

PARISH REPORT MAY 2018

WOODSTOCK PARKING

The issue of parking is always contentious with any solution only providing another question. At virtually every Woodstock Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting parking is discussed, whilst everybody acknowledges more parking provision would be the ideal solution there is the question of cost and who would pay for it. There have been discussions with Blenheim who are the major developer and could be part of a solution but at the moment there are no firm plans.

There have been numerous complaints that cars are left well over the time limit in the centre especially the 30min and 1-hour bays with people saying anecdotally that people park all day and go into Oxford treating this as an unofficial park & ride. This means that frustrated drivers who can't find a space tend to park illegally on the double yellow lines around the Crown.

If we are currently unable to build new car parking spaces then we must use the existing ones better. The TAC requested that more enforcement of the 30 min & 1-hour bays would encourage people not to park in them creating more 'churn' and better usage, the TAC requested that the increased enforcement was restricted to the centre of town and a maximum of 2 hours at a time thus allowing residents the opportunity to find longer time bays in the morning before people come into the town.

West Oxfordshire District Council as the enforcing authority have issued notices to give people advance notice. In my experience no solution is ideal for everybody but we must try to achieve better usage from the existing space and by limiting the enforcement to the shorter time bays this should help.

My personal view is that we should have a residents parking scheme that would allow residents to park in the bays all day with visitors to the town able to park for a limited period of time, this works well in Oxford and I think would provide the solution. However, there would be a cost involved for the permits which goes against the policy of WODC for free parking so there is stalemate.

Whilst I fully understand concerns I would ask that we see if improved enforcement of the 30 min & 1-hour bays provides better use of the existing spaces.

ADDITIONAL NEW POTHOLE FIXING MACHINE

OCC and contractors, Skanska, have taken delivery of another Dragon-Patcher which uses a combination of compressed air, heat, bitumen and chippings to repair potholes. This means that there are now two machines working full-time in the county with another being shared with Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. Because it can repair a number of holes at the same time, and much faster, a Dragon-Patcher can carry out repairs far more cheaply than before. A typical Dragon-Patcher repair costs just under £14 whereas one fixed using conventional methods on a non-rural road costs about £60. On a good day a Dragon can repair 200 potholes; that, combined with the low road repair costs, means that the investment is a sound one. More work is done and more money is saved so that it can be put into resurfacing. The Dragon also carries out preventative work by sealing cracks in the road surface that would otherwise let in water and eventually turn into more potholes. In the past year, OCC's own machine, along with the shared Dragon, has fixed over 21,000 potholes. It is expected that the new one, over the next twelve months, could fill up to 14,000 more.

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COUNTY COUNCIL'S FIRST THOUGHTS ON OXBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY

As the highways authority, OCC was asked for its views on the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway. The submission says that until Highways England publishes a preferred route OCC cannot make a formal response on the proposal. Key points from OCC's initial response to Highways England sent in April 2018 are:

OCC welcomes the further development work and engagement taking place on the Expressway project and the opportunity to give views to Highways England. However, at this stage, OCC is not able to indicate a corridor preference, given that the technical and other supporting work required to inform the decision on a preferred corridor is not yet complete.

OCC supports the strategic objectives and purpose of the Expressway project, recognising the opportunity it brings to support and enable growth and development, enhance connectivity and take forward innovation and smart technology. However, following detailed discussion on the project between officers and members, there are some important principles which, in addition to the published assessment criteria, should be integral to the corridor selection and decision-making process. In Oxfordshire, these include:

- 1. Ensuring that the Expressway corridor does not increase pressure on the existing, already overstretched strategic highway network. Specifically, the Expressway must not use the section of the A34 through central Oxfordshire. This section is where the A34 currently operates as both a regional/national strategic route and a local distributor route (forming part of the Oxford Ring Road) and it is essential that the new Expressway infrastructure provides a completely separate strategic route to avoid this conflict of use;*
- 2. Ensuring that the Expressway corridor minimises the impact on the existing highway network, i.e. it should not use existing local road networks or draw significant strategic traffic directly into local road networks / highway infrastructure which would not be able to cope – the ring road around Bicester for example;*
- 3. Ensuring that the Expressway is developed separately alongside locally planned highway enhancements such as Culham river crossing.*

Further information is available from the [Highways England website](#).

My personal view on the Expressway is:

The road that causes the most traffic issues for Oxfordshire is the A34 as it's a mixture of a local and national traffic. If the 2 parts could be separated to allow the ring road to function as a local road then there would be an improvement for Oxfordshire's residents. The A34 impacts on all 5 Districts and all 6 constituencies so there are few residents not affected. On page 17 of the strategic stage 3 study (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/571353/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway-strategic-study-stage-3-report.pdf) paragraphs 3.4.5 & 3.4.6, it is clear that this proposal will provide a local solution.

Whatever corridor and ultimately route chosen there will be local impact with local opposition however we have to consider the bigger picture to improve the A34. For that reason, I am not suggesting a preferred corridor as I want to wait to see the evidence that Highways England will provide.

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CARE WORKER RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN ATTRACTS DOZENS OF APPLICANTS

A recruitment drive to encourage more people in Oxfordshire to consider a career as a care worker has attracted more applicants in just five months as in the previous two years. The campaign - *'Make a difference every day'* - features a number of real life care workers, already supporting people across the county, talking about the rewards of the job and why they would recommend the job to others. The Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers (OACP) website received 84 applications for a variety of care work roles between mid-November 2017 and the end of March 2018, compared with 66 applications in the two years between November 2015 and October 2017. A total of 107 new job seekers registered on the site between November 2017 and the end of March 2018, compared with 101 from October 2015 and October 2017. And around 130,000 people have looked at recruitment adverts on Facebook since the campaign launched. Oxfordshire currently has around 14,200 people working in adult social care. But the county's ageing population is growing at twice the average, so there is an urgent need for more caring, friendly and reliable care workers to support older, frail people in their own homes, in nursing and residential homes or in community hospital settings. According the latest workforce survey by OCC and Oxford Health Foundation Trust (OHFT), nine out of 10 care workers say they are proud of the work they do.

COUNCIL PROBES THAMES WATER'S OXFORDSHIRE RESERVOIR PROPOSALS

A series of questions have been raised by OCC about Thames Water's plans to build a huge new reservoir to the south of Abingdon between Steventon and Marcham. The council's cabinet was asked to endorse a response to Thames Water's consultation on the idea – which is part of its wider strategy for the South-East of England in coming decades. The company's Draft Water Resources Management Plan proposes a new reservoir near Abingdon which will not only support the forecast needs of the Thames Water area but also some of the needs of the wider South-East. In response to the consultation the council has asked for more detail on Thames Water's calculations for growth in population and water usage for coming years that underpin the reservoir proposal. The council has also asked how much of the water from the reservoir would be sold to other water companies. A report to councillors also urged Thames Water to speed up their programme of leakage reduction' to 'delay the need for a reservoir as long as possible' as well as pointing out that there is a 'lack of clarity on whether potential sites have been assessed across the South East region'.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth

07956270 318

ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk