



Uffington Parish Council

Annual Assembly

8 April 2024

Agenda

Annual Assembly

1. Introduction
2. Chair's Report for 2023/24
3. Flooding – Simon Jenkins
4. Uffington White Horse Restoration – Simon Jenkins
5. Council plans for 2024/2025
8. Public Forum - All
 - Other projects you'd like to see...
 - Any other points or questions....

Chair's Report for 2023-24

General Overview

- Stayed within budget and received no adverse audit comments
 - Routine maintenance of the village continued, including:
 - 2 Jubilee Field Tidies and road Verge Rubbish Picks
 - Pond part-clearance – no winter clearance due to weather
 - Removal of the poplars by the pond for safety reasons
 - We have continued to comment on all planning applications.
 - Started the New Play Equipment project
- and
- Started out an initial review of the 2019 Neighbourhood plan.

Report for 2023-24 – FP4

Completed the final project to convert FP4 **stiles to kissing gates** – grants from TOE, WHST, OCC were received which covered most the cost (Council c £1.6k approx 20%).



Old



New



Old

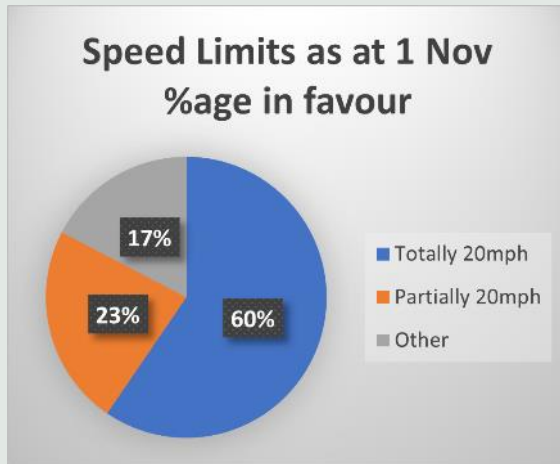


New



Report for 2023-24 – Road Safety

20 mph Started with a Courier Survey in Autumn 2022 so Council agreed to proceed.



OCC Survey took place in Feb and was approved by an OCC Highways Committee on 25 March. Implementation took place in May with all 30 mph signs being replaced by 20mph ones.

Speedwatch – successfully restarted once ‘gun’ and IT system approved and now in regular operation. There are 2 sessions most months in the last 12 months and 79 vehicles have been reported for speeding. More volunteers would be much appreciated!

There has been some reduction in speed but a lot still exceeding the limit – mainly in peak commute and school run times.

Report for 2023-24 - Coronation

We held a village event on 7th May to **celebrate the King's Coronation**. Fine weather and very well supported. Our thanks to all those who contributed, especially the Scouts with their climbing wall, Sam, Chris, Caroline and Lisa with the PTA BBQ, Alex with his music, Fay and the 'church tea ladies' for the teas, Karen, Juliet and Fenella with the children's games and not forgetting Dibbles with his ever-popular and entertaining tug-o-war!



