



Sonning Parish Council Newsletter July 2026

From the Chairman

Welcome to our July 2026 edition of the Sonning Parish Council (SPC) newsletter. As I write this, Sonning is basking in our second heatwave of the year. I'm sure we will all be a little happier when we get back to our average summer temperatures and a splash of the usual rain. The planters at the entrance to Ligure Way have been looking resplendent of late with the addition of some summer bedding plants. Many thanks are due to Ian Runnalls for his help in maintaining the planters.

WBC Councillors

Other good news is that Leon Cook has offered to take up one of the vacancies as councillor on the SPC. Many of you will know Leon and that he has recently been successful in being elected as a Wokingham Borough Councillor for Thames Ward. We welcome Leon to the SPC, once the paperwork has been sorted, and we acknowledge the support given by him and our two other borough councillors, Sam Akhtar and Wayne Smith.

Sam.Akhtar@wokingham.gov.uk

Leon.Cook@wokingham.gov.uk

Wayne.Smith@wokingham.gov.uk

Sonning Neighbourhood Plan (SNP)

The Sonning Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) is finally reaching its final stages after many years of hard work by a group of Sonning residents, in collaboration with the planners at Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and planning consultants employed by the SNP Steering Group. The Examiner's Report has been finalised and is available to view on the WBC website. ([Sonning Neighbourhood Development Plan - Examiner's Report.pdf](#))

We are expecting a date for the Referendum in the Autumn. You, as residents, will be able to

vote and thus decide if the SNP should be adopted. If successfully adopted, the plan will be used in future years to determine how Sonning should develop and grow as a community.

Our work

Since our last newsletter, your parish councillors have been working hard on your behalf on finance, highways, IT, planning, recreation and environment and website matters. I express my thanks to them all, as well as Lesley, our industrious parish clerk. I won't tread on any toes and will leave them to provide their own reports.

If you have any concerns or comments that the SPC might help you with, please feel free to contact me or Lesley, our Parish Clerk. If really interested, you may wish to join the SPC team as a councillor. Do get in touch with us if that is the case.

Trefor Fisher, Chair

trefor.fisher@sonning-pc.gov.uk 07789 880072

Lesley Bates, Clerk

clerk@sonning-pc.gov.uk 0118 9697753

In alphabetical order, our current Councillors (and their responsibilities) are:

Sanjeev Bhardwaj*	Recreation/ Environment
Richard Draper	Highways
Trefor Fisher	Chair SPC
Trudi Flanagan*	Finance
Chris John*	Website
Jackie Ruffle	Planning Committee Chair

[* indicates councillor is part of our IT group. All Councillors are members of SPC Planning Committee]

Please see individual reports below.



Recreation Update

We are pleased to share several improvements at King George V Field as we head into the summer season.



The zipwire has now been fully repaired and restored and is back in use for the community to enjoy.

We have also successfully installed a new flagpole near the cricket pavilion. During the World Cup, the England flag is currently being flown, alongside the Union Flag. We are also in discussions with Sonning Cricket Club about introducing a dedicated club flag.

As always, if you have any questions, ideas, or feedback on recreation facilities in the parish, we would love to hear from you.

Sanjeev Bhardwaj (Parish Councillor (Recreation)): sanjeev.bhardwaj@sonning-pc.gov.uk

Planning Update

Planning is an area which has a degree of unpredictability about it as we generally don't know what is coming forward for consideration to SPC, as a consultee for most planning applications made to WBC.

In the last 9 weeks we have had 7 planning applications to review and discuss, from small change to a grade II listed property within the Conservation Area to a significant change of use for one of the sports pavilions. In addition, SPC, along with nearest residents, were invited to a public consultation on a potential development prior to any finalisation of the planning submission. Such prior discussion provides a great opportunity for likely consultees (SPC, public, neighbours etc.) to

While most equipment is now operational, one piece of exercise equipment (the leg press) remains out of service due to an unavailable part. A repair has been scheduled for later this summer.

