

NEWINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 15th October 2020

Attendees	Cllr. James Nettleton (JN) Cllr. Mike Black (MB) Cllr. Peter Ablett (PA) Cllr. Graham Howlett (GH) Cllr. Duncan Howlett (DH) Cllr. David Turner (DT) (SODC) Cllr. Lorraine Lindsey-Gale (LLG) (OCC) Bianca Rush (BR) (Clerk)
Apologies	None.

Ref	Item	Notes	Action
44/20	Introduction	The Chair (JN) opened the meeting and welcomed all present.	
45/20	Apologies	None.	
46/20	Minutes of the Last Meeting	Actions from last meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chalgrove planning response – Done. - MB to contact Brian Tuckwell about camera placement - DH to fix styles – Done. - JN to look into VAT reclaims – Carried forwards. - PA/MB Newington News – done – thanks to PA and MB for their great work on this newsletter. - MB to contact highways to find out if signs can come down near front of Holcombe Lane – Road yet to be repaired so agreed to keep in situ for now. Minutes of last meeting approved.	JN
47/20	Matters Arising	None.	
48/20	Open Forum & Village Matters	None.	
49/20	District Councillor Report (DT)	Has sent supplementary report for September. South and Vale putting development money into sites that already have approval to make them more affordable for rent. Good initiative with funding of around £8m. Another person prosecuted for fly tipping on A4074 near Wallingford – this person has appeared in court and been fined. District council launched a campaign to clean up the Thames for both wildlife and people. Covid-19 infection rate currently still increasing across the UK however Oxfordshire is still at Amber. We are preparing for any changes should we be put into a higher category. New council offices will not be put at Crowmarsh. Looking at an HQ in Didcot at the Gateway, which will be more sustainable and will save a lot of money. Have been meeting in Didcot which makes sense since it is midway between the two councils.	

		<p>Feedback on local plan received 930 responses, which is all being worked on. Now assessing the key issues to develop policies and actions.</p> <p>Local plan went through the IP. Inspectors prelim report – comments need to be in by 2nd November 2020 at the latest. We then await inspectors final report. LLG mentions initiative organised by Ian Goldsmith writing to John Howlett about the Chalgrove plans – 19 parishes combined.</p> <p>JN states that he has been working with Ian Goldsmith to support with writing to John Howlett. Thanks to Ian Goldsmith for his fantastic work on this.</p> <p>PA raises issue of Land Value Capture. Homes England own the land, and they will sell it to a developer. The increase in value if they get planning permission will be significant, and this value would go to central government. Is there a proposal that local authorities will be able to intervene, and take a share of that increase in value? Not just from CIL or section 106, but actually get a cash payment. DT says that apart from CIL and section 106 he hasn't heard anything about this.</p>	
50/20	<p>County Councillor Report (LLG)</p>	<p>New bus service between Cowley and Abingdon. Delighted that this has been reinstated. Service funded for 2 years. There is a real hope that local people use it; if we don't use it we will lose it. This solves problem of getting local children to school.</p> <p>Going back to school is going very well, around 95% of schools are back and a large number are in attendance. All credit to the staff who have been phenomenal. Thanks also to staff at County Council who have been working hard to spread the word about how safe it is to send children back. So far, no lockouts from school. A few cases of isolation, but nothing more. Everything is being managed well. Things are safe and children are back learning. County council has now launched their own track and trace system in case there is a positive case. Contacting people by phone, and if they can't reach by phone, they will send officers out. Have a tried and tested process which is working well. County Council doing as much as they can to see that Oxfordshire doesn't have to go into any higher level of restriction.</p> <p>JN questions Clifton Hampden bypass and asks where this would go. LLG would like to arrange for some officers to come and talk to NPC. The officers have been to Culham, Clifton Hampden, the Baldwins, and surrounding villages. If we would like a briefing with the planning team LLG can arrange this for NPC. Bypass will hit A415 on the Culham side of the railway line, just after the railway as you drive to Culham. It will come up in front of the Culham Science Centre where there will be a big roundabout. All the through traffic will be syphoned off round the back of Clifton Hampden and join up with the other road near the golden ball. Planning officers seem to agree that it is a good route. This raises concern for traffic at the Golden Balls Roundabout. There is £1million put aside to conduct a study into what is the best solution for the roundabout. Hopefully by the time the officers get to discuss with NPC they will have a good plan for this. Local village is concerned about the volume of</p>	

