

Appleford-on-Thames Parish Council, Chair's Report, May 2026

Appleford-on-Thames Parish Council continues to:

- strategically monitor and contribute to local infrastructure planning and development
- upgrade village environment and amenities
- champion community cohesion in conjunction with the Appleford Community Project
- improve council governance

Key achievements and activities from the past year include:

- **Infrastructure and Planning (Greg O'Broin & Manu Mavrikis):**
 - **HIF1 Relief Road Lobbying:** Following the approval of the HIF1 scheme by the Secretary of State at the end of 2024, APC's Greg O'Broin continues to lead the mitigation of impacts on Appleford village through regular engagement with Oxfordshire County Council, local parishes and public stakeholders. With construction underway, villagers are encouraged to stay abreast of ongoing planning updates, particularly those relating to B4016 road closure, potential upgrade of the diverted footpath to a cycle route, and associated provision of more stopping train services.
 - **Village Hall:** in the process of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), updating the lease, and improving day to day management. Greg O'Broin has led creation of a new management committee, and will continue to support this, whilst handing over day to day administration to Teresa Flinders: More volunteers sought to support planned improvements, e.g. Gigaclear broadband.
 - **Battery Energy Storage System (BESS):** Greg O'Broin led public meetings, and stakeholder engagement for 300MW BESS facility planned along the B4016, at the southern entrance to Appleford. This has resulted in an Agreement for a 5 year £10k option to lay an underground cable through Appleford Orchard; substantial further funding for Appleford if exercised.
 - **Railway Improvements:** Manu Mavrikis continues to liaise with Network Rail, Great Western Railways and local councillors to enable additional commuting services, not least during proposed HIF1 closure of the B4016. Greg O'Broin further working with HIF1 team to contribute a station car park - and secure cycle parking - plus to resurface the Recreation Ground car park.
 - **Road Safety:** Manu Mavrikis maintains the Appleford Speed Infrastructure Devices (SIDS), and supports village-led road-safety task force. Disappointed by the lack of response from OCC Highways engagement following their visit to propose more formal traffic calming measures.
 - **Local Planning:** Villagers sought to support Greg O'Broin with responses to the many, and varied, local planning applications and consultations. Recent successes include continued Appleford Press Coverage, the refusal of the Waste Transfer application beyond 2050, and the request of an independent review of Waste & Minerals Sites Planning and Monitoring functions

- **Environmental & Village Improvements (Victoria Shepherd):**
 - **Recreation Ground:** temporary fencing, and planting to fill in gaps along the Main Road. Continued contract with APC gardening services.
 - **St. Edmund's Football Club:** renewed football contract, albeit increasing concerns with increasing dog waste.
 - **Dog waste bins:** upgrades progressing, with thanks to village dog warden for ongoing efforts to manage and maintain these.
 - **Village Tree Survey:** commissioned to support local tree health and safety.
 - **Public Rights of Way** and local **Liaison Meetings:** quarterly meetings with FCC Environment/Heidelberg Materials and RWE Didcot Power Station. Continued pressure to maintain (twice diverted) footpath to Sutton Courtenay (SC). Progress with Thames Water to reinstate Hobbyhorse Lane Bridleway to enable better cycle access into SC over the level crossing.
 - **Playground Upgrade:** quarterly and annual playground monitoring reports. Village proposal for play equipment improvements, pending village feedback. Volunteers needed to provide more regular playground and recreation ground monitoring.

- **Championing community cohesion (Claire Rees)**
 - **Community Survey:** working with Appleford Community Project to initiate a village satisfaction survey.
 - **Community events:** regular events to encourage villagers to come together: fortnightly Pizzas at the Recreation Ground, June Cream Tea, and November Bonfire night. Please share ideas for other events with Claire Rees.

- **Governance and Financial Management (All):**
 - commended for annual audit improvements, with implementation of a number of new and updated policies, plus full transition to APC website (and decommissioning of the old one), with thanks to clerk, Judy McCarthy.
 - further thanks to Greg O'Broin for providing financial oversight and integrity with regular bank reconciliations, and the implementation of new internal control procedures, including a corporate purchase card for the clerk. We encourage people with financial expertise to consider joining the council.
 - Continued encouragement of residents to join council, and to work together to represent their village, plus to use [Fix my street](#) to report local problems

Please consider joining Appleford Parish Council to maintain an active role administering parish activities, protecting village identity, monitoring planning applications, managing village assets, and encouraging local community: a new councillor is sought for the current vacancy.