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BUSES

The Wootton turning circle has been completed and is now in use by the 7 service although this is not an official stop I have been informed by Stagecoach that customers can use the service from here. The 233 to Witney and Burford is now half hourly with these smaller buses turning in the town centre due to the tight timetable. A new Traffic Order is being considered for the centre of town to ensure that there is sufficient turning space for both the 233 and 500 buses.

INFRASTRUCTURE BIDS

The funding bid for up to £500 million has been submitted by Oxfordshire County Council on Thursday 28 September. Money is sought to bring forward infrastructure investment to pump-prime three major development schemes:

1. Didcot Garden Town – £171m is bid for transport improvements including a Didcot Science Bridge and A4130 dual carriageway, a new river crossing at Culham and Clifton Hampden Bypass. This would support the delivery of over 22,000 homes in Didcot, Culham, Harwell and Berinsfield. Additionally up to £70m of cycle and other sustainable transport improvements are proposed for inclusion in the bid plan.
2. West Oxfordshire Garden Village – £135.4m is bid for further upgrades to the A40, building on existing schemes and based on the approved A40 Long Term Strategy including development of the Rapid Transit network and additional highway capacity on A40 transport corridor. This would support the delivery of over 10,000 homes in Witney & Carterton, and around Eynsham.
3. North of Oxford – £152m is bid for the development of Rapid Transit lines on upgraded A44 and A4260 corridors, a new Park & Ride, and strategic cycle infrastructure plus. Support is also sought for additional education requirements (as yet un-costed). This would support the delivery of 5,570 homes in Woodstock, Begbroke/Yarnton and the Northern Gateway.

The bids submitted to the £2.3 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund are ranked as above according to the Government's scoring method, with the guidance that the strongest bid be put first.

FREE ELECTRIC BLANKET TESTING OFFERED AS THE WINTER MONTHS APPROACH

People in Oxfordshire who have electric blankets to keep them warm on Autumn and Winter nights are being urged to get them tested for free

As the autumn is approaching and the temperature is getting colder, Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards & Fire and Rescue Services are offering free testing of such blankets to ensure people have a warm, safe winter.

Blanket testing is taking place at the following locations during October:

Oxford - Monday 2 October
Banbury - Tuesday 3 October
Witney - Wednesday 4 October
Wallingford - Thursday 5 October
Abingdon - Friday 6 October

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Oxford - Monday 16 October
Bicester - Tuesday 17 October
Chipping Norton - Wednesday 18 October
Thame - Thursday 19 October
Wantage - Friday 20 October

In 2016 831 blankets were tested and 177 blankets failed, a rate of 21%.

To book your safety check appointment call 01865 898642 or email:
communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk

TENTH PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT PUBLISHED

Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health Jonathan McWilliam published his tenth Public Health Annual Report on 7 September. It is an independent report about the overall good state of health in Oxfordshire and the challenges facing the county and its residents.

Overall the report shows that Oxfordshire is healthy county, on many measures healthier than the national average. Organisations are well coordinated, but there are still challenges to face.

Jonathan McWilliam said: "The biggest challenges are all connected to population growth and how we all cope with it. This affects all parts of our lives from dealing with traffic to re-shaping public services.

"The population is also ageing so we need to put an emphasis on healthy ageing too.

"We also need to take care about our weight, as the average levels of overweight and obesity are creeping up and this will lead to higher levels of disease.

"Although the average levels of health are good, some disadvantage still exists in our rural and urban communities. These gaps are overall steady, or narrowing, but we mustn't take our eye off the ball."

The report will be presented to Oxfordshire's Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee on 14 September, and the council's cabinet and other committees later in the autumn.

MORE CHANCES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES START-UP FUNDING

The council last year opened a £1m Transition Fund to help schemes for nought to five-year-olds get off the ground at locations formerly served by children's centres. To date a total of 27 projects have been awarded funding – in addition to open access sessions at the council's network of eight family centres. The final round of applications ended earlier this year, with £232,000 remaining unallocated. OCC's Cabinet has agreed to reopen the applications process to enable new groups to come forward with their plans. The funding criteria will be broadened to allow groups to apply for grants in locations not previously served by children's centres, or where a children's centre has been repurposed – for instance, as a nursery. Community groups interested in finding out more about the Transition Fund and running open access children's services should contact localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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NEW ERA FOR DAYTIME SUPPORT IN OXFORDSHIRE

A new system of delivering daytime support services in Oxfordshire came in to operation on 1st October. Eight new centres** will provide support for more than 500 older people or people with a learning disability who have been assessed as having an eligible need and some other people who do not have an assessed need. The changes follow a consultation with service users and their families in late 2016 in which they were given the opportunity to have a wide-ranging input in to how the new service should take shape. Within the council's new £4.5m service there are 1,600 days of support per week (3,200 sessions) being provided across the eight locations. Each centre will have its own fleet of family-size vehicles, some of which will be adapted. These will be used to transport people to and from the centres and will be driven by staff from the Community Support Service. There will be a number of options for meals, including: staff supporting people to eat out at a local café, cooking as part of a small group, paying towards a group meal prepared by others, a simple hot meal prepared by staff, and people bringing in their own pre-prepared meal or light lunch if they wish to.

**The centres are located at Audlett Drive, Abingdon; Neithrop Avenue, Banbury; Launton Road, Bicester; Britwell Road, Didcot; Agward Stone Road, Horspath Driftway, Oxford; High Street, Wallingford; Charlton Village Road, Wantage; and Moorland Road, Witney.

CHANGES TO CHARGES FOR DISPOSAL OF DIY/NON-HOUSEHOLD WASTE

As from 1 October, changes to DIY waste disposal charges at the council's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) come into operation. Meanwhile, the council has signed a new Household Waste Recycling Centre contract that secures all seven sites in the medium term, with no change to the sites opening hours or days (further information from the HWRCs contract change press release).

The existing DIY 1,2,3 for free scheme is being replaced by a small fixed fee per item of £1.50 for non-household waste. Tyres and plasterboard will also be charged for at an affordable rate. The existing scheme has been in place for 15 years and during this time the charge has not increased beyond £1 per item.

Banners and leaflets are on display at HWRC sites informing local residents that there will be a change in non-household waste charges, supported by social media activity and an issued press release.

In the HWRC public consultation carried out in summer 2016, 91% of responses indicated that residents would prefer to pay to deposit non-household waste as a way of saving money and protecting other council services.

The council recognises that many householders carry out small DIY projects from time to time, and by applying a small charge this allows HWRCs to continue accepting these discretionary types of non-household waste.

Non-household or DIY items, as a general rule are materials created from the construction, demolition, alteration or repair of a home or garden. For example a sink, bath, kitchen unit, fence panel, bag of rubble etc.

Residents can still dispose of all their household waste free of charge at any of the county's HWRCs.

Also new in October will be a bin for recycling hard plastics. After a successful trial at Dix and Alkerton HWRCs, items such as plastic garden furniture and children's toys will be collected and recycled from all sites.

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The locations of the county council's seven Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) are:

- Alkerton - Stratford Road, Alkerton, Nr Banbury
- Ardley Fields- Brackley Road, Ardley
- Dix Pit - Linch Hill, Stanton Harcourt
- Drayton - Steventon Road, Drayton, Nr Abingdon
- Oakley Wood - Old Icknield Way, Crowmarsh, Nr Wallingford
- Redbridge - Old Abingdon Road, Oxford
- Stanford in the Vale - Faringdon Road, Stanford in the Vale, Faringdon

W+S Recycling will manage six of the seven HWRC sites from October, while Dix Pit HWRC will continue to be managed by FCC Environment.

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