traffic that will pass through. Lots of options considered over the years, and this is a tricky issue. At the moment they don't have an answer, but they know they need to come up with one. This is likely to connect the Stadhampton bypass. This could then act as a link from Didcot to the M40 – to the north of Chiselhampton.

PA asks about OxCams expressway. LLG says they are all told that this is stalled; possibly not going ahead. LLG fears the link road will be a substitute for the expressway.

JN asks about Nuneham Courtenay PAGE. Nuneham Courtenay managed to challenge the original site allocation. As a result, the county council decided to go right back to the beginning of their assessments. The earliest we will be looking at proposals for other sites and having a consultation will probably be March 2021 or later. LLG confirms that Newington may still be an option for the proposed site. It may however prove that this area can't provide sufficient volume of gravel that's needed. If this is the case they may go back to NC for the balance. No site is out of the frame at the moment. There was once a proposal to extract gravel from Chalgrove, however it was rejected at the time as the land was deemed worthy of protection.

30 libraries open which is hugely important. LLG pushed hard to get them open since they are a priority, educationally and socially important for people. They are a safe public space. We have adopted track and trace, masks are compulsory, numbers are limited. Very pleased about that.

County Council announced yesterday that they are taking over the local track and trace system. They also have a local team who are responsible for going round communities and checking how people are following the guidelines and persuading people who aren't following guidelines to do so. Team of officers from all 6 councils will be going round to check and see how people are carrying on.

LLG sent a nice story about some Vikings. A lovely and delightful story, two chaps reunited after 1,000 years and the fact that the Brits beat the Vikings in Oxford.

Raised issue of the drainage issues on Thame Road. MB chased this up again this week. Suzie was dealing with James Raffel. LLG was in Garsington with JR today looking at their drains. JR apologised for the delay. Due to limited funding the county council are not currently in a position to carry out this work this financial year, therefore it is necessary to delay this to the next financial year. MB raises the fact that this is not a newly reported issue but rather has been going on for years. MB highlights that the drain is blocked in 5 places – including the post of an AMCO barrier which goes straight through the drains. LLG expresses shared frustration with this issue – sadly the answer is the same in many locations at the moment; houses in Kidlington are flooded which is what they are currently dealing with. Shared frustration. LLG apologises that this hasn't been sorted. There are communities all over the county complaining about similar issues, and LLG doesn't know what they can do since the budget is so tight.

