

PARISH REPORT JANUARY 2017

The Our Bus Bartons

This is a community bus project that was set up to replace the discontinued S4 & S4C service through the Bartons. There are services to Deddington, Steeple Aston, Lower Heyford Station, Oxford Parkway & Chipping Norton as well as 'one off' routes such as for the Flu jab. All the team including the drivers are volunteers to keep the costs down.



With Robert Courts MP on Our Bus

However more users are needed to ensure a sustainable future, I have contacted Begbroke and Yarnton Parish Councils to encourage their residents to use the service to Kidlington on a Monday and Thursday. Already residents in Wootton are finding this service to Kidlington a real benefit to them. I have met with the organisers and Stagecoach to see if we can find a way of encouraging more users.

Woodstock Bus Services

The irony for me at the current time is that in Woodstock we are suffering the complete opposite in terms of bus services with the introduction of the Oxford Bus 500 and soon the Stagecoach 7 service to Oxford Parkway. We have been asking for a frequent service to the new station since it was opened over a year ago. Oxford Bus extended their 500 service to Woodstock with twice hourly journeys; the turn-around is in the centre of town. There have been problems mainly caused by illegally parked vehicles on the double yellow lines in Market Place. I have asked WODC as the enforcement authority to make sure there is strict enforcement of the double yellow lines, making it possible for the 500 to turn in the centre of town. Some residents suggested that the 500 should turn round on the Barn Piece estate as does the hourly S3 bus. This residential estate was not designed to be used as a turnaround for buses and with the introduction of the 7 service there would be 5 buses an hour. I have already had meetings with both managing directors to try and resolve the situation.

There is the suggestion to redesign the centre of town to a one way system with a new parking scheme, this was considered several years ago but funds are not available and there was a concern that traffic speed would increase with a one way system.

We now have extra services and cheaper fares; we have to consider all options to find a way forward, we may have to make some compromises if we are to have such good regular bus services to Oxford Parkway and the City centre.

Oxford Parkway

The rail link between Oxford Parkway and the City centre was opened at the beginning of December with a journey time of just 8 minutes. The Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, attended the opening; I took the opportunity of talking to him not just about railways but the road problems we have in Oxfordshire with regard to the A34, A40 and A420 reminding him that if we are to have the extra houses and jobs then we need the funding for the infrastructure to deliver sustainable development.



At Oxford Parkway with SoS Chris Grayling and Deputy Leader Cllr Rodney Rose

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Grant funding announced for 'open access' children's services

Six community groups planning to run 'open access' children's services will receive funding worth £163,000 from a grant scheme set up by the council;

- Butterfly Meadows (Bloxham) - £29,384
- Carterton Town Council - £30,000
- Bridges (Oxford) - £30,000
- Grandpont Nursery (Oxford) - £35,600
- St Nicholas Primary School (Marston) - £8,000
- Sharing Life Trust (Thame) - £30,000

Community-led schemes will complement a comprehensive new service for 0-19-year-olds across Oxfordshire which ensures children at risk of abuse and neglect are protected and that families who need extra help are identified at an early stage. Applications received during the first round of the £1m grant scheme were assessed by a cross-party working group of councillors which made recommendations to the council's Cabinet.

A further eight bids were supported in principle by the working group, but deferred to the second round of bids so that further work can be carried out on their business models;

- Barton Community Association
- Employment Action Group (Berinsfield)
- Chalgrove Primary School
- Cutteslowe Primary School
- The Nature Effect (Florence Park)
- Magpies Pre-School (Kidlington)
- Friends of Maple Tree Children's Centre & Wheatley Nursery School
- Oxfordshire Play Association (Abingdon)

The panel refused just three bids, on the basis that the eligibility criteria were not met; in that those bids related to entirely new centres, rather those at risk of closing. The £1m transition fund is intended to help groups establish themselves in order to become self-funding, and to develop and deliver the services that are most important to their communities – responding to specific local needs. As part of the council's continuing investment in early intervention, new teams of 'locality workers' will advise and support community groups delivering open-access sessions – such as 'stay and play' - as well as other universal services including schools, health and early years providers. We are continuing to discuss proposals with community groups as they develop their plans and working with Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) to support groups with developing business plans. The deadline for the second round of applications is 9th January, 2017.

Health Inequalities Commission report

Oxfordshire's Commission on Health Inequalities has published its recommendations to narrow the health and wellbeing gaps which divide communities in the county. The Commission was set up earlier this year by the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board. Its members came from health, local authority and voluntary sectors and it was led by Professor Sian Griffiths as independent chair. Public sessions were held at venues across the county and evidence was taken from a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations.

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The Commission heard that Oxfordshire, overall, is an affluent county with relatively low levels of deprivation, but there are significant variations. For example, two small areas in Oxfordshire are among the 10 per cent most deprived in England (Rose Hill and Iffley ward in Oxford and Northfield Brook ward in Oxford) and a further 13 areas (parts of Oxford City, Banbury and Abingdon) fall within the 10-20 per cent most deprived in England. Older people living in parts of Banbury Grimsby and Castle ward are in the top 10 per cent most deprived in the country.

Among the 60 recommendations made by the Commission are:

- An integrated transport strategy to reduce social isolation
- Greater investment in prevention of ill health
- Employers to promote the health of working people
- Greater integration of health and social care and more support for unpaid carers
- Public sector organisations should review their buildings and land which might be used for key worker and affordable housing
- Promotion of physical activity and exercise among vulnerable groups
- More provision for mental health services

The next steps for the Commission will be to promote the findings of the report and for discussion of what can be achieved through local action. Progress will be regularly reported to councils, NHS partners and the local population through the Health and Wellbeing Board and linked to other health plans in the county.

Home Library Volunteer Success and new Libraries e - Newsletter

In September you may recall we launched a county-wide campaign for Home Library Service volunteers. This successful campaign has led to 150 volunteer applications so far, and the campaign was shortlisted for a public sector communications award for best low cost / no cost campaign.

Home Library Service volunteers choose and deliver books to those who are unable to get to a library. It's a lifeline for people who live alone and can help support independent living, reduce isolation and ill health.

More information about the scheme, including details of what volunteering involves and interviews with those who benefit from the service, can be found at:
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homelibrary

The Library Service has also recently launched a bi-monthly newsletter for library service users. The newsletter contains the latest libraries news, events, book recommendations, volunteering opportunities and more.

We can also use it to tell users about services they may not know the library offers, such as Zinio (free electronic magazines), eBooks, our People's Network (free public access to computers) and Wi-Fi in Libraries.

This new, low cost way of reaching library users currently is sent to 6000 people, and we would appreciate it if you could help spread the word to your residents and getting them to sign up at;
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/librariesnewsletter

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