

PARISH REPORT OCTOBER 2019

WOODSTOCK LIBRARY

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to keeping a library facility within Woodstock and options need to be considered. Whilst the current size of the temporary facility is not as large as previously, the opening hours have increased by nearly 50% giving more opportunity for residents to use the library. There have been some innovative local co-locations in Charlbury and Wood Green, Banbury which have increased the library hours even more. I think its worth visiting either or both of those libraries to see what can be achieved by co-location with other facilities.

COMMUNITY FIRST

The work that Community First is carrying out regarding development around Woodstock gives the Town an opportunity to input into some key themes; Connectivity from Old Woodstock, Parking and the Library.

There does need to be a safe off-road pedestrian/cycle path from Old Woodstock as the current pinch points along the pavement and the vehicles do not encourage residents to walk or cycle only adding to the traffic on the already busy A44. Also, there is a safety report by Oxfordshire County Council due this month which should highlight the key areas of concern.

Parking in the centre of town continues to be an issue and a long-term solution is required to ensure that there is a balance between the needs of the residents ~~along with~~ enough parking ~~place~~ to keep the town centre businesses vibrant and successful. We await the parking report, but it can be linked to the work that Community First are doing.

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The matter of Home to School transport is a major issue in Middle Barton, I'll be holding a meeting to address this and try to explain the situation. Although the national law is clear that free transport is only provided to the nearest school there are some situations that occur when there are no places at a school, this is what will be explained at the meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you want further information.

ELECTRIC BLANKETS

The weather has changed with winter fast approaching now is the time to start planning ahead. Free electric blanket testing is offered over a two-week period during October at different locations around the county.

Book your electric blanket in for a free check

- Thame - Monday 7 October 2019
- Oxford - Tuesday 8 October 2019
- Banbury - Wednesday 9 October 2019
- Witney - Thursday 10 October 2019
- Abingdon - Friday 11 October 2019

- Oxford - Monday 21 October 2019
- Bicester -Tuesday 22 October 2019

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- Henley - Wednesday 23 October 2019
- Chipping Norton - Thursday 24 October 2019
- Grove - Friday 25 October 2019

To pre-book an electric blanket safety check, phone 01865 895999 or email communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

GROWTH DEAL FUNDING

The decision by the new Liberal/Green coalition at South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to defer endorsing the emerging Local Plan has serious implications for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid which would provide £218 million of vital infrastructure for the Didcot area.

The preferred options of the coalition at the council meeting on 18th July were to either revise or withdraw the emerging Local Plan however the decision was deferred. Should either of these options be taken then the probable outcome is the collapse of the HIF bid with the consequent severe impact on the Didcot area infrastructure. This would then probably mean South [Oxfordshire](#)'s existing Local Plan would come under pressure and large-scale speculative planning applications might come forward on inappropriate sites. Neighbourhood Plans that many town and parish councils have spent time working on will continue to provide some protection, but there is a real danger that developers might seek to exploit the situation as there would be no new Local Plan for Neighbourhood Plans to align with.

Problems are not confined to SODC; if there is no HIF then the Vale Local Plan could also fail.

This could mean that within months of new administrations in South & Vale taking office, both Local Plans might fail due to the loss of £218 million for vital infrastructure in Didcot. A further consequence could then be the failure of the £215 million Growth Deal which contains £60 million for much needed affordable homes.

Meetings in September have been cancelled which means the crucial meeting is Full Council at SODC on 10th October.

I am continuing to working with members and officers at SODC to find a solution.

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