51a/20 MB	SAD Speed Awareness Device	<p>MB has had a note from Jon Beale to apologise for the delay as the contractors are supposed to have put the pole in already, but he is now chasing them. Hopefully the installation will happen imminently.</p> <p>MB asks why Warborough's speed device is permanently illuminated. LLG unsure, highlights that they have bought 3 devices, to be installed in conjunction with the County Council.</p>	
51b/20 DH/GH	CommLiaison/ Notice Board	No updates.	
51c/20 DH/GH	Planning Applications	Newington Nurseries has been approved. Nothing new.	
51d/20 PA/MB	Church Revival	<p>Actions: MB/PA to contact DAC to find out about car park permissions. MB to contact SODC to find out the fees for planning permissions. MB asks if we are happy to put this through. Diocese agree that the car park can be situated on this piece of land, however we need a separate note on headed paper so that the planning team can see that we have approval. We therefore want to proceed with pre-application advice. The land agent will need to see a copy of the plans. Drawings have gone to the land agent. GH states that there are certain aspects that he doesn't agree with; GH to meet with the land agent. GH and DH state that the drawings in the newsletter looked different to the initial drawings by architect; raised questions of the size of the car park and the graveyard. GH states that the land agent needs to see the plans before applying for pre-planning advice.</p> <p>PA states that we have an agreement in principle that we use the land for a car park – not only in principle but it was their suggestion that we use the land for a car park. All expressed desire to ensure any new car park has sufficient gated entrance to prevent unlawful use.</p> <p>Agreed that we need to get a yes/no from the community before project goes ahead. Do we get the pre-app advice and then ask the community, or do we ask the community and then go for pre-app? We do have £1,400 in the bank from DT which could fund the pre-app.; W need to get DT's go-ahead but then the hope is that we can use this money for this, and then go from there.</p> <p>Lengthy discussion about the overall feasibility of the project as a whole. Is it too high an investment for such a small village? DH expressed concerns regarding feasibility of the project as a whole, considering feasibility/cost/justification of project scale.</p> <p>Discussed the ideal scale of project. Do we want a scaled back project to install toilets/kitchen, or do we want a full renovation? All agreed that we want to improve the church. Further discussion needed. JN questions if the car park is the first step, as opposed to putting some loos in the church. PA feels we wouldn't get a lot of usage out of the church without the car park (chicken and egg), secondly PA feels it is an easier and smaller project to do than the rest of the works in the church.</p> <p>Action: MB and DH to get together to discuss pre-app plans to talk these through before submitting.</p>	<p>MB/PA</p> <p>MB/DH</p>

51e/20 MB/JN	Event Co-ordination	No events planned at present because of Covid-19 restrictions.	
51f/20 BR	Website Management	Parish laptop is not working. £100 spend authorised to cover laptop repair as required.	
51g/20 PA/MB	Neighbourhood Plan	No updates.	
51h/20 MB/GH/ PA	New Highways/ Potholes	MB met with representative of local speeding alliance to give history of issues within the village.	
51i/20 JN	Responsible Financial Officer	Reviewed cashbook. All satisfied with current position.	
51j/20 DH	Footpaths	MB raised issue of brambles near pinch point in village. Action: JN to look into getting this cut back.	JN
51k/20 BR	Upcoming Training Events	None.	
52/20	AOB	Three cheques authorised and seconded: Clerk Pay, Clerk Tax, £40 AGAR fee. Add planning officers RE new road to top of agenda for next meeting. LLG to arrange planning officers to join next meeting to discuss Clifton Hampden Bypass. Setting a precept: JN suggests we keep this the same as in previous years. Unanimously agreed.	BR / LLG
53/20	Date of Next Meetings	Thursday 17 th December 2020 Proposed dates: Thursday 18 th February 2021 Thursday 15 th April 2021 Thursday 20 th May 2021 Thursday 22 nd July 2021 Thursday 16 th September 2021 Thursday 18 th November 2021	

Signed: Chairman

Date:

Appendix 1.1 – Cllr David Turner’s Additions to September Report

SODC Councillor (Chalgrove Ward) Supplementary Report (October 15th)

£8 million of new funding for affordable homes across South and Vale. £8 million could be pumped into providing more affordable homes across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse following Cabinet meetings at the two district councils. Both councils have a strong commitment to delivering genuinely affordable housing, and reports being discussed by the councils’ Cabinets set out the options to how to spend nearly £4 million in each district to provide a huge boost to local families looking for affordable homes in the area. Cabinet members will discuss making a recommendation to spend the money, which has been received from housing developers that are building in the two districts. This would be additional to targets that the developers are already committed to as part of their planning permissions. This council led initiative will deliver much needed affordable housing, community-led projects and environmentally sustainable projects across the two districts. The reports were discussed at the Cabinet meetings at South Oxfordshire District Council earlier in October and at Vale of White Horse District Council. The funding will be secured through a variety of means such as developer contributions and through an affordable housing delivery programme. There will be criteria on how the money may be spent. The housing industry was particularly affected by the Covid19 lockdown when construction sites closed earlier this year. During this time, the housing industry has been delivering homes at a slower rate than before. Additional investment will ensure that momentum is kept in the delivery of much-needed affordable homes for our residents.

