

SODC A Conservative District Councillor's View **(Or What The Council Is Doing)**

July 2018.

Planning

South Oxfordshire Local Plan update

We've started to review and filter the 15 possible strategic allocation sites, including the current strategic sites; previously considered but not progressed sites; and some more recently submitted sites.

Please come along to our next Round Table session on 20 June at 6pm in Meeting Room 1, 135 Milton Park, to discuss the outcome of this initial broad assessment and find out about the next steps.

Discussions continue with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Have your say on new housing land supply proposals

The government has put forward proposals to provide Oxfordshire councils with greater protection from speculative housing development as they plan for the county's future housing needs.

Under the proposal we will only need to provide a three-year land supply while we develop a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP), rather than the five-year supply which is normally required. In addition, a revised Housing Delivery Test (HDT) would also be in place for three years after the JSSP has been adopted.

This would make it harder for unplanned speculative housing development to get planning permission and would also allow us to focus on working with our partners to prepare the JSSP and our respective Local Plans.

For more detail on the proposals, and to submit your views, please visit the Oxfordshire Growth Board website.

<http://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=41&o=9492&url=http%3A%2F%2Fww.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org%2Fconsultation&a=0>

The consultation is open until 11.45pm on Thursday 12 July.

Appeals - Public Inquiries

Results awaited

- Benson – an appeal relating to site known as BEN5 for 120 units (to the north of Blacklands Road) was heard at an Inquiry which opened on 20 February. The appeal has been recovered (called in by SoS).
- Crowmarsh – an appeal relating to a site off Benson Lane Crowmarsh Gifford for 150 units opened on 27 March and sat for 3 days. Following legal advice, we did not defend our reasons for refusal – however the Parish and a local action group appeared as Rule 6 parties. The appellants have submitted a costs claim for £225,000 and a revised planning application for the same development.

Forthcoming Inquiries

- Tetsworth - an appeal for a traveller site comprising 12 pitches originally was deferred in November 2017 and is now scheduled for August 2018.
- Chinnor – Three Appeals beginning 26th June in respect of Perssimon and Cala Homes.
- Further inquiries are scheduled for sites in Didcot, Chinnor and Shiplake

Neighbourhood Planning

Benson and Watlington neighbourhood plan referendums are being held on Thursday 28 June.

Examinations of The Baldons, Chalgrove and Warborough & Shillingford neighbourhood plans are ongoing, expected to conclude early June.

We are inviting comments on the submission draft of the following neighbourhood plans: Cholsey - deadline 5pm on 12 July.

Waste and Recycling

Reminder - Cooking oil collected

We are now collecting cooking oil alongside food waste. Residents just need to empty the oil into a plastic bottle (no bigger than 1 litre) then put it in inside their food waste caddy when they leave it out for collection. We will only collect from plastic bottles and will not accept oil in glass bottles/jars or any other container.

We'll be promoting this new service to residents over the coming months.

Council tax and business rates collection results 2017/18

Both South and Vale continue to be among the top performers in the country when it comes to collecting council tax and business rates.

Last year South Oxfordshire District Council recorded its best ever results for collecting the money during the year it was owed. We collected 98.8 per cent of the council tax owed for 2017/18 and 99 per cent of business rates.

This is great news as it means we have to spend less time and money attempting to recover money that is still owed to us.

Privacy policy updated (GDPR and all that.)

Following the introduction of the Data Protection Act 2018 we have published a new privacy policy as well as information for residents about how we handle their personal data. You can find these on the SODC website.

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us/requesting-information/data-protection/privacy-policy>

The new Act integrates everything covered by GDPR with additional aspects specific to the UK - for more information see the Information Commissioner's website.

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-act-2018/>

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First community lottery draw

More than 800 tickets were sold prior to the first So Charitable Lottery draw last weekend.

The first draw saw 15 people win three free tickets each and raised £430 for local good causes and supporting the voluntary sector.

This is a great start for this initiative!

Wallingford Outdoor Riverside Pool

The heated outdoor swimming pool by Wallingford Bridge is open for the summer season.

Riverside Outdoor Pool will be open from 7am - 8pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 7am - 6pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and from 9am - 6pm at weekends - until Monday 3 September. Jubilee Splash Park is already open on site for younger children to enjoy.

Riverside Park and Pools, located on the bank of the River Thames, is the perfect place to spend a lazy summer day. The site features a 23 metre pool, changing rooms, refreshments and a campsite.

A swim costs just £4.50 for adults, £2.90 for junior/seniors or £13.05 for a family swim (two adults and two children). Regular swimmers are also able to take advantage of a season pass for £71 for adults and £35 for juniors and seniors.

For more information about Riverside Park and Pools please visit the Riverside website or call 01491 835232.

No trains between Didcot and Oxford

If you use the train to get around, please be aware that there will be no trains running between Didcot Parkway and Oxford from 7 to 22 July.

This is due to track remodelling work taking place around Oxford Station. Replacement bus services will operate throughout this period.

For full details of the work see
www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/oxford2018

Town and parish forums update

Following our internal restructure, we've agreed to postpone the Town and Parish Forums that were initially scheduled for this summer.

This will give the new team that now arranges the forums a chance to get in touch with the town and parish councils to find out if the events are providing the information and support they want, and how they want to receive it.

In the coming weeks and months we will get in touch with the town and parish councils to ask for some feedback, which will help us design and plan future Town and Parish forums in a way that means everybody gets the most out of them.

