

## **Berrick Salome Annual Parish Meeting 23rd April 2026**

Whilst I give a monthly report to all the Parish Councils and Parish Meetings in Chalgrove District Council Ward this report is a summary of the last year.

### **Major upgrades have taken place at all the five leisure centres run by SODC. They have included:**

- Major efficiency gains to reduce carbon emissions including LED lighting, solar panels on the roofs of the buildings and up-graded heating systems.
- Upgrades of wet areas which were looking tired.

### **New 5 Year Local Plan (2041)**

The last Local Plan covered the period to 2035. The new plan has gone through the initial public hearings with the final public hearings due to commence late June/ early July.

### **Planning Issues**

These have dominated the last 6 months with Chalgrove seemingly under siege from developers. A major concern is the land to the East of Chalgrove. This site was refused by SODC and at a public appeal by the National Planning Inspectorate. The developer then re-submitted the same plan 6 months later which was refused again by SODC. The developer then appealed again to the National Planning Inspectorate and to our dismay they approved it. I have personally always had faith in the independence of the Planning Inspectorate, but that view is now shattered. It seems that the Government push for more homes has had an influence. SODC took advice from two barristers who both said that we would not win a Judicial Review because you have to demonstrate due process had not been followed. Chalgrove cannot be called NIMBYS when you consider that we have seen a 35 percent growth over the last few years.

### **Chalgrove Airfield**

You will recall that Homes England withdrew their last application following the Civil Aviation Authority saying it was dangerous to life given how close the runways were to the proposed homes. Homes England have said they would submit another application with a single runway to the North of the Airfield which Martin Baker have said will not meet their needs. I have regular meetings with James Martin of Martin Baker who informs me that to relocate to another site even if one was available would cost his company 45 Million

pounds. Our MP Freddie Van Mierlo and County Councillor Judith Edwards have also been to see James Martin. Freddie has been in touch with the Government Defence Minister discussing how it will negatively affect a UK major defence contractor and how important that is in these dangerous international times. I understand that one of the American airmen who ejected over Iran said “Thank goodness for Martin Baker!” We must keep up our campaign against an airfield housing development and I thank Paul Boone and his SHIELD team for their campaign against a possible development.

### **Brown Bins**

This is an optionable payable service for collection of green waste which is then composted and sold to land owners for soil improvement. Once a year it is possible for people to take their own sacks to a collection site and get free compost. People who use the service have asked why you have to buy a sticker for a brown bin every year. The reason being is the turnover of home ownership so that people who use the service are not paying for new residents’ who have not opted into the payable service. Remember if your next collection is between 20<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May you can put out up to 4 extra sacks. This is because we suspend the service over Christmas.

### **Waste Collection Vehicles**

During the year SODC has purchased electric waste collection vehicles which has helped reduce SODC’s carbon footprint.

### **Post Office**

We have all been sad at the loss of the post office and it has not been possible to find an alternative site. For many years the owner of the post office site has been subsidising it and that has come to an end. The big turnout of Chalgrove people when Jill Spicer and colleagues reached the end of their long spell showed how much their work was valued. A collection for Jill raised over £1500 which Jill was very grateful for. Freddie Van Mierlo is trying to get the post office to reinstate a post box in the centre of the village. I understand that there will be a celebration of the local post office staff on 10<sup>th</sup> May between 2 PM and 4 PM.

### **SODC Grants**

SODC makes several grants available to be applied for local community purposes. In the summer details of these grants will appear on the SODC website. As District Councillor I have a budget of £7500 for the four parishes

which I represent. Last year I awarded grants for such things as the Chalgrove Children's Centre, the Village School, The Chalgrove May Day Festival, community benches and facilities in recreation grounds, Chalgrove Cavaliers and a Wildlife and Conservation society who work closely with the River Thames Conservation Trust.

### **SODC Budget**

This year we set the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest District Council Tax in England. When my group took over in 2019 the officers informed us that the council was heading for bankruptcy in 6 years' time. As cabinet member for finance I took £2M out of the first budget and that means together with other subsequent measures that the threat has now been removed.

### **Local Government Review**

The Government is determined to scrap District Councils and replace them with new Unitary County Councils. The key question is the size of the Unitary Councils. There are various proposals including a Unitary whole of Oxfordshire or two smaller ones. Recent decisions by Government in the County of Essex has recommended several smaller more local unitary councils. My personal view is for two Unitary Councils for Oxfordshire splitting the County into basically a North and South split. I feel this will be much more locally sensitive. There are proposals to join Swindon and or Reading with Oxford, a proposal which I do not support.

David Turner  
SODC Councillor (Chalgrove Ward)  
23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026