Following the appointment of our new landscape contractor, the first cut of the season took place in March, leaving the grounds well-prepared for the upcoming cricket season.

We are continuing to review further improvements to the play areas, including the repair and replacement of selected equipment.

Thank you for your patience while we worked through contractor availability for specialist repairs—this has now been resolved for key items such as the zipwire.

view outline plans, ask questions and ensure a greater understanding before being presented with the actual plans for planning approval comment. We would always encourage people to speak with interested parties before submission. In my limited experience to date this has very much assisted in support for plans and fewer concerns/objections being raised.

We really value contributions either written (email ideally) or in person at our meetings which are publicised on the SPC notice boards, from interested parties. Comments on each application we consider carefully and include any input from neighbours and residents in our discussions.



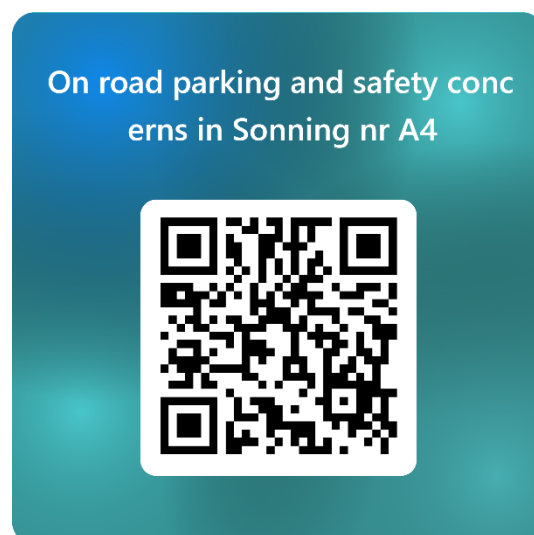
If you want to discuss a planning application with Sonning Parish Councillors, ideally before the SPC planning meeting, feel free to contact: Jackie Ruffle (Parish Councillor (Chair Planning Committee): jackie.ruffle@sonning-pc.gov.uk

We will be happy to arrange a time to speak on the phone or to visit you to hear your thoughts and relay back through appropriate channels.

Survey to help further understanding of specific area concerns

SPC are keen to support ongoing provision of recreational/sporting facilities and in seeking solutions to allay and/or mitigate residents' concerns with developments in the parish. To help us better understand residents' concerns raised in relation to some facilities and potential options to address these, we have developed an online survey for completion. Whilst this is focused on the A4 side of the parish we are aware of similar concerns elsewhere. We will trial this initial survey with view to expanding/repeating, so please bear with us if this doesn't cover your area at present.

[On road parking and safety concerns in Sonning nr A4 – Fill out form](#)

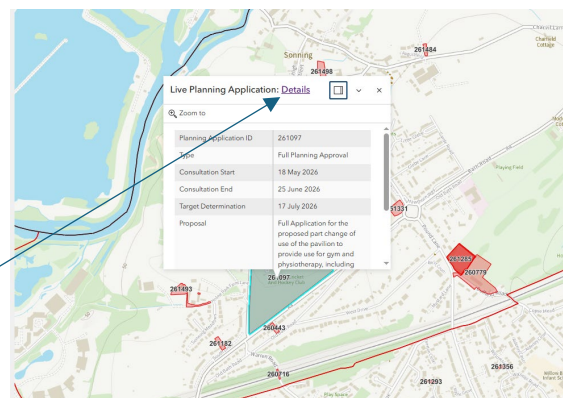


Keeping informed

You can keep an eye on latest applications via the interactive map

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d7dbd7abe271468ba132402bbbd0f53b>

Just type in your postcode and applications nearby can be seen on the map. To get access to all related documentation you just click on the blue 'Details' text in the pop-up.