Wallingford Cycling Festival

We are supporting the Wallingford Festival of Cycling for the fourth year running. The popular event is happening throughout the weekend from 6-8 July.

It is set to be bigger and better than ever with organised rides for all ages and abilities as well as a great variety of activities for everyone to enjoy.

You can find out more on their website;

<http://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=45&o=9492&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.wallingfordfestivalofcycling.co.uk%2F&a=0>

Thames Valley Police.

Doorstep crime

Following a recent incident involving a suspicious door-to-door jewellery buyer, our community safety team has sent out the following advice from the police. Please would you help spread the guidance to your communities:

look through the door viewer or window to see who is outside

if you decide to open the door keep the door-chain on

check the caller's identity

call the organisation's phone number (by independently looking up first) to confirm their identity - remember official visitors will wait while you check

do not feel pressured into buying any items or services at the door

do not let them into your house or give them access to any private rooms

do not give them information on where valuables are kept

For more information on how you can protect yourself and others, please visit the Thames Valley Police website.

A 'Safe Place' to go for vulnerable residents in Thame

People in Thame now have somewhere to go if they are feeling lost, worried or threatened, following the launch of Safe Places in the town.

Premises taking part in the Safe Places scheme display a distinctive Safe Places logo in the window. If someone is feeling vulnerable, then specially trained staff will be available help keep them safe.

Safe Places has been launched in Thame following the success of the scheme in Henley, Wallingford and Didcot. In total, more than 50 premises have now signed up in South Oxfordshire, including seven new locations in Thame, three in Wheatley and four in Chinnor. To find where the Safe Places are visit safeplaces.org.uk.

Under the Safe Places scheme people can request a special card to carry when they are out and about. This provides details of someone to contact if they need help. However, you don't need to have a Safe Places card to enter a participating location and ask for assistance.

If you or someone you know wishes to request a Safe Places contact card, or you are a business interested in becoming a Safe Place, please email South Oxfordshire District Council's Community Safety Team via communitysafety@southandvale.gov.uk or call 01235 422593.

The Safe Places scheme is supported by the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership, Oxfordshire Family Support Network and Age UK Oxfordshire and the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Cllr Caroline Newton, Cabinet Member for Community Safety at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: “We had a really positive response to the Safe Places launches in Henley, Didcot and Wallingford so I’m delighted that we can now add Thame to that list and that a number of local businesses have already signed up. Safe Places provides an important reassurance and help for vulnerable people who may experience difficulties in public spaces.”

Feeling unsafe on a date? Pub goers can now ‘Ask for Angela’ to get help

A new scheme designed to help those at risk of abuse in a pub or bar has been launched in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire.

If someone feels uncomfortable in a licensed venue in Abingdon or Didcot they can go to the bar and ask; “Is Angela in?”. Staff will then offer discrete help, such as keeping an eye on them, calling a friend, relative, taxi, or the police - or simply help them to leave the building via alternative exit. Having started in 2016 the ‘Ask for Angela’ campaign is now available across a number of towns and cities in the UK.

The scheme is particularly aimed at those who are on a date with someone they have only just met online, or via a dating app, who then doesn’t turn out quite as they expected.

Participating venues can be recognised by a blue sticker in their window and posters displayed in bar and toilet areas. So far, 21 pubs have signed up in Abingdon and ten in Didcot.

The ‘Ask Angela’ campaign will be rolled out across towns in the South Oxfordshire this summer. The scheme is supported by local Pubwatch members and the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership.

Cllr Caroline Newton, Cabinet Member for Community Safety at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: “If you are on a date, particularly with someone you have only met before online, then ‘Ask for Angela’ provides that extra reassurance that there will be someone to turn to if that person turns out not to be what you were expecting.”

PC Stuart Betts said: “Thank you to all the members of the pub-watches in Abingdon and Didcot for being so supportive of the scheme. This is a great example of working closely with the community to safeguard potentially vulnerable people in the night-time economy.”

Online safety awareness sessions for parents

URGENT

The South and Vale Community Safety Partnership is funding a free event for parents, of children who are at primary school, to find out how to keep their child safe online.

On **Tuesday 3 July** e-safety experts Computing Champions will be at Cornerstone Arts Centre to advise parents on the dangers of a variety of technologies in the home, and talk to them about how to make their child ‘share aware’, preventing access to inappropriate content, appropriate use of social media and safe online gaming.

The session is available, at 5pm to 7pm. To book their place parents should visit:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/keep-your-child-safe-online-e-safety-workshops-for-parentscarers-tickets-45645656387>

£1.3m boost for community projects in 2017/18

Last year we provided more than £1.3million in grant funding to community projects in South Oxfordshire. Here's a quick summary of how we allocated the money:

Capital Grants

We awarded £715,408 to 19 projects, including £250,000 for a replacement club house at Thame Sports Club, £170,000 for a replacement roof and other improvements at Wallingford Corn Exchange, and £50,000 to refurbish a playground in Little Milton.

Revenue Grants

17 projects will benefit from £512,000, including £165,620 for the Citizens Advice Bureau, £46,000 for the South Oxfordshire Food and Education Alliance, and more than £24,000 for Be Free Young Carers.

Councillor Community Grants

Councillors awarded £156,000 to 106 projects, ranging from community events and coaching courses to fencing and flag poles.

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