Cllr Robin Bennett, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: “We’ll be working tirelessly to ensure that residents of South Oxfordshire have genuinely affordable homes available. This funding allows us to support social rent housing, which is substantially cheaper than market rents, as well as projects with high environmental standards, and will be one of many steps we’ll be taking in the coming years to make a significant difference to the availability of good quality homes our residents, and their children and families, can afford to live in.”

Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Development and Infrastructure at Vale of White Horse District Council, said “It’s no secret that we live in one of the least affordable areas of the country and we’re doing everything within our power to address that challenge. There are long term problems to tackle, but we can also address immediate difficulties, and this money would make a significant difference in the lives of many in our district in the very near future. I have been an active supporter of affordable housing initiatives and I hope that this new investment will help to make these a reality.”

Northamptonshire man prosecuted for fly-tipping Reading office waste in South Oxfordshire. South Oxfordshire District Council has successfully prosecuted a 30-year-old man from Northampton for fly-tipping and not having a waste carrier’s licence, among other offences, after office furniture was found strewn at the side of the A4074 near Wallingford last year. Paul Parker, from Chadwick Gardens, Northampton attended Oxford Magistrates’ Court on 9 October via video link.

Cleaner Thames River. South Oxfordshire District Council is stepping up its campaign to make the River Thames safe for wildlife and river users by calling for an end to sewage overflows, more public information on water quality and more stringent water testing in the river. The Thames and its tributaries in Oxfordshire are a haven for wildlife.

Leader’s statement to council 8 October 2020. Covid19 update. Unfortunately, we are still living in strange times because of the coronavirus outbreak. Infection rates are increasing across the country although our district currently remains at the amber level (Medium risk), but we’re preparing for any changes to that, and to any future changes to restrictions whether that’s nationally or locally.

Our continuing campaign for cleaner air. To mark Clean Air Day (Thursday 8 October) South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils launched a new campaign to encourage people to use fewer polluting means of transport, such as walking and cycling, for local journeys. Since March many of us have changed where we work and how far we travel.

Didcot Gateway – the home of the new South and Vale district council offices. Released on October 6, 2020 Didcot will be the home of the new offices for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils in a move that will help to secure a more sustainable future for the councils, both economically and environmentally.

Oxford to Cambridge Arc: a global asset and national investment priority. Bold vision to create a global hub for innovation and green development that inspires communities worldwide. The Oxford to Cambridge Arc, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer described as a “key economic priority” for the country, has unveiled its bold vision in a prospectus that has been submitted to Government. This of course has many implications including more housing and traffic issues.

South Oxfordshire councillors use feedback to develop Corporate Plan themes for the future. In July of this year Cabinet members at South Oxfordshire District Council asked residents and those working in the district to have their say on what mattered to them about where they live to help form the themes of the forthcoming Corporate Plan. The survey had a great response with over 930 people giving their views.

Local Plan to 2035. Released on September 21, 2020 Councillors in South Oxfordshire are urging residents, communities, local businesses and organisations to have their say on a number of changes proposed in a preliminary report by the Planning Inspector to the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. The emerging Local Plan is currently being progressed to adoption under a Direction from the Secretary of State. Your views are important. The closing date for inputs is Monday 2nd November. See the SODC website for more details.

David Turner

SODC Councillor (Chalgrove Ward)

15th October 2020

Appendix 1.2 – Cllr David Turner’s October Report

SODC Councillor’s Monthly Report October 2020

The following was sent to all Parish Clerks last week:

New Covid-19 restrictions now in place. We have lots to share with you today, including some important updates related to the pandemic.

