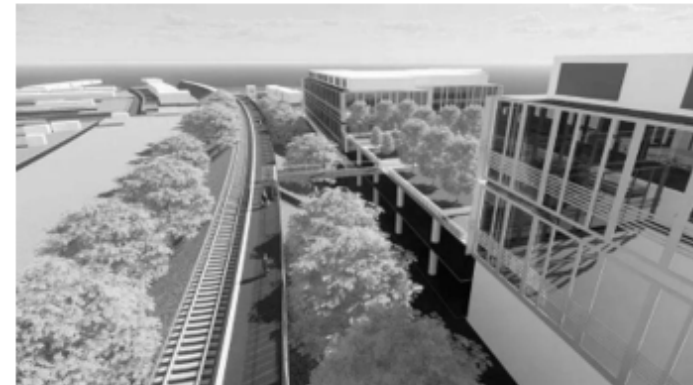
A proposed solar farm between Sandford and Nuneham Courtenay, on the opposite side of the road to the one currently under construction, has been turned down by South Oxfordshire District Council's planning committee. The installation was strongly opposed by conservation groups and Nuneham parish council, with Oxford Preservation Trust arguing it was "grossly inappropriate within the historic setting" close to Nuneham Park and Gardens.

After a 90-minute debate, two Green councillors proposed and seconded refusing the solar farm – which was carried with five votes to three. Applicants RES have the right to appeal, and one councillor warned that "There is a danger that, at appeal, we could find ourselves in a very difficult position."

Littlemore rail station

The £155m project to reopen the Cowley Branch Line to passengers and build two new stations was approved last October. But with extra contributions needed to be found locally, Oxfordshire County Council has agreed to cover the £14.5m shortfall through business rates raised by the region's two enterprise zones. The plan includes the creation of two new stations at Cowley and Littlemore. Network Rail will fund the majority of the project, but local businesses and organisations need to contribute £35m to the core scheme, with an additional £12.5m for things like cycle parking and routes to connect the stations to the local community. Local partners have so far committed £33m, leaving the project needing a further £14.5m to progress.

At a county council meeting in July the Liberal Democrat-led authority agreed to "forward fund" the extra money needed through business rates from Oxfordshire's Science Vale UK and the Didcot Growth Accelerator.. The Cowley Branch Line is currently only used by freight going to and from the BMW Mini Plant, but it is expected to reopen to passengers by 2029.



Projection of Littlemore station

Say it with flowers

Whether you have a wedding, a funeral, an anniversary, a dinner party or just want to cheer someone up I'm available to help. I'm just an enthusiastic amateur who loves to work with flowers, so email me at Caroletasker27@gmail.com or give me a call 07876 701151



*The full minutes of the Parish Council can be found at
<https://www.sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk/>*

Notes on the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 1 June

CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk presented the report and highlighted the following matters:

- A resident enquiry regarding works taking place in the field behind Main Avenue had been investigated. The Clerk visited the site and confirmed the works related to ground preparation for a car park for EIT Contractors.
- An update on the proposed land transfer to Oxford Preservation Trust: the Clerk had met with Sovereign to discuss the removal of play equipment and associated costs. A quotation is expected during June.
- Annual maintenance play area on the rec was completed on 21 May.
- An update was received regarding the 20mph scheme. Oxfordshire County Council's Vision Zero Team advised that a county-wide monitoring and evaluation programme will commence shortly and Parish Councils will be invited to submit requests for additional measures.
- Ongoing OCC discussions regarding maintenance of Fox Furlong Culvert.
- Oxfordshire County Council confirmed that Brick Kiln Lane remains on the resurfacing programme, although no timescale has been provided. Some remedial works appear to have been undertaken during May.
- Members were advised of the Grenoble Road Development site walkabout attended on 15 May with representatives from Gummer Leathes and Nature in the Leys. Gummer Leathes will be responsible for the site throughout development as the Master Planners. Planning applications are likely to be submitted in approximately one to two years' time. We must feed into the process with the results of our 2022 survey and look to carry out another consultation meanwhile. We must also ensure that the heat recovery system is put in place and that Thames Water has already been involved in similar projects elsewhere. The existing sewage works has the potential to provide heat source for up to 12,000 homes.

The following matters requiring Council consideration were agreed:

- The Clerk to work with the Village Hall Bookings Manager to review website content relating to room bookings.
- Grounds maintenance invoices to be withheld pending satisfactory clarification of completed works.
- The Henley Road bus shelter proposal will not be taken forward at this time.

PARISH MAINTENANCE AND ENVIRONMENT

a. Grounds Maintenance Contract

The schedule of works submitted for April and May did not appear to correspond with the works observed on site. Members agreed that the expected improvements had not materialised and expressed disappointment with the standard of service delivered to date. It was agreed that the Tactical Facilities Management Ltd be issued with a formal notice setting out concerns regarding contract performance and requiring satisfactory remedial action within 14 days. To query the works reported as completed to date and request that any deficiencies be rectified. Agree with Tactical as part of the formal notice that all future works are to be signed off monthly by the Parish Council before payment is authorised.

b. Mowing of Grass Verges on Heyford Hill Lane

It was agreed to have the area included in the monthly mowing schedule.

IT: Hybrid Meeting Technology

Members received an update regarding potential hybrid meeting technology. The Clerk reported to the Council that Cloudy IT has provided details of a complete package but that it is likely to be above and beyond what we are looking for. A price will be obtained by the Clerk of this and then a more basic solution for comparison.

Notes on the meeting of the Parish Council held on 6th July 2026

Issues Raised:

Concerns raised by Parishioners present over the Ellison Institute of Technology development:

- a) The traffic impact on the village from contractors and future employees.

