

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

**August 2018.**

**Planning**

**As a separate Planning Newsletter was issued just a few days ago, I am only including a few, more recent items.**

**Oxford to Cambridge Expressway**

The Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council is calling on MPs to back its preferred route for the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

Cllr Jane Murphy has written to the Secretary of State for Transport, setting out that the Council's preference for the Expressway is Corridor C, which would run between Milton Keynes and the A34 at Bicester via Buckinghamshire to the north and west of Oxford, along with sub-option C1 which would link back to the A34 between Abingdon and Didcot.

Cllr Murphy said: "We are supportive of the objectives and purpose of the Expressway and recognise that it will support economic growth along the Oxford-to-Cambridge Corridor. We strongly believe our preferred route is the best option not only for South Oxfordshire, but Oxfordshire as a whole and I am urging all of our local MPs to support this route.

The Council believes its preferred route is the best option because:

it would more closely align with the current main route along this corridor, A34-M40-A421-M1, helping alleviate congestion along this route

it would more closely align with the growth locations along the corridor such as Bicester and Didcot Garden Town, and potential further growth areas in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire

it would more closely align with the other key east-west infrastructure schemes, such as East-West Rail.

If you want to stay up to date about the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway head over to Highways England's new dedicated website. This includes all the information presented at a stakeholder conference on 23 May, as well as further context on the proposed scheme.

You can find the web site at

<http://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=48&o=9492&url=https%3A%2F%2Fhighwaysengland.co.uk%2Fprojects%2Foxford-to-cambridge-expressway%2F&a=0>

We also have information and links on our web site at

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/delivering-infrastructure/oxford-cambridge>

**Appeals**

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). We have now heard that the Secretary of State has overridden the Planning Inspector's decision to grant the Appeal, supporting the Council's decision to refuse planning permission.

Sonning Common - South Oxfordshire District Council originally rejected the planning application for a development off Kennylands Road for a number of reasons, including the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the local countryside, and because it wasn't consistent with the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan.

The developer appealed but the inspector dismissed it saying the site adds positively to the setting of the village and that the harm to this and the wider countryside would be significant if the development went ahead.

Our MP, John Howell, says 'Both of these cases show how the Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate are supporting Neighbourhood Plans. Of crucial significance is the fact that where an NDP has been brought into force planning permission should not normally be granted which conflicts with it. That more than anything should give a great deal of comfort to those communities doing a Neighbourhood Plan.'

More information can be found on John's Blog  
<http://www.johnhowellmp.com/john's-blog/>

#### **Motions from councillors Considered by Full procedure**

At our last Full Council Meeting, we considered and debated five motion all of which were passed..

#### **(1) Motion to be proposed by Councillor David Turner, seconded by Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak:**

Council recognises that:

- Thames Valley Police are stretched to capacity, and that parking enforcement is one of their lowest priorities.
- members are regularly contacted by residents about inconvenient, illegal and dangerous parking violations that aren't being enforced.
- we have the power to introduce civil parking enforcement, as neighbouring councils have done at no additional cost to their tax payers.

This Council agrees in principle to introduce a civil parking enforcement scheme across the area covered by South Oxfordshire District Council.

Council instructs officers to produce a Business Case (to include financial costs and income, delivery options and timescales) to be considered as part of next year's budget.

#### **(2) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Sue Cooper, seconded by Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak:**

*That all new housing planning permissions with car parking spaces in South Oxfordshire include the provision of an electric vehicle charging point.*

**(3) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Felix Bloomfield:**

Council is supportive of the objectives and purpose of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway which it is acknowledged will support economic growth along the corridor. At this stage, the Council preference is for Corridor C, including sub-option C1 to the west of Oxford (see map attached to this agenda).

Council ask that the leader of South Oxfordshire, Councillor Jane Murphy, write to the Rt Hon Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport, to note the Council preference for road corridor options to the north and to the west of Oxford, and also note that should a south of Oxford corridor route materialise, given the potential environmental harm to southern Oxfordshire, furthermore detailed engagement and consultation should be undertaken on route options within this corridor.

**(4) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Felix Bloomfield:**

This Council supports the Government in undertaking the review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). We welcome the opportunity to be consulted upon the review and to feed into the process of review to assess the capability of the AONBs becoming National Park Authorities.

**(5) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Paul Harrison:**

Council notes that South Oxfordshire is an area of exceptionally high property values relative to the rest of England and that the statutory definition of Affordable Housing, whether for rented or home ownership, is related directly to these values. Average local incomes have not kept pace with average house prices or rents and 'Affordable' housing is not, therefore, affordable to many households and individuals. Council asks Councillor Jane Murphy, Leader of the council, to write to James Brokenshire, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government setting out the council's concern. Council urges the Secretary of State to give consideration to the definition of Affordable Housing, taking into account the impact very high values have on the current definition of affordable housing and urges him to consider a national debate on affordability and the implementation of a regional based definition of "affordable housing" to be introduced to set a maximum price model for affordable housing.