The first thing to say, which will come as no surprise is that sadly the country is heading in the wrong direction with Covid-19. Further restrictions to help control the spread and the impact are being announced daily and sometimes throughout the day. Until the situation changes this trend is likely to continue and confirms that Covid will remain a significant issue for district, town and parish councils alike for some time to come.

The most recent announcement by the Prime Minister was around introducing further measures in the leisure and hospitality industries. The additional restrictions on indoor sports will have implications for our leisure centres, which we are already working with our leisure provider GLL to understand and implement. We’ll let you know as soon as we have more information to share on this.

The most significant implication for the district councils will be if we are heading into a further lockdown. Unlike before, we will be responsible for distributing the thousands of food parcels that were previously distributed by central government to shielded residents. This would mean our weekly food distribution service, which we introduced to compliment the government scheme, would have to ramp up its operations from managing around 70 boxes a week to over 900.

We are therefore likely to need your help more than ever before in your roles to support the Covid-19 volunteer networks in your communities. As we saw over the earlier phases of the pandemic, our local communities have huge resources in terms of local knowledge and potential volunteers. This may become even more important over the coming weeks and months, particularly when we also factor in adverse weather such as snow and ice, so we need to be prepared. In a future update we’ll share details on how we

can support you in these preparations. If you have any questions now, please contact our Coronavirus Community Support on 01235 422600 or email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Public facing buildings must display QR code poster. Don't forget – if you have a building that is open to the public, you must now display a poster including the QR code for the new NHS Covid-19 Track and Trace app. This includes town and village halls, community centres and sports clubs etc. Anyone who visits a building must scan the app with their mobile phone to log their visit. This means that they can be contacted to self-isolate if somebody that visited at the same time shows symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19. The posters are a legal requirement for all publicly accessible buildings. It's very important to note that your venues need to have an alternative check-in process for visitors who aren't tech-savvy – most places are simply asking their visitors to sign-in and provide their name and phone number using a pen and paper. If you run a public facing building you can download a poster by visiting the [government's website](#). There's more information in the email we sent you on Monday – a copy of this is in the attached document.

£500 for low-income families. The government recently announced a £500 support grant for low-income families that are forced to self-isolate for two weeks following a Covid-19 test. We've been asked to administer this scheme and are urgently looking into the implications as we have just a couple of weeks to put a system in place. We'll provide more information when we have it.

Businesses invited to share their Covid-19 experiences. To help us understand how Covid-19 has affected businesses in our districts we've launched a business recovery survey.

Through the survey we hope to establish how businesses have managed to adapt to the various challenges they have faced during the pandemic. We will use the feedback we receive to provide any help and support businesses need, as part of our Economic Recovery Plan.

Please encourage businesses in your communities to share their experiences via our [South and Vale Business Support website](#). The survey closes at midnight on 30 September.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan Consultation. We've just launched a six-week consultation on a number of changes proposed by the Planning Inspector to South Oxfordshire's emerging Local Plan 2035. To view and have your say on the Proposed Main Modifications and supporting documents please visit southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan, the deadline for giving feedback is Monday 2 November. If you know someone without internet access, they can view the documents at the following locations listed below. However, we are urging people to check the opening times and any Covid-19 and social distancing measures that might be in place before travelling:

- Public libraries in South Oxfordshire – people can check which libraries are open on [Oxfordshire County Council's website](#)
- Chalgrove Post Office
- Culham Parish Council (contact Cllr Casey-Rerhaye to arrange a viewing of the documents - Sam.Casey-Rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk or 01235 799489)

Note - the availability of the documents at these locations might change in response to the ongoing pandemic.

The consultation documents are also available at our offices on Milton Park, however as our offices remain closed to the public this is strictly by appointment-only. Appointments can be arranged through our Planning Policy team on 01235 422600 or email planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk – they can also provide any support with accessing the consultation materials.

