



INSIGHT

INCREASING
COMMUNITY
ACTION

PROGRESSING
AN OXFORDSHIRE-
WIDE COMMUNITY
LED HOUSING HUB

HELPING BUILD
RESILIENT
COMMUNITIES

ENABLING
NEW AND FRESH
TRANSPORT
INITIATIVES

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

I am honoured to have taken on the chairmanship of CFO from Jonathan Reavid. Jonathan has done a sterling job in leading the Board of Trustees over the last five years and his advice, as I have settled into my role, has been invaluable.

CFO continues to be a very effective charity. Led by two excellent directors and a highly skilled staff team, CFO provides a range of professional services. Importantly, it understands the need and value in working in collaboration with our key partners. Collectively, we are more than the sum of our parts.

I see my role as very much to facilitate a productive partnership between trustees and staff. This is an exciting time for CFO. Our Placemaking and Community-Led Housing initiatives offer much promise, while our Red Arrow Good Neighbours Scheme, community halls and retail services, bulk-oil buying schemes and various community mobilisation projects continue to provide vital (and sometimes the only) support for communities.

There are always challenges ahead, yet I look forward to the future with much optimism.

John Cunningham

Chairman

Spreading the word....



Robert Courts, MP
Witney & West Oxfordshire



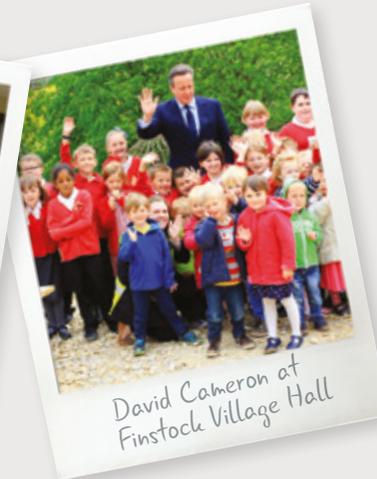
Oxfordshire Community Shop



Victoria Prentis, MP
North Oxfordshire



French student visit



David Cameron at
Finstock Village Hall

FORWARD

They say it is better to travel than to arrive. These last few years Community First Oxfordshire has travelled a long way on what was, at times, a difficult journey. Yet it would be wrong to say that CFO is now where it wants to be. The world in which we work continues to offer much challenge, not the least financial - yet to stand still is to let that world happen to you.

The last year was a very successful one for CFO. We continued to develop our Neighbourhood Planning service and broke new ground in Placemaking and Community-Led Housing. Yet at the same time we delivered on all our 'traditional' core activity. It is testament to the dedication and professionalism of CFO's staff that we could generate a small surplus, which will be recycled back into helping communities, and have a situation in which our grant and earned income are at near parity.

For the coming year, we will continue to seek out new opportunities to give longer-term stability to the organisation while also developing innovative solutions to meet the ever-pressing needs of Oxfordshire's communities.



↑ TOM McCULLOCH
DIRECTOR - COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT



↑ EMILY LEWIS-EDWARDS
DIRECTOR - BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
AND PARTNERSHIPS

Placemaking: building communities not just houses

Community First Oxfordshire describe Placemaking as the **creation of thriving, socially active and successful places** which have strong relationships with neighbouring communities and where people have a positive sense of belonging.

We do not believe that you can build hundreds of new homes on the edge of a town or village and expect a thriving community to just emerge. It must be nurtured, and that means communities, agencies and organisations working in partnership. To take the conversation forward, CFO held a Placemaking Conference with keynote speaker Lord Matthew Taylor, former chair of the National Housing Federation and the Rural Coalition and a leading proponent of 'Garden Villages'. The event was sold out, with 120 delegates. We also undertook discussions with various partners about implementing the recommendations that followed from our recent 'Best Practice in Placemaking' research.



LOOKING AHEAD

CFO will launch an exemplar placemaking project with the Dorchester Group and Cherwell District Council, which will place a community development worker at a major development location in north Oxfordshire. We will also be pursuing similar discussions with our partners elsewhere in the County.