Flooding



Flooding - Historic

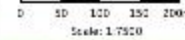
UFFINGTON HISTORIC FLOODING

Roads and Properties

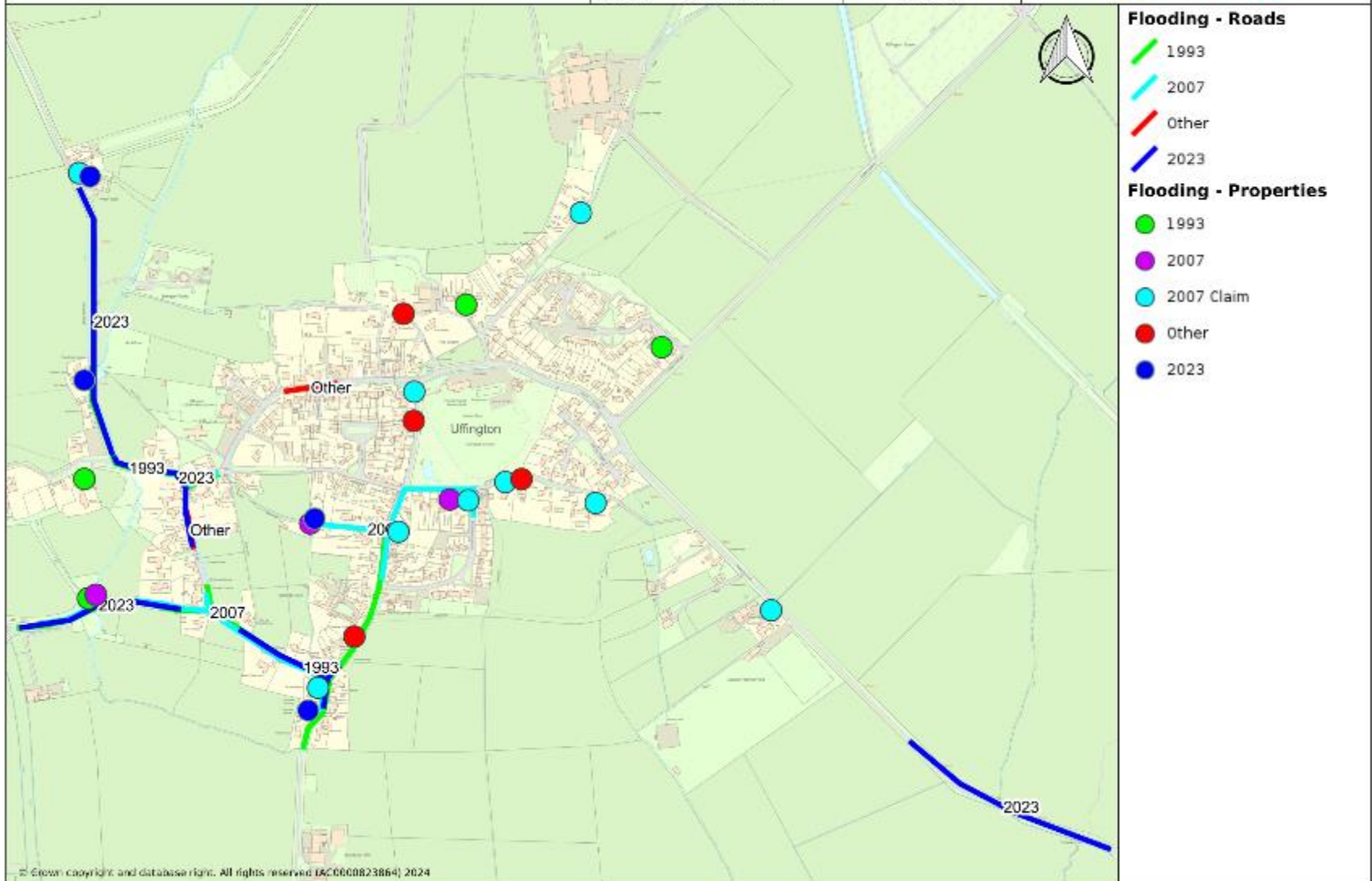
Uffington

Author:

