

Kidlington Parish Council

Chair's report

October 2019

The Kidlington Masterplan was commissioned by Cherwell Council and adopted in 2016 as a Supplementary Planning Document, to provide the framework for future planning developments. It was drawn up jointly with the Parish Council before last, and incorporated the main points of our earlier Vision for Kidlington. The full text is available on the Cherwell website at

<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/277/adopted-kidlington-masterplan-spd>.

Because of Cherwell's work on its Local Plan, little progress has been made with the Masterplan since it was adopted. But while it now needs some updating, it still represents the Parish Council's main aspirations for the future development of the village. Here is an outline of the principal topics covered. Most of them fall outside the Parish Council's powers; we will be engaging with the District Council, and other bodies, in order to take them forward.

- 1. Enhancement of the Village Centre.** Much can be done to make the village centre more attractive and vibrant. We need a stronger overall design framework, to include also the stretch of Oxford Road between the two sets of traffic lights, which should be made less a through-road and more a welcoming and pedestrian-friendly street. Increasing the Exeter Close facilities will help.
- 2. The Green Agenda.** More can be done to promote and encourage cycling and walking, and more can be made of Kidlington's many paths and green spaces, including the canal. We will be working with Cherwell on a Healthy Kidlington initiative, and have set up a Sustainability Working Group to consider what the Council can do on issues of climate change and quality of life.
- 3. Public identity.** Kidlington residents are generally attached to the village, and value its distinct character. Modest but significant initiatives can be taken to underline this, particularly at the village entrances: the metal sculptures at the Sainsburys ('Rosie's') roundabout are a striking step in this direction.
- 4. Sports and other community facilities.** These are generally good, but there is room for further improvement. We are about to renovate the play area in Ron Groves Park, and are looking at the need for more football fields.
- 5. Business links and employment.** Kidlington is a major employment area, with the growing range of businesses in the Langford Lane area. It would be useful to develop contacts with employers, though this is not easy since they have many other concerns. We would like to do more here, but for practical reasons it cannot be a high priority.
- 6. Housing.** A few years ago we were concerned that there was not enough housing in Kidlington. There is now a risk that we will soon have too much. At the time of writing, we are also waiting to see whether we will be affected by Cherwell's response to the Planning Inspector's instruction to reallocate to other sites around Oxford the 410 houses allocated to Woodstock in the revised Local Plan. There will be a short period for consultations once this is made public.

DAVID ROBEY