**PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2017/18**

During the 2017/18 year, and following a reduction in the frequency of its meetings, the Committee has met 12 times and considered 78 planning applications, the majority of which were for changes to existing dwellings. The only large development, of some 200 new houses to the south of Highworth Road, could not be objected to as a whole because it was on a designated “strategic” site but various suggestions on improvement for the design based on the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, which has now been fully adopted, have been made.

That the Neighbourhood Plan has now become part of the District Council’s Local Plan is significant not only because it gives the town more control over developments but also because this will affect the value of that part of the new developer contribution payable to the parish. During the past year a new form of developer contribution called the Community Infrastructure Levy has been introduced which calculates the contribution on a sliding scale, 25% of which is given to any parish to improve its infrastructure that has a “made” Plan in place rather than the 15% to any that has not.

However, the two previously agreed “strategic” sites either side of Coxwell Road (which are currently in Great Coxwell parish but subject to a forthcoming parish boundary review) will not make CIL contributions, these are to be made using Section 106 agreements. Although the majority of the monies agreed under these agreements are destined to be spent improving the infrastructure of Faringdon, significant sums have been earmarked for sports projects that will bring limited or little benefit to the town, the majority of the money towards the proposed sports centre in Wantage. The Town Council is currently attempting to persuade the District Council that this money would be better spent locally, even if it is just to upgrade our leisure centre.

Andrew Marsden

Chairman, Planning and Highways Committee

*The Planning and Highways Committee of Faringdon Town Council is the committee which undertakes the Council’s role as a consultee on planning applications falling within the parish of Great Faringdon and also on county-wide general planning matters which affect the parish. It discharges this duty by considering all applications it receives from both Vale of White Horse District and Oxfordshire County Councils and making recommendations as to their acceptability or otherwise, based on a combination of the policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, national planning regulations and local knowledge. Additionally, it comments on all proposals regarding the infrastructure of the town and any environmental improvement scheme which might have an impact on the parish and also pursues a successful policy of recommending to the District Council that the names given to streets in new developments be taken from those who are remembered on the War Memorial.*