

# NEWSLETTER FROM SOULDERN PARISH COUNCIL

**December 2014**

**We trust that you have all had a very happy Christmas. This newsletter is the first in a series which will be issued quarterly throughout the year. We hope you will find them informative.**

## **Looking Back**

2014 has been a year that has seen a lot of changes within the Parish Council. Following 6 years of tireless and invaluable service Alan Martin has been replaced by Nick Oakhill as Chairman. Dara Masterson-Jones has joined the Council and Nikki Robertson has recently replaced Jan Martin as Responsible Financial Officer. Whilst there are currently no further vacancies on the Council, in May 2015 Local Council elections will take place. If any parishioner is interested in becoming a Parish Councillor this is your opportunity! We are able to hold elections if there are more candidates than places.

Please contact Barbara for further information if you are interested.

## **Village Database**

One of our biggest challenges is to disseminate and distribute information to the community in a timely fashion, and to improve things the Parish Council would like to create a database of email addresses. If you would like to receive future editions of this newsletter by email or wish to be included on the database please send an email to [clerktosouldern-parishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:clerktosouldern-parishcouncil@gmail.com). At the same time if you wish to receive information on any of the articles in this newsletter please type the relevant heading on your email e.g Planning or Community Led Plan. For those that would prefer to receive a hard copy of the Newsletter do nothing, and edition two will be delivered in March 2015.

## **Development and Planning in Souldern**

To date we have been very fortunate that our village has not been subject to any large scale development proposals, but we must not be complacent as the pressure on Local authorities and Developers increases to provide large numbers of new properties.

The protocol for new planning applications is very transparent, and to this end the Parish Council is required to hold open meetings to discuss planning matters which parishioners are welcome to attend. In the first half of 2015 these will be held at 7:30pm in

## **Consideration for others in the community**

In all communities there are niggling issues that appear to be dealt with and then resurface occasionally; ours is no exception. Please would all parishioners be mindful of the following two which have recently been drawn to our attention:

**Dog Fouling:** The village is suffering from an increased incidence of dog fouling and abandoned green bags. We are in the process of obtaining a further supply of the bags from CDC, and there are already plenty available from the blue box alongside Spring Cottage (opposite village pond). The Parish Council will address this issue and possible solutions at their next meeting in January. In the meantime can we remind you that it is not enough just to put your dog's mess in a plastic bag, or leave the bag on the verge until later; you must take the bag away with you and dispose of it responsibly.

**Parking on pavements:** We have a couple of hotspots in the village where inconsiderate parking can make things tricky (dangerous) for other road users and pedestrians. These are the junction of Fox Lane with the High Street and the village pond area. Please consider others who may wish to pass using the pavement, when you are parking throughout the village, but particularly in the two areas mentioned. We have a very good road safety record, let's keep it that way.

## **Village Post Office**

For those that wish to make use of it, a post office facility is available between 9-10 a.m on Thursdays in Souldern Village Hall.

**Best Wishes to you all for the remainder of the festive season, and a very happy, prosperous and healthy start to 2015.**

## **Parish Council Meetings**

Please remember that Parish Council meetings are open to all residents. During 2015, these will be held in the Village Hall on Thursdays from 7:30 on –

22nd January

19th March

14th May (Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm)

16th July

17th September

19th November

Souldern Parish Council contact details are:

Chairman: Nick Oakhill - 01869 345784

Clerk: Barbara McGarry - 01869 345931

Email: [clerktosouldernparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:clerktosouldernparishcouncil@gmail.com)

the village hall on the following dates; Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February/ 8<sup>th</sup> April/ 11<sup>th</sup> June. Planning issues will also be dealt with at ordinary parish council meetings, for those that wish to attend.

### **Broadband update**

Firstly, the bad news..... Souldern was not covered by the initial round of funding to provide 90% of the CDC area with superfast Broadband by May 2015. The modelling for the first tranche of funding was done on a value for money basis ie the maximum number of premises passed for the amount of capital investment

Secondly, the slightly better news: the modelling data has been received for the next tranche of funding and subject to contract, Souldern is covered within the additional funding that Cherwell District Council is investing in the programme. CDC are going through the contract signing stage, which should be completed by mid January 2015. Once the contracts have been signed Better Broadband for Oxfordshire will update their website with a revised delivery plan outlining the preliminary delivery dates for the programme. Currently, the delivery schedule for the additional funding is 2016/17 but we have no further details beyond that at this stage. We will update you once more is available.

Thirdly, as an alternative option we might want to consider funding our own initiative to bring an enhanced broadband service to Souldern. Private companies, such as Gigaclear, are offering to install much faster broadband services to rural communities such as ours. This particular company is currently engaged with both Aynho and Croughton to explore the possibility of installing a better broadband service. As always there is a cost, and we have yet to explore the minutiae of private initiatives. If any parishioner has a burning desire, and feels suitably qualified, to become our Broadband white knight please take a step forward and contact either Nick or Barbara.

### **Village Website**

At various moments in time the creation of a Village website has been mooted. In the Spring of 2015 we are determined to make this happen, and to this end a couple of us have already started doing some background work on this project, but if there are any budding ( or experienced!) internet wizards out there who would be willing to get involved please contact either Barbara or Nick for further information.

### **Village Fayre**

In 2012 the community held a very successful celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and many people have expressed an interest in holding a village event along similar lines in the

future...Watch this space as plans are already afoot to stage a Village Fayre in June 2015. More information will be available early in the New Year. The primary aim is to get all involved and have fun together as a community so please do not be backwards in coming forwards to offer assistance!!

### **Community Led Plan**

In the spring of 2015 the Parish Council will launch a project to develop what is called a '*Community Led Plan*'. The keyword being "COMMUNITY", and all organisations within our village should be involved. The plan, once completed, should set out a vision of how our community wants to develop and identifies the action needed for us to achieve it. In preparing the plan everyone will be given the opportunity to say what they want in our village. For instance, do we want to explore the possibility of having a shop in the village; how do we feel about more housing development in the village; do we need better public transport; how do we care for all age groups within the village? If you would like to help with this project, please contact Barbara.

### **Village Playground**

Over the course of the summer the fence surrounding the playground was repaired and painted courtesy of a group of willing volunteers. Under the leadership of Rosie Sanders the playground group will be carrying out further work in the spring to give the area a bit of a facelift, once it has been decided what needs to be done. Helping hands are always welcome to assist with this task. Please contact Rosie (email [rosie@souldern.com](mailto:rosie@souldern.com)) at Souldern Manor for further information.

### **Nancy Bowles Wood**

Following the clearance of a small area of the wood at the beginning of the year three apple trees have been introduced into NBW this year, they are already growing on well thanks to the endeavours of Romney Summers and her team. This community woodland continues to provide a tranquil and beautiful area for parishioners to enjoy throughout the year. Please make the most of it, as the area is being managed for the benefit of our community.

### **Good Neighbourliness**

Please make sure that if you have any vulnerable neighbours, then you call in now and again to make sure they have what they need, for example, do they have sufficient heating and food; do they need help to get to the doctors or other important appointments? Are they worried about anything during the bad weather? We know that many residents in the village already do this and this is one of the things that makes Souldern so special.