

Lower Heyford and Caulcott Parish Council

<https://heyford.info>

FOREWORD

Welcome. 2020 can rightly be described as an unprecedented year that has presented many challenges to our daily lives and disrupted that which we previously took for granted. Amongst the uncertainty, Lower Heyford and Caulcott Parish Council has continued to meet virtually to address issues that we know affect you all. We are committing to provide an update bulletin twice per year to ensure that you know what has been achieved, what is being discussed and what our priority activities are. Of course, all residents are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings. Agendas and minutes are also provided on noticeboards and on our website. Frustratingly, some of the key issues take years to resolve due to the sheer number of consultees, competing priorities and financial constraints of local authorities. We will continue to proactively represent your views through the appropriate forum and apply pressure to decision makers to ensure that our Parish's needs are considered at all times.

Priorities for 2021:

- Endeavour to establish a 7.5tn weight limit on Rousham Bridge
- Liaise with the local authorities and developers to negotiate an improved financial contribution to enable traffic calming measures in both Lower Heyford and Caulcott.
- Engage with OCC and MCNP to consult on proposed traffic mitigation strategies in the local area

Ric Fowles, Chair

On behalf of Lower Heyford and Caulcott Parish Council

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The expansive urbanisation that can be seen around Bicester and in Heyford Park remains a concern to many in the local villages. We are continuing to engage proactively with local authorities to ensure that the traditional character of our Parish is preserved. Through Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), Cherwell District Council (CDC) and close collaboration with the Mid-Cherwell Neighbour Plan committee (MCNP), we continue to press developers in the following areas.

Traffic Flow. Many residents have commented that the increase in HGV traffic and general increase in vehicles is of particular concern to them. We remain concerned about the safety and environmental impact of increasing traffic associated with local developments. The additional noise and pollution has led us to pursue an environmental weight limit over Rousham Bridge. Notwithstanding the environmental impact, there is the increasing damage to the Bridge. Works to repair this are due to commence in Spring 2021; we will be monitoring the progress with interest.

Traffic Calming. Developers are obliged to commit financial investment in local infrastructure to mitigate against the impact of the development. The scale of developments around (thankfully not in!) our locale means that there are many parishes which are demanding a proportion of this 'Section 106' money to invest into various mitigation measures, Lower Heyford and Caulcott being just one of those. Of course, mitigations in one parish may adversely increase the impact of the development on another parish. Thus, this leads to a number of consultations, objections, traffic surveys and meetings to reach agreement. We have utilised the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Planning Forum together with other member parishes to seek an agreement that is palatable to all. Additionally, we are liaising with CDC, OCC and MCNPF to ensure that developers at Heyford Park make contributions to local infrastructure improvements *in proportion* to the impact on the Parishes. We rejected initial sums being discussed for traffic calming measures due to the proposed amount of money being offered would not be sufficient to implement the calming measures that Lower Heyford and Caulcott would require.

ROAD SURFACING

The Parish Council has been working alongside OCC Highways for over 3 years to endeavour to clear the backlog of road maintenance. As a result of our work we are extremely pleased that instead of temporary 'patching', the entire village of Lower Heyford was recently properly resurfaced to a degree of robustness that should last for many years. We received a letter of thanks from OCC crediting the residents for being so co-operative with the disruption and for ensuring that vehicles were removed from the roads during the works. Additionally, a number of drains have been cleared to assist the correct running of excess water; this will help prevent future damage to the new road surface. We hope you are as pleased with the results as we are.

SPEED AWARENESS

We are fully aware of the disruption and danger to village life caused by the increased traffic volumes and traffic speeding we are experiencing on the B4030, Station Road and Upper Heyford Road. The increase in traffic over the last few years has rendered the battery packs for our two existing fixed Speed Identification Devices (SIDs) inadequate.

The PC has purchased two upgraded pole mounted SIDs. We have been working with OCC and have had 7 bases installed throughout the Parish, where these can be safely and effectively mounted. One benefit of the upgraded SIDs is that they will be mounted on removable and rotatable posts, so the two SIDs can be routinely moved between the seven locations. The devices will also enable us to collect and monitor traffic flow and speeds through downloadable data. We will use this to inform OCC of persistent issues that can then be used as preliminary evidence for future traffic calming discussions.



One benefit of the upgraded SIDs is that they will be mounted on removable and rotatable posts, so the two SIDs can be routinely moved between the seven locations. The devices will also enable us to collect and monitor traffic flow and speeds through downloadable data. We will use this to inform OCC of persistent issues that can then be used as preliminary evidence for future traffic calming discussions.

We will use this to inform OCC of persistent issues that can then be used as preliminary evidence for future traffic calming discussions.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

The COVID pandemic has highlighted some of the real benefits of living in a small community. Back in March many of you volunteered to ensure that our more vulnerable neighbours were kept safe and supplied, when access to shops, transport and medical facilities was limited. In fact, there were more volunteers than we needed. What a glowing endorsement of our residents! All of you that volunteered rightly deserve recognition for your selflessness. Pictured below are two brothers, Olly (l) and George (r) Daly who received an Unsung Hero



certificate from Victoria Prentis, our MP, for their delivery of medications in the villages. Well done to them and everyone else for displaying real community spirit in challenging times.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

While the PC endeavours to address the concerns of its residents, it is a community effort and the Parish Council cannot find the time to do everything. Therefore we ask that if you can spare some time to assist on projects that benefit us all, then please do. Many hands make light work!

FIXMYSTREET—Super-user

Undoubtably, there will be issues with highways and footpaths in the future so we are **seeking a volunteer** to receive training as a FIXMYSTREET super-user. Local trials have demonstrated that these super-users have rapidly increased the response time of local authorities to carry out repairs. The time commitment is minimal and full training is provided.

Community Speedwatch

The PC is very much aware of the dangers of speeding traffic, especially on Station Road and through the Caulcott dip. In order to address this the PC has recently committed up to £1,500 to purchase equipment to enable residents of Caulcott and Lower Heyford to start up a Speedwatch group.

Speedwatch is a system that has full police support and training and is designed to help residents improve their environment and slow speeding traffic. **The PC is currently in process of trying to find volunteers to operate such a scheme to enable them to make a difference. Full training will be given to all those who wish to help by giving up an hour or two of your time each month.**

Please let the **Parish Clerk, Cathy Fleet**, know if you would like to help at 01869 347 000 or send her an e-mail to: parishclerk.lowerheyford@gmail.com