Highways Update

It has been another busy few months tackling the issue of speeding through Sonning Village. As many residents will be aware, we have a few Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) positioned throughout the village. These devices accurately measure the speed of approaching vehicles and display it to drivers in real time. They also record valuable traffic data, which our Chairman, Trefor, regularly collects and analyses.



The latest figures continue to highlight the scale of the problem. On Pearson Road, 35% of westbound drivers were recorded travelling above the 20mph speed limit, with the highest speed logged at 40mph at 9:45am. The data from Pound Lane was even more concerning, with over 50% of southbound vehicles exceeding 20mph and a peak speed of 60mph being recorded. This was between the 17th May and 8th of June. These figures demonstrate that speeding remains a



significant issue within the Parish. We must continue to explore new measures to improve road safety, protect residents, and maintain Sonning as a safe and family-friendly community. This is particularly important given that the data from Pound Lane is collected directly outside our wonderful primary school.

A4 crossing

Several residents have also contacted us regarding the difficulty and danger of crossing the A4 between Old Bath Road and Hawthorn Way, just east of the Pound Lane roundabout. The road has a 50mph speed limit and currently lacks any dedicated pedestrian crossing

Low water pressure

Away from highways, a number of residents have reported experiencing low water pressure during periods of hot weather. I contacted Thames Water about the issue, and they advised that they were only aware of two reports from local customers.

They have asked that anyone experiencing low water pressure contacts them directly on 0800 316 9800. Even if the pressure returns to normal before an engineer arrives, each report helps them gather data, identify patterns, and

Get in Touch

I would really value hearing from you. If you have any thoughts, concerns, or suggestions regarding highways in and around Sonning, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Richard Draper (Parish Councillor (Highways)): richard.draper@sonning-pc.gov.uk

IT & Website update

Since our last update we have been busy making practical improvements to the website and laying the groundwork for more significant changes ahead.

On the technical side, we have increased our email storage capacity to keep the council's communications running smoothly and within

I am currently investigating the possibility of acquiring more advanced speed monitoring equipment capable of photographing offending vehicles, with the aim of sharing this information with the police where appropriate. Such technology would require investment, and any proposal would need to be carefully considered and appropriately funded.

facilities, making it particularly challenging for those wishing to access the nearby bus stops. The Parish Council supports measures to improve pedestrian safety at this location, and we have written to Wokingham Borough Council asking them to investigate potential solutions.

assess whether further investigation or investment is required.

I have also asked Thames Water whether any planned infrastructure upgrades in the area. They have advised that a number of projects are taking place which will add resilience to the Sonning Area. Full details can be found in the following news article <https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/news/26182721.thames-water-invests-20-million-berkshire-infrastructure/>.

quota, and we have resolved issues with both the **Contact Us** and **Fault Reporting** forms on the website, which are now working correctly. If you have tried to use either of these in the past and experienced difficulties, please do try again.

We have also been meeting as a group to plan and prioritise the next phase of improvements



to the website. Our discussions have focused on four areas:

- **Content refresh** — reviewing and updating the information on the site to make sure it is current, accurate and useful to residents
- **Accessibility** — working towards making the website easier to use for all visitors, including those with disabilities, in line with public sector accessibility requirements. We have drafted an accessibility statement which will shortly be published on our website.
- **Mailing list subscriptions** — exploring ways for residents to sign up for updates so that important news and notices reach you directly whilst maintaining

compliance with data privacy legislation.

- **Usage analysis** — looking at how the site is currently being used so that we can make informed decisions about where to focus our efforts and how best to reach the community

This last point is important to us. We want to ensure that our website and other communication channels — such as social media — are genuinely useful and reach as many residents as possible, rather than making changes based on assumption alone. We will share further updates as this work progresses.

[Sonning Parish Council : Home Page](#)

In the meantime, your feedback remains very welcome. What information would you like to see on the parish website? How would you prefer to hear from the council?

Please get in touch and let us know — we would love to hear from you

Chris John (Parish Councillor (Website)): chris.john@sonning-pc.gov.uk

