

PARISH REPORT SEPTEMBER 2016

Unitary Debate

There have been reports suggesting that proposals for reform are off the table due to the lack of agreement between the City and District Councils, and the County. While it is true that Government wishes to proceed by consensus where possible, OCC hopes that the debate is not over – particularly when Grant Thornton has put forward a new compromise proposal, which has yet to be fully discussed. With £200,000 spent on independent advice, and with both reports showing that savings in excess of £100m are possible over a five-year time period through a single strategic authority for Oxfordshire, it is everybody's interest that the debate continues. I have asked officers how best the reports can be presented to allow all members to debate them at Full Council on 13th September, then later at Cabinet on 20th September, and how OCC should move forward.

Exam results

Well done to all the students at the Marlborough school in their exam results. There were some excellent results with 7 students achieving A* and A grades in all of their subjects at A level. At GCSE 12 students achieved 10 or more A* and A grades. These results prove once again that Marlborough is a place where everyone can achieve their goals and where our young people are challenged to do their best and nurtured and supported through that process

Libraries Minister sees “GREAT EXAMPLE” at Bicester

Plans to expand Oxfordshire's Home Library Service and joining up services 'under one roof' were among the hot topics at Bicester Library, during a fact-finding visit from Minister for Civil Society Rob Wilson MP. The flagship county council facility offers a wide range of council services and activities, and has attracted more than 2,000 new members since opening in April. Heralded as a “great example” by Mr Wilson, Bicester exemplifies an emerging identity for Oxfordshire's libraries as focal points for a broad range of services, help and advice. The council has also announced plans to grow its Home Library Service so that people with mobility problems who can't get to a library can have books and other items delivered to their door.

Residents can get their Electric Blankets Checked Free

Now is the time for residents to book their blanket in for a free check in October. Oxfordshire County Council's Fire & Rescue Service and Trading Standards are urging electric blanket owners to get their blankets tested free of charge ahead of the approaching colder months. Testing electric blankets annually is important as all electrical systems have the potential to go wrong. In 2015 a total of 22 per cent of the electric blankets failed the safety test and were declared unsafe to use. They can be perfectly safe to use provided they are in good condition and have the necessary overheating safeguards incorporated into the design. Station Manager Chris Barber of Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service said: “Like any other piece of electrical equipment, it is vitally important that electric blankets remain in safe working order, last year nearly a quarter.” Testing is by pre-booked appointment only, strictly on a first come, first served basis. Residents should call Trading Standards on 01865 815 000 option 4 to arrange an appointment or email communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

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Oxfordshire Carers' Strategy and Carers' Personal Budgets Consultation

At some point in our lives, many of us will care for a relative, friend or neighbour who needs support in their daily lives.

We may see ourselves as someone who is just 'doing what you would naturally do' by looking after a relative or friend - but if the person you care for couldn't cope without you and you aren't getting paid for what you are doing, then we would consider you to be a **carer**.

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group work in partnership with other organisations to identify and support many of the 61,000 family, informal or unpaid carers in Oxfordshire.

We do this because we recognise and value the important role that carers have in the lives of the more vulnerable members of our communities.

We are undertaking a joint consultation which has two parts:

Part 1 of this consultation is about the **Oxfordshire Carers' Strategy**

This is a document about our priorities for carers' support and the outcomes we want to achieve for carers of all ages. It also gives an overview of how we are supporting carers in Oxfordshire.

Part 2 of this consultation is about the **proposed options for carers' personal budgets**

As you may know, there is no longer enough money for the council to carry on doing things in the way we do now. We want to find the best way of spending the funding available to meet the needs of as many carers as possible.

We are keen to hear your views, comments and ideas about both parts of this consultation. Your views on Oxfordshire Carers' Strategy and the options for carers' personal budgets will influence our future decision-making.

We recommend that you read the strategy and supporting documents available as part of this consultation. We acknowledge that the Oxfordshire Carers' Strategy in particular is a long document.

The strategy and supporting documents are available at:

<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Carers/consultationHome>

If you require a paper copy of these documents, please contact us by email on carerssupportreview@oxfordshire.gov.uk or phone 01865 323410.

The consultation ends 14th November

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