Date: 16/02/2024

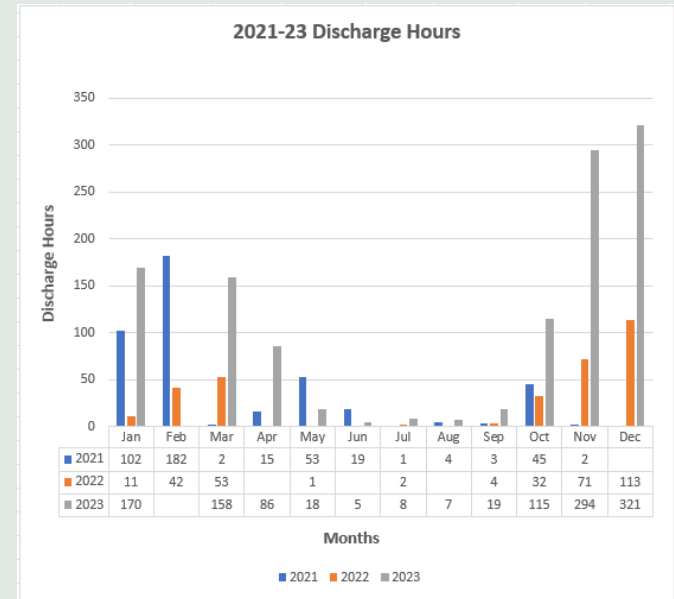


PARISH
ONLINE

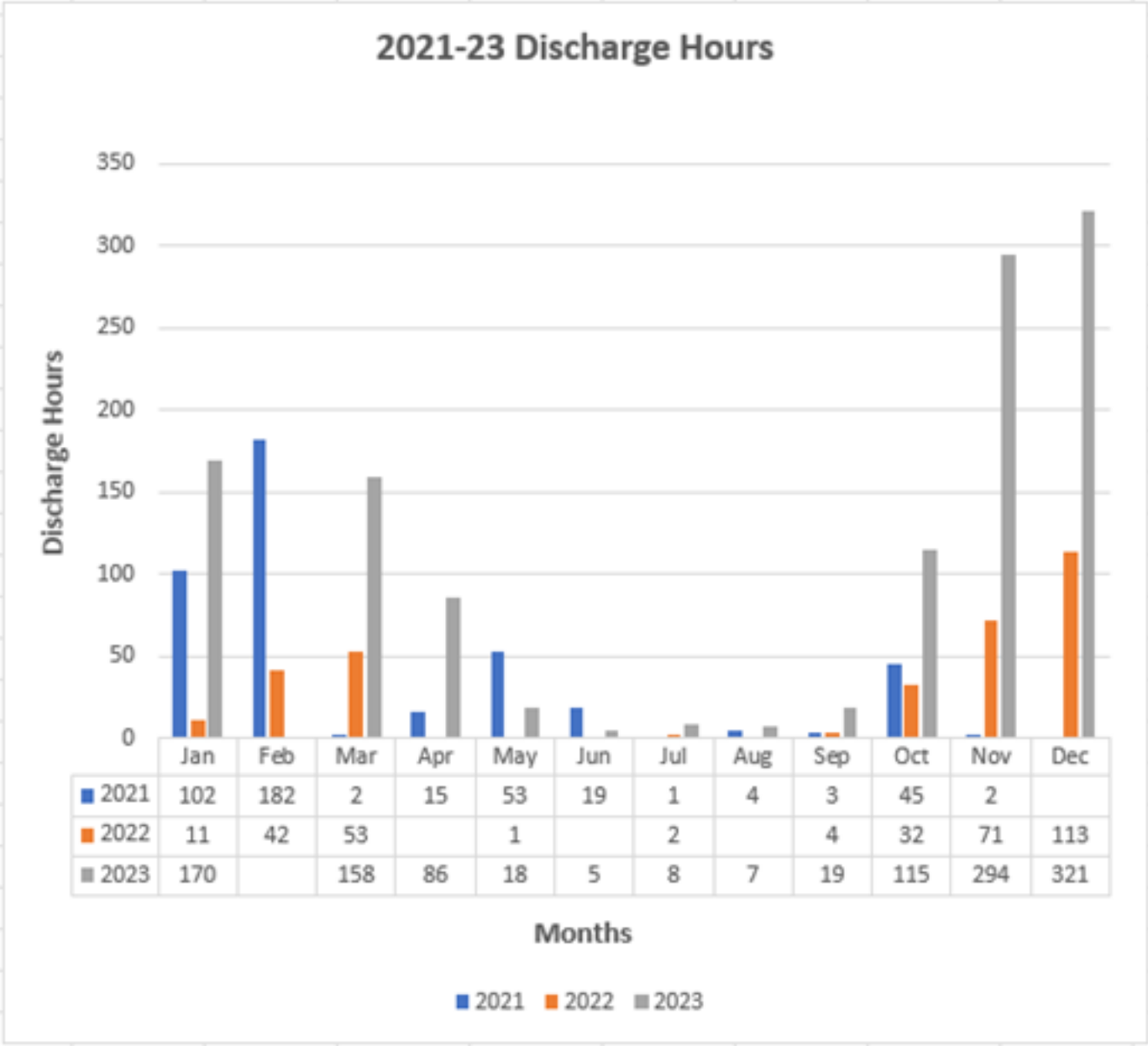


Flooding - reports

- The period September 2023 to March 2024 saw the worst flooding since 2007.
- Council decided to carry out an initial study (Part 1) to identify the main causes/pinch-points and those responsible for each.
- Council followed up with an 'Action Plan' (Part 2) asking all those responsible to take action.



Uffington Sewage Works Discharges 2021-23



Flooding - responsibilities

Those identified fall into 5 groups:

1. **Local landowners** - those who own the fields either side of Uffington Brook leading north out of the village.
2. **Thames Water** – responsible for the sewer network in the village and the Uffington sewage works itself.
3. **OCC Highways** – responsible for some of the ditches and the culverts under the road.
4. **Riparian Property Owners** - those with watercourses bordering their properties.
5. **Property Owners** – those whose properties have been flooded (or are in serious danger of flooding).

