

Chairman's Report 2025/2026 & Financial Report – Item 4 BPC APM.

4.1 Introduction

Over the past year, the Parish Council has dedicated itself to representing residents, addressing ongoing challenges, and implementing improvements throughout the village. This report details the Council's principal areas of work, notable achievements, and future priorities for the coming year.

4.2 Village & Infrastructure

The Council has maintained continuous communication with Oxfordshire County Council to address essential infrastructure issues, including the upkeep and renewal of road markings (both white and yellow lining) and the ongoing repair and maintenance of pavements. These efforts ensure the safety and accessibility of village thoroughfares for all residents.

Responding to specific concerns raised by the community, the Council has tackled issues such as overgrown hedges and blocked footpaths, as well as traffic congestion and parking challenges, particularly around schools and Ells Lane.

Regular installation and maintenance of litter bins and dog waste bins, along with the provision and repair of street furniture, have been prioritised to enhance village cleanliness and amenities.

The Council has continued to work closely with Bloxham School, focusing on matters related to highways, parking, and community use, strengthening the relationship between the school and the wider village.

4.3 Planning & Development

Active involvement in assessing major planning applications has been a key activity, particularly those impacting the village through large-scale housing proposals. Where consultation processes have been insufficient or information inaccurate, the Council has formally challenged such proceedings to safeguard the interests of the village.

Ongoing engagement with Cherwell District Council has centred on housing supply pressures and the implications of the Local Plan. The Council routinely reviews and responds to weekly planning applications to ensure that community views are represented in local development decisions.

4.4 Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan

Work has continued developing the Draft Modified Neighbourhood Plan. The Council has delivered public consultation events and organized information sessions for residents to keep the community informed and involved. The Bloxham Regulation 16 Modified Neighbourhood Plan has now reached the examination phase and is expected to be called to Referendum for village residents in 2 to 3 months.

Efforts have been made to address community concerns and counter misinformation, with significant engagement and, at times, challenge from residents to ensure transparency and inclusivity in the planning process.

4.5 Flooding & Environment

The Flooding Working Group has achieved significant progress, including securing funding support and hosting a well-attended public meeting. Collaboration with partners and landowners continues to be essential in this area.

Practical steps such as Brook clearance works and the exploration of Natural Flood Management solutions have been undertaken to reduce flood risks.

Environmental improvements at The Slade have focused on biodiversity initiatives and volunteer engagement, with ongoing maintenance work enhancing this vital community space.

4.6 Traffic, Highways & Safety

The Council has consistently lobbied for speed reduction measures, improved signage, and overall road safety enhancements. Requests have been made for the reinstatement of speed cameras and further traffic calming improvements.

Footpath safety and traffic flow through key village areas remain ongoing concerns, with the Council continuing to address these issues to improve safety and accessibility for residents. Currently the Council is investigating the update of the 2016 Sustrans Report.

4.7 Community & Engagement

Strong engagement with residents has been achieved through public forums at monthly Council meetings and dedicated public meetings, such as those focused on flooding and draft NDP proposals. The Council supports various community initiatives and events, including the Farmers Market and the Remembrance Sunday parade.

Efforts to enhance communication and accessibility continue, with the aim of fostering a more informed and connected community.

4.8 Community Facilities & Projects

The maintenance and improvement of local assets have been a priority, demonstrated through repairs to Jubilee Park play equipment and the exploration of installing outdoor adult gym equipment.

The Council has supported local organisations by backing funding applications, such as the Bowls Club roof project. Tree management and environmental improvements have also featured prominently among the Council's activities.

4.9 Governance & Council Changes

The year saw changes in Council leadership, including the resignation of the previous Chairman and the appointment of a new Chairman. New councillors have been co-opted to maintain full membership, ensuring effective representation for the community.

Continued training and development have been provided for councillors, strengthening governance and Council effectiveness.

4.10 Financial Report

The Council remains financially robust, closing the year with a balance of £296,533. Key expenditures included the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, village maintenance (such as grass cutting, tree work, and waste bins), and support for community grants and initiatives.

Major sources of income are the parish precept and VAT returns. The Council continues to manage funds responsibly, aligning financial decisions with village priorities and ongoing commitments.

4.11 Priorities for 2026/2027

- Progress and finalize the Neighbourhood Plan
- Continue engagement on planning and development pressures
- Deliver further flood mitigation work
- Improve traffic safety and infrastructure
- Invest in community facilities and green spaces
- Strengthen communication with residents

4.12 Closing Remarks

This year has been both challenging and productive. The Parish Council remains dedicated to advocating for residents and supporting the long-term future of Bloxham.