- b) A need for formal community liaison on at least a six-monthly basis including a named contact for EIT and the Construction company.
- c) What is the anticipated occupancy of the building?
- d) Sustainable traffic plans in place for the project and its ongoing use.
- e) Could a mobile phone mast be installed on the building to improve mobile phone reception within the village?
- f) Will the atrium's design create a wind tunnel effect?

County Councillor report

The High Court awarded an injunction to OCC to prevent the continued unauthorised placement of flags on or near the public highway. A review of speed limits on all of Oxfordshire's rural A and B roads is being expanded.

New quiet lanes will be introduced across Oxfordshire, where there is local support, under a pilot scheme approved by OCC's cabinet. Villages across the region have been experiencing problems with speeding. Some available options which can help make our roads safer have been provided such as Speed Indicator Devices, ~~Speedwatch~~ Schemes, infrastructure such as chicanes.

Advice was provided on home security measures, including ~~SmartWater~~ and CCTV.

District Councillor

Joint Local Plan has been delayed until mid-2027.

Waste collection days unchanged, but collection times may change.

Ellison Institute Presentation

Confirmation that the planning application was endorsed by the Planning Committee last week.

View points of the development and the site layout were exhibited.

The presentation confirmed that the three buildings had been joined, resulting in changes to the façade. An increase in the ridge height of the building by less than 1 metre.

Lord Norman Foster has been involved in the design so there is synergy with Littlemore House.

The number of site employees has been reduced from 1800 to 1200.

The principal contractor is expected to be MACE.

a) Commitment to continued community liaison.

b) Traffic concerns noted.

Actions Agreed:

- Regular community meetings and updates provided through the Parish Council at the Village Hall.
- Consideration of the traffic concerns and how the community can assist with future transport/travel plans.

Parish Maintenance & Environment

a. Grounds Maintenance

A productive site meeting has taken place with Tactical Facilities Management. Immediate remedial works have been requested ahead of the Village Fête, together with revised inspection and monitoring arrangements. The full width of the Heyford Hill Lane grass verges be included within the routine monthly mowing programme following No Mow May. Payment will continue to be withheld pending completion of the agreed remedial works, and the Clerk will obtain quotations from alternative contractors.

b. Traffic & Highways

The SIDs have now been installed by Peter and Paul. The data needs to be collected.

Notes on the meeting of the Parish Council held on 2nd August 2026

Tree survey

The Chair, with the agreement of Members, brought forward the Tree Survey agenda item to allow the Council's Tree Surgeon, Dave Baldwin, to present his professional advice.

Located on Henley Road adjacent to the Village Hall entrance. A visual inspection, supported by Resistograph testing, confirmed evidence of historic structural decay at the previous crown break and within the stem. However, the tree is currently considered stable and suitable for retention. A crown reduction will be undertaken within the next three months to reduce loading on the tree and minimise any future risk. The tree will continue to be monitored through the routine inspection programme.

Mr Baldwin apologised that a previous recommendation to remove the tree had not been implemented correctly. Additional testing undertaken had demonstrated that retention of the tree is now appropriate.

County Councillor report: Robin Jones

The Government's proposals for Local Government Reorganisation include the proposal for Sandford-on-Thames to become part of the proposed Greater Oxford Unitary Authority from April 2028.

Members also noted updates regarding the review of future electoral divisions and councillor numbers, Oxfordshire County Council's water safety guidance during the recent hot weather, Thames Water's hosepipe ban, and the National Highways and Transport Survey.

CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk highlighted progress made in July, including the installation and operation of Speed Indicator Devices, playground inspections, start of the internal tree audit, work on grounds maintenance procurement, progression of the Communications Plan and Village Hall Maintenance Programme, completion of the AGAR submission, routine financial monitoring and ongoing work towards the CiLCA qualification.

Grounds Maintenance

Members remained dissatisfied with the overall standard of service and noted that no further communication had been received from Tactical following the Clerk's previous correspondence. Quotations from alternative contractors continue to be obtained, and the Clerk would also contact neighbouring Parish Councils to obtain recommendations for alternative grounds maintenance contractors. We will continue withholding outstanding Tactical invoices pending satisfactory completion of the agreed works.

Village Hall / Talking Shop

The Village Hall Committee had been advised that relocating the gas meter outside the Talking Shop may provide a more cost-effective solution than excavating the car park to investigate the suspected gas leak. Alternative heating options, including air source heat pumps, had also been explored, although these would require significant capital investment together with replacement radiators and associated works.

Members agreed that grant funding should be explored in the first instance. Should additional financial assistance be required, the Parish Council would be willing to consider a formal funding application from the Village Hall Committee. Members also agreed to donate a prize of £250 towards the Talking Shop Photography Competition.

Community Orchard

Volunteers have continued to undertake regular watering throughout the recent dry weather.

Local Government Reorganisation

It was agreed to support and sign the collective representation to the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the proposed inclusion of Sandford-on-Thames within the Greater Oxford Unitary Authority.

CORRESPONDENCE

An update was received from Oxfordshire County Council's Flood Team, who are continuing discussions with the Highways Team regarding possible infrastructure improvements to facilitate safe access to the trash screen.

HAIR BY SADIE

07584 240122 sadie.tooke@hotmail.co.uk

   [@hair_by_sadiebrown](https://www.instagram.com/hair_by_sadiebrown)

97 Henley Road, Sandford-on-Thames, OX4 4YW



The Dovecote Studio

Barclays Farm

OX44 9PU

Tel: 07590282759

siminbeautystudio@gmail.com

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This Link magazine is published by the Link Committee and this issue is edited by Prue Sykes, Lower Farm, Sandford-on-Thames (748848). Anything for inclusion should be sent to Lower Farm or e-mailed to robert.morgan@theology.ox.ac.uk.

Printed by Parish Magazine Printing of Holsworthy, Devon