Note: The Environment Agency carries out maintenance, improvement or construction work on Main Rivers to manage flood risk. The Uffington Brook is classified by the EA as a ‘main river’ from the road bridge just beyond the Museum. The EA is responsible for ensuring water quality and hence investigating into any pollution of waterways.

Flooding - Actions

The action plan has been sent to all requesting action as follows:

1. **Local landowners** – to clear the watercourses crossing their land. Some have started work already, some yet to do so.
2. **Thames Water** – to identify and eliminate sources of pollution such as flooded sewers, which lead to sewage pollution of the roads and streams around Uffington and to complete the planned improvements to the sewage works.
3. **OCC Highways** – to clear the ditches and the culverts annually. To re-start clearing the 'grips' (which drain water off the road into the ditches).
4. **Riparian Property Owners** – to keep the section of the watercourse outside between their property and the road clear.
5. **Property Owners** – to implement personal flood defences.

Thames Water

Thames Water was included in the distribution of the Flooding Paper. They were invited to identify and eliminate sources of pollution such as flooded sewers, which lead to sewage pollution of the roads and streams around Uffington and to complete the planned improvements to the sewage works.

They were invited to this Annual Assembly – but declined to be present. Instead they sent a written summary from their point of view stating:

- *We don't believe there are any issues with Thames Water foul sewers in Uffington.*
- *An upgrade is planned for Uffington STW. This will improve its ability to treat the volumes of incoming sewage, reducing the need for untreated discharges in wet weather. The scheme, which is still being designed, is due to complete in 2025.*
- *We're also investigating the impact of groundwater on the sewer network in this area. This will help inform our long-term planning. See our groundwater impacted system management plan for Uffington.*
- *We expect this location to meet all government targets for storm overflows by 2035 - 2040.*

We were obviously very disappointed in this response which contradicts information provided previously and are robustly following up their reply.

OCC

Unfortunately, OCC Highways were unable to send a representative to this Annual Assembly and have sent their apologies. The action we asked them to comment on was:

- Ducts/grips - we would welcome an initial check/clearance followed by a regular program of checking and clearance of the grips.

HOWEVER, We have just received information from OCC (as the Local Flood Authority) on a potential source of funding. The kind of projects this funding could be used for include but are not limited to:

“small flood storage areas, embankments or channels; culvert (pipe) removal or improvements on ordinary watercourses; natural flood management works; improving community flood resilience through awareness raising/preparedness.”

Uffington White Horse Restoration

- The 3000-Year-Old Horse Needs Your Help!
- The Uffington White Horse is but a shadow of its former self: it has shrunk badly in the last few decades. Read on to see how you could help to reverse this process and breathe new life into our wonderful White Horse.
- Spot the Difference:

This is what the Uffington White Horse looked like in 1965 and this is what it looked like in 2021



(Photo courtesy of Hedley Thorne)

Uffington White Horse Restoration

- Research has shown that because of erosion and turf encroachment, the lines of the White Horse appeared to have shrunk in places (notably the head and neck) by about 40%, in the last 30 years.
- Oxford Archaeology, working with David Miles, author of *Land of the White Horse*, has obtained Scheduled Monument Consent to restore the Horse to the scale that existed thirty years ago.



(Photo courtesy of Hedley Thorne)

Uffington White Horse Restoration

- Assistance in the form of equipment, technical expertise and voluntary labour will be provided by Oxford Archaeology, the National Trust, English Heritage, and Historic England, all of whom have given consent to the proposed work, and all of whom would like to begin work as soon as possible – ideally in July 2024.
- Oxford Archaeology is currently (22 March) discussing with the other parties involved the costs of the project, thought to be around £20,000, to including sufficient for new dating and further research into the origins of the White Horse, and how much they can afford between them.
- I have been discussing with David Miles and Oxford Archaeology ideas for a local fund-raising campaign as I think that many local people will wish to be involved – The White Horse hill figure is precious to Uffington and I'm sure people will wish to contribute to this project.

Plans for 2024-25

The Council

- We now have our full complement of 7 councillors:
 - 3 previously elected councillors (Simon Jenkins, Fenella Oberman and Mike Oldnall).
 - 2 new elected councillors – Richard Charles and Kat Foxhall.
 - 2 new co-opted councillors: Nigel Puddicombe and Dave Garwood
- Sandy Evans has resigned due to work commitments and we are seeking a new clerk.
- Julia Evans will be continuing as RFO until after the 2023/24 audit in May

Budget

- Precept has been increased by 7% to £30k after 2 years with no increase. This has been driven primarily by the need, in the absence of any volunteers, to contract for a ground maintenance person.
 - Finding a contractor is ongoing after the initial person selected opted out.
- Total income/expenditure about £70k. This increase over last year is due to almost £30k on the new play equipment, most of which we hope will come from grants.

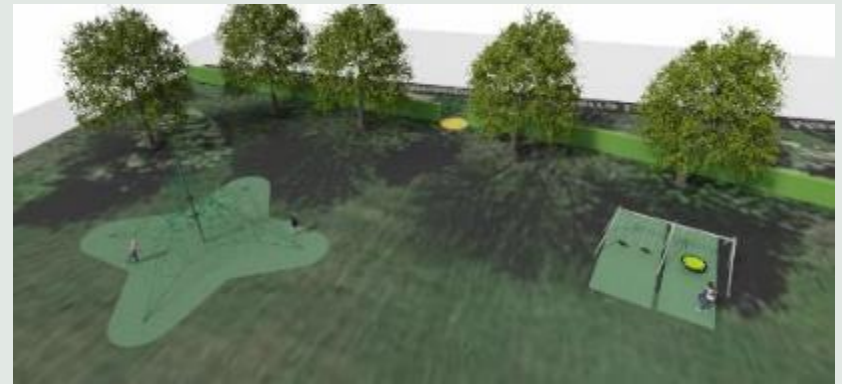
New Play Equipment

Progress to date:

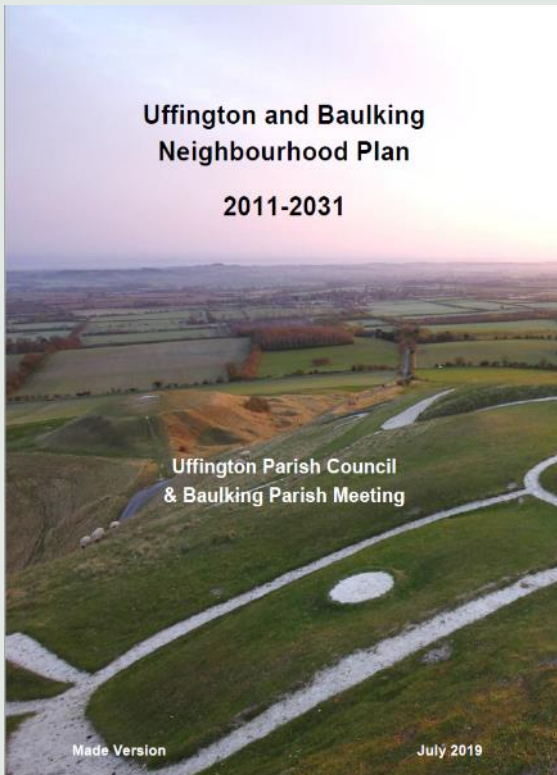
- Equipment and location decided. ✓
- Planning permission obtained. ✓
- S106 grant submitted, awaiting confirmation. ✓
- Bid to White Horse Show Trust prepared for April. ✓
- Placed order(8-12 week lead time). ✓

To do:

- Site recce by contractor (Kompan).
- Install equipment.
- Target date – by start of summer holidays.



Neighbourhood Plan



- The first Uffington and Baulking Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was published in July 2019 covering the period to 2031.
- Review/update/re-write due after 5 years (2024).
- Vale and South District Plan is being updated and is in early stages – policy options.
 - Adopts a different approach – “good Growth” driven.
 - We need to keep in step and issue our NP after theirs.
 - 2041 Plan is due for issue in Summer 2024.
 - Currently there are no allocations for new housing quotas in Uffington or other local villages, except Shrivenham.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is being updated. Key for us are:
 - (Possible) Changes to way in which housing numbers calculated.
 - Emphasis on using Brownfield sites with fewer planning restrictions.
 - Changes to way National Landscapes (formerly AONB, Green Belt, National Parks etc) is treated/protected.
- Way Ahead – review existing Plan and decide to rewrite or update after advice from Vale and South.

Public Forum

Some ideas to start people off:

Redevelop Pond Area?

- Hedge – been replaced thanks to tree donation by the Future Trees Trust. ✓
- Improve pond area as a wildlife habitat?
- Trees – type and number?
- Grass – or let brambles re-establish?
- Enhance as a child-friendly area?
- Other ideas?

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging?

- OCC initiative with some Government funding
- EV charging point at Village Hall?

Anything Else that people would like to see or have done in the village or would like to discuss?



Thank you