120

DELEGATES ATTENDED THE PLACEMAKING CONFERENCE



↑ LORD TAYLOR, PLACEMAKING CONFERENCE

Neighbourhood Planning

CFO is committed to helping communities make the most of the Localism agenda, of which Neighbourhood Planning (NP) is a key component. In 2016/17, we supported 12 NP groups across all the stages of the process, from initial project scoping through consultation, character and site assessment and policy formulation to plan submission. One of the first NP groups we supported, Long Wittenham, has now passed its independent planning examination. Our work is underpinned by constructive working relationships with Local Authority NP officers. CFO's position as the interface between community and Local Authority is where our clients tell us our help is most valued: providing the day to day support which is so important to efficient progress through what is a complex and ever-evolving process.



LOOKING AHEAD

CFO will continue to support our existing groups and new clients. Recent commissions have seen our NP activity extend into West Oxfordshire. There remains much interest in NPs across the County.

12

NP GROUPS SUPPORTED ACROSS ALL STAGES OF THE PLANNING PROCESS



↑ BRIZE NORTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION



Affordable homes for local people

In Oxfordshire, house prices and rental costs are unaffordable for many, especially young families, single people and those on low or average incomes. CFO has a long track record in supporting affordable housing initiatives. As a part of the Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership, we helped to deliver over 500 much-needed affordable homes for local people. Community Led Housing (CLH) offers another route to housing affordability. CLH is about local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving local housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing. Community Land Trusts, cooperative housing, co-housing and community self-build are examples of CLH. In 2016/17, CFO undertook initial discussions with multiple organisations with the ambition of creating an **Oxfordshire-wide support Hub for Community Led Housing projects: a 'one-stop shop' for expertise and advice.**



LOOKING AHEAD

CFO and partners (The Oxfordshire Community Land Trust and Oxfordshire Community Foundation) have been commissioned by Oxford City Council to undertake a research project to explore how community-led housing could be delivered sustainably within Oxford. We will also continue to explore CLH initiatives in other districts and take forward our CLH Hub discussions, while encouraging Local Authorities to incorporate CLH support policies into local plans.

Community action

All of CFO's activity supports community action and volunteering. In the last year we supported 7 Community Led Plan groups, which have long proven their worth in driving new community initiatives. Yet there is a challenge here. Given the pressures of daily life, people are often hard-pressed to find enough time to help out. To this end, CFO is working on a major project

with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action to find out what the most pressing issues are in communities across Oxfordshire and better support volunteers to help solve them. We have profiled community activity in 11 communities and are supporting local groups on projects focusing on, for example, community transport, young people and support for the elderly.



↑ EYNSHAM CARNIVAL



LOOKING AHEAD

Need more people to get involved in the community?
Worry that if you get involved you might feel out of your depth?
CFO will be holding a series of "Attracting the Unusual Suspects" workshops. We know succession planning is difficult and that most work falls to the few in the community, so these workshops will start the discussion to see how we can change this.

11

COMMUNITY PROFILES UNDERTAKEN

Community transport services

2016/17 was a good year for new start-up minibuses, with the launch of Our Bus Bartons and West Oxfordshire Community Transport schemes. CFO supported the setting up and awarded grants (on behalf of the County Council) to both schemes. We also awarded funds to The Villager minibus scheme to offer a new shuttlebus service in Chipping Norton. We have supported Henley

Handybus to run a shopping service for Nettlebed and UBW minibus has extended its service to other villages in need. The new minibus activity is a direct response to the withdrawal of subsidised bus services. In the same year, as new schemes start, we saw well-established schemes such as Stanford in the Vale minibus and Nettlebed Surgery car scheme cease to run.



LOOKING AHEAD

Demand for flexible transport services is at an all-time high, and CFO will continue to act as the one-stop shop for everything transport. We will be: mapping community transport activities in the county to work out where the gaps are; working with Aspire Oxford to meet patient transport and other transport needs; seeking software initiatives and sourcing new funding opportunities. In addition, we will work with Oxford University Hospitals on improving parking for volunteer drivers.



↑ FINAL PHOTO OF VOLUNTEERS FOR THE STANFORD-IN-THE-VALE MINIBUS



Red Arrow Good Neighbour Scheme

CFO launched the Red Arrow scheme in Autumn 2016 to meet the needs of vulnerable people in Oxford City. This scheme is the first Good Neighbour Scheme to cover the whole city, and works together with the neighbourhood-based schemes. Using online volunteer websites such as Ami, posters and word of mouth, we have recruited 12 volunteers, but as demand for the service increases we will need to recruit many more. (Funding was gratefully received from Doris Field Trust, Feoffees of St Michael and All Saints' Charities and Oxfordshire County Council).