Recycle Week. To mark Recycle Week our Waste team has created a series of social media videos to help residents to get their recycling right and to help lower rates of recycling contamination. Please feel free to share the videos with residents:

- Together we recycle – Help at home <https://youtu.be/m8P-RmQcRBQ>

- Together we recycle – Help the bin crews https://youtu.be/uctxUw3_q3Y
- Together we recycle – call centre help - https://youtu.be/CYKa0fM5_ow
- Together we recycle – Help behind the scenes - <https://youtu.be/k2Bk8Xc52PQ>
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We have also published the results of our [Great Green Bin Recycling Quiz which](#) launched over the summer. If you didn't get the chance to take part and you'd like to test your recycling knowledge you still can by clicking on the link.

Comms Team

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

www.southoxon.gov.uk @southoxon

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk @whitehorsedc

Additional Item:

18,700 homes urged to respond to voter registration reminder. Released on September 13, 2020.

Households in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are being urged to respond immediately if they receive a yellow reminder letter from the district council about their voter registration details. Over the summer South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils sent a 'Canvass Communication Form' to every home requiring residents to check and confirm the details of everyone over the age of 16 that lives in their property. The councils are now sending a yellow reminder form to around 18,700 homes who failed to respond and whose occupants over the age of 16 may have changed since last year.

The councils are sending the reminder letters because by law they need to ensure the electoral register is up to date. The reminder letters explain exactly what occupants need to do - it is very important that residents read it carefully and follow the instructions to confirm any changes. The easiest way to do this is by visiting householdresponse.com/southandvale – they will need the two-part code on the yellow letter to do this. By doing this as quickly as possible it will mean that the councils don't have to use additional resources trying to contact people this Autumn to confirm the information. Margaret Reed, Electoral Registration Officer for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, said: "We'd like to thank everyone who needed to respond to our first letter and did so. However, there are around 18,700 homes we are yet to hear from whose occupants over the age of 16 may have changed since last year. We are now writing to these homes again asking the residents to confirm their details. "If you receive a reminder letter please respond as soon as possible. This will help to ensure that we don't have to spend unnecessary time and resources contacting properties again in the autumn to confirm their details."

David Turner

SODC Councillor (Chalgrove Ward)

September 29th 2020

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS – OCTOBER 2020
BY Cllr LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE**

MORE LIBRARIES OPEN ACROSS THE COUNTY

19 of our libraries have already re-opened, with more to follow this month. Locally, we now have seven core libraries open: Abingdon, Thame, Didcot, Cowley, Henley, Wallingford and Berinsfield. Plus Faringdon, Sonning Common, Watlington, Woodcote and Chinnor Community libraries are opening during the week commencing 12th October.

The library network is part of my Portfolio of responsibilities, and I am delighted that the County Council has been able to open so many, in a very COVID-19 safe way. It has not been as easy as you might think, but I feel it is so important to provide our residents with a safe and secure public space at a time when other venues are facing huge challenges. We ask visitors to wear masks, register with the contact tracing system, use hand sanitiser and keep their distance. All returned books are quarantined for 72 hours before being put back on the shelves. We are still not collecting any fines!

RETURN TO SCHOOL GOING WELL

This week as the Cabinet Member responsible for the Education Service, I was also pleased to be able to issue a press release **praising parents, carers, pupils, teachers and school support staff** for their commitment to ensuring a safe return to the classroom, despite the continued national challenges of COVID-19.

Pupil attendance in all Oxfordshire schools is currently significantly higher than the national average: **For Oxfordshire maintained schools, it was 93.3% on 29th September, compared to 88.7% across England.**

Schools are working hard to carefully manage their COVID-19 safety measures. They are regularly communicating details to parents, carers and pupils by letter, social media and online virtual meetings giving parents confidence to return their children to the classroom, maintain attendance, and enhance their children’s wellbeing.

