

PARISH REPORT APRIL 2017

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Elections to Oxfordshire County Council are now just under five weeks away and there are a series of key dates in the lead up to the Thursday, May 4 poll.

The final full council meeting of the county councillors elected in May 2013 took place on Tuesday, March 21.

All 63 county council seats will be up for election and residents all over Oxfordshire began to receive polling cards during the last week of March.

On Wednesday, April 5 the list of candidates for each OCC seat will be published. A number of existing county councillors have already indicated they are standing down but the definitive list will not be clear until April 5.

I will be standing for the Woodstock Division and will be out and about across the division meeting as many residents as possible.

Registering to vote

The last day for people to register to vote is Thursday April 13. Although this is a county council election, Oxfordshire's district councils are the authorities responsible for administering the electoral register and people should contact them if they are not already registered to vote.

The last date to apply for a postal and postal proxy vote is Tuesday 18 April and the last date to apply for a new proxy vote is Tuesday 25 April 2017.

Polling day

Polling Day on Thursday, May 4 runs from 7.00am to 10 pm. The election count takes place on Friday, May 5 in Abingdon.

PURDAH

The County Council pre-election period ('purdah') has now started and the Council must comply with restrictions outlined in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986. In addition a 'Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity' published in 2011 makes clear that particular care should be taken in periods of heightened sensitivity, such as in the run up to an election. The Act defines publicity as "any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public."

Generally, the Act says that a council should "not publish any material which, in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party." The Code of Practice recommends that authorities should generally not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters and that publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published unless expressly authorised by statute.

UNITARY UPDATE

For the reasons above, the County Council, Oxford City Council and the four District Councils have agreed not to promote their standpoint on the issue of Unitary Government for the period of purdah.

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TRAVEL APP CAN SHOW BETTER WAZE TO GO

OCC has joined forces with Waze, the free crowdsourced traffic and navigation app, in a data-sharing link-up that could help residents get from A to B more easily. Waze is effectively a Sat Nav app used exactly as any in-car navigation device – except Waze has the added benefit of crowd-sourced traffic flow info and OCC roadworks as part of the mix. This means that the app can see the traffic hotspots on the roads and route residents round them where appropriate, saving them time. Waze is FREE to download and use – simply go to <https://www.waze.com/download>

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