↑ PROMOTING COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

12
VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED

"CFO supports us with whatever we may need, I find them very helpful"
WHEATLEY CARE SCHEME 2017

Community buildings

CFO supported 6 new or refurbished community hall projects in Finstock, Letcombe Regis, Beckley and Stowood, Harwell, Sibford and Shutford. 71% of community halls in Oxfordshire are members of CFO's advisory service, with the service extending to include more urban-based community centres and, increasingly, churches. In these times of dwindling congregations, it

is encouraging to see how churches are adapting to the changing needs of their communities where no other community space is available. In addition, the CFO initiative of providing training in Portable Appliance Testing to community hall volunteers has proved to be a great success, allowing halls to save money whilst remaining compliant and safe.



↑ SHUTFORD COMMUNITY HALL



↑ FINSTOCK COMMUNITY HALL



↑ PAT TESTING TRAINING



LOOKING AHEAD

We will continue to forge links with new organisations that can benefit community hall operations. We will seek further training opportunities for community hall committees and we will continue to offer knowledgeable advice and support on broad ranging topics affecting community buildings.

71%

OF HALLS ARE MEMBERS OF CFO



↑ VOLUNTEER AT TALKING SHOP SANDFORD-ON-THAMES



Community shops

Across the county, community shops are evolving to provide goods and services that communities value and use. Appleton Shop has undergone a facelift and, alongside selling some of the best local produce, now includes a space to sit down for a chat with a cup of coffee. Ewelme Village Store has a new tea room, and has also added a new product line- bicycle inner tubes- to take advantage of increasing numbers of cyclists visiting the area. Sandford-on-Thames Community Shop and Café evolved from a weekly village hall market and now provides a real community hub, offering work experience apprentice schemes, a garden for the community and bike mechanic sessions. Homeworkers can also use the café if they need a change of scheme. Diversification is the key to success.



LOOKING AHEAD

CFO will continue to support community shops. We will also be increasing our support to independent shops, which have somewhat different challenges, such as filling long opening hours with few staff, sourcing affordable and less perishable products in order to remain economic and competing for trade as supermarkets expand their reach.



↑ BECKLEY VILLAGE HALL FEATURING STONE FILLED GABIONS WHICH WILL IN TIME BECOME A LIVING WALL

Developing our Bulk Buy Offer

The OxOil scheme continues to save our members money, not only on their oil supplies, but also on bottled and bulk gas and coal. We have nearly 800 members in our fuel scheme and purchased over 1.7 million litres on their behalf. We also championed the use of Smart Meters to our off-gas members. Every British home will be offered a smart meter from their energy supplier at no extra cost.



↑ OIL-SCHEME COORDINATORS MEETING



Income 2016-17

	2016-17	2015-16
 PROJECT GRANTS	£187k	£198k
 OTHER INCOME	£113k	£96k
 AGENCY FEES	£2k	£4k
 INTEREST ON DEPOSIT	£3k	£2k
 INCOME	£305k	£300k
 EXPENDITURE	£267k	£372k

OUR STAFF

Emily Lewis-Edwards
Director - Business
Development &
Partnerships

Tom McCulloch
Director - Community
Development

Fiona Mullins
Development Project
Manager

Tessa Hall
Community Buildings &
Retail Adviser

Hilary Lombard
Community Planning
& Action

Sue Hunt
Oil Scheme Administrator
& Office Manager

OUR TRUSTEES

John Cunningham
Chairman

Gill Bindoff
Vice Chair

Malcolm Taylor
Treasurer

Jonathan Reuid

Ken Attack

Sue Butterworth

Julian Cooper

Natasha Eliot

Jon Bright

Edward Dowler

OUR PATRONS

Revd Canon Glyn Evans DL
President

Catherine Bearder MEP

Mike Breakell

Celia Collet MBE

Dr J V Sharp

OUR AREA OF OPERATIONS



CONTACTS

Community First Oxfordshire
South Stables
Worton Rectory Farm
Worton, Witney
OX29 4SU
Tel: 01865 883488

info@communityfirstoxon.org

 [facebook.com/
communityfirstoxon](https://facebook.com/communityfirstoxon)

 [@oxcommunitybuzz](https://twitter.com/oxcommunitybuzz)

Community First Oxfordshire
is a Company limited by guarantee
(no. 2461552) and a Charity (no. 900560)

www.communityfirstoxon.org

OUR PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