Head teachers and members of the Council’s public health and education teams have put in place robust processes so that schools, colleges and early years settings can respond quickly and appropriately to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

COVID-19 UPDATE

South Oxfordshire continues to remain at alert level green. But **Oxford City**, currently at amber alert status is edging closer to a **red alert level**. The sharp rise in cases in Oxford is a fast moving situation and the County Council is monitoring it very closely. We are working with partners to send increased and targeted warnings that call on people to follow the government guidance.

The **NHS COVID-19 APP is now live** – please download it if you can. The more people who use the APP the more we can keep each other safe and stop the infection rates rising. If you do not have COVID-19 symptoms please do not book a test. You could be taking a test away from someone who really needs it, like a key worker.

COVID SECURE TEAM – a new development

To help ensure that government safety rules are being applied, a new COVID Secure Team is has been established across Oxfordshire. Funded by the County Council's NHS Test and Trace grant, and delivered jointly across all Oxfordshire councils, the Team's aim is to encourage compliance by businesses and the public and to provide a visible and reassuring presence on the county's streets.

THE COUNTY NEEDS MORE CARERS

Residents across Oxfordshire are being encouraged to find their career in care thanks to an innovative partnership between our own Oxfordshire Employment and Style Acre. The Careers in Care programme, which has been extended to 31 March 2021, is designed to bring individuals closer to voluntary and paid employment through bespoke work experience. Oxfordshire needs more people to consider care as a career, so please help raise the profile of this fantastic programme with residents in your community.

VIKINGS REUNITED

A family is being reunited from our Museums Service after 1,000 years and an Oxford Massacre

Two Vikings from the same family are to be reunited more than 1,000 years after their deaths, thanks to help from our Museum Service. We have a skeleton that is one of at least 35 men and boys believed to be victims of Oxford's St Brice's Day Massacre of AD 1002, in which dozens of Danish raiders, settlers and their offspring were thought to have been executed on the orders of the King Aethelred II of England. The skeleton is held at our Museum Resource Centre in Standlake, West Oxfordshire.

Now DNA evidence has shown that a male skeleton, discovered during an excavation in Denmark, is closely related to one of the Oxfordshire victims – known as SK1756.

Next year, SK1756 will be taken 'home' to Denmark to be included in a Viking exhibition alongside the latest Danish discovery – believed to be a close relative such as an uncle, nephew, grandfather, grandson or half-brother.

In the meantime, SK1756 is set to be featured in a Danish TV documentary about the Vikings. The Director of the National Museum of Denmark, Dr Rane Willerslev, visited Standlake with a television crew on Thursday, September 24, where he interviewed Oxfordshire's Curator of Archaeology, Angie Bolton, for the documentary.

Dr Willerslev said: "It was strange to see this skeleton – one of your ancestors – which had been hit eight to 10 times in the head and stabbed several times in the spine, just lying there in front of you."

The mass grave was discovered in 2008 when archaeological excavations took place ahead of a development in the grounds of Oxford University's St John's College. Research shows that they had all been massacred at the same time, probably in AD 1002.

Isotopic analysis suggests that some of the victims originated from within the UK, Denmark and Germany. The massacre was prompted by King Aethelred's frustration at his inability to stop Viking invaders from raiding England.

"I don't think there will be any hard feelings towards the Brits," Dr Willerslev joked. "People always think the Vikings went overseas and killed and plundered, but here the situation is turned around. It's payback!"

The documentary and the exhibition, due to open at the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen in 2021 and run in various forms until 2024, show that the Danes still embrace their Viking heritage.

The Museums Resource Centre is the principal store for all archaeological sites excavated or studied in Oxfordshire. Collections include sites and objects from every period of human history - prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval.

As many of you will know, I am an archaeologist, and just couldn't resist telling you about this fascinating discovery. The Museum Service is also part of my Portfolio, and very dear to my heart.