**Charity And Volunteer Award Winner**

The award-winning South Stoke Community Shop had three new customers yesterday afternoon when the chairman of South Oxfordshire District Council, Cllr Lorraine Hillier, Cllr Lynn Lloyd, cabinet member for community services at the council, and Cllr Kevin Bulmer dropped in for a browse and a cup of tea.

At the recent Oxfordshire Charity and Volunteer Awards, the shop won the best group in South Oxfordshire, an award which was sponsored by the district council.

Cllr Lloyd said "We gave the award to the South Stoke Community Shop as recognition of the hard work by the volunteers to create this community hub in a rural part of South Oxfordshire. This has obviously been appreciated by local people judging by its success."

Cllr Hillier added: "It was great for us to meet the winners of the council award and see for ourselves this remarkable asset which serves the community in so many ways."

Cllr Bulmer added 'This is a great facility to have in our community and I am very proud of the volunteers who make it possible. It is fantastic that their hard work and commitment has been recognised by their winning this Award.'

The councillors enjoyed a cup of tea and cake with the volunteers on the lawn outside the shop before buying some more cake to take home.

### **Fire-damaged council headquarters to be demolished**

The former headquarters of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are set to be demolished after the building at Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, was severely damaged in an arson attack in 2015.

A specialist demolition contractor has been appointed and will be on site from next Monday (16 July) carrying out preparatory works ahead of demolition.

Cllr Jane Murphy, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, which owns the site, said: "We're working closely with our contractors to minimise disruption to neighbouring residents once demolition work begins and I'd like to thank them in advance for their patience. We're also very grateful to all of our residents and local communities for their understanding during the time that's passed since the fire."

Cabinet member for Corporate Services Kevin Bulmer added 'This is a project that has been a long time getting under way and both the Council and the residents of Crowmarsh are pleased that, at last, work is beginning. There is still a lot of planning to do, but things are now moving forward.'

The councils moved temporarily to the Milton Park Estate following the fire.

Demolition is expected to take around four months.

### **Privacy policy updated (GDPR and all that.)**

**Reminder** -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/>

### **Lottery raises £5,000 as at the 3<sup>rd</sup> July**

Charities and voluntary groups signed up to our SO Charitable Lottery have received a total of £3,064 in the first three months since tickets went on sale. A further £1,919 has also been raised for the SO Charitable Community Fund, which we will use to support the district's voluntary sector.

Draws take place every Saturday and the biggest prize won so far is £250. Smaller £25 prizes and free lottery draw entries have also been given. There have been a total of 158 winners to date and there are currently 58 local good causes signed up to the lottery.

You can help by continuing to spread the word about the lottery among your local charities and voluntary organisations, and by encouraging residents to support the lottery by purchasing tickets.

Further information is available on the lottery website

<http://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=48&o=9492&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.socharitable.co.uk%2F&a=0>

### **Reminder - 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.

### **Making workplaces safer**

The Food and Safety Team found that a quarter of employees at inspected premises across South and Vale had reported incidents of verbal abuse, theft, violence and racial abuse.

The team have just completed a project to help make workplaces safer. Between July 2017 and April 2018 officers inspected 26 premises which have vulnerable working conditions, such as lone working, night working and cash handling. These included betting shops, off licences and late night takeaways.

Three quarters of businesses had good measures in place such as CCTV, lighting, magnetic locks on doors, and cash-handling procedures. However we had to make recommendations for improvements at five businesses - the good news is that all five made improvements by the time we did a re-visit.

The project was part of the team's proactive enforcement activities. From now until next April they will be focusing on the prevention of carbon monoxide poisoning in catering businesses and transport safety in large scale warehousing.

### **Wallingford Cycling Festival**

This year's Festival was attended by SODC Cabinet Member for Leisure Lynn Lloyd and District Cllrs Imran Lokhan and Ian White. There were a vast range of entrants ranging from semi-pro to complete novice and from 'mature cyclists' to the very young.

Cllr Lloyd said 'It was a great day; the energy from the Sponsors, organisers, volunteers and people taking part was incredible. Watching the professionals going around the town was something else.

Having the opportunity to be at the start of the family ride, seeing all the shapes and sizes involved was lovely. Some of the little ones will be giving the professionals a run for their money in years to come.'

Ward Member Cllr Lokhran said 'It was a fantastic day and great to see so many coming out on their cycles or supporting the riders and competitors. Every year we see an amazing commitment by cyclists and the volunteers who make it possible. This year was the first ever soapbox race and it was an amazing and fun way to end the festival of cycling!'

### **Thames Valley Police.**

#### **Nottingham Knockers Are About**

Thames Valley police has received reports of 'Nottingham Knockers' in our area. Often these people try and sell you cleaning items and say that they are trying to improve their lives following release from prison. **These people are often trying to find out more about the home owner and whether they are vulnerable and could be scammed out of more money.**

Please do not buy from these people and report it to Trading Standards by calling 03454 04 05 06 (Citizen's Advice) or emailing [TSinformation@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:TSinformation@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

If you feel threatened in anyway please call the Police on 999 (or 101 to report an incident after it has happened).

#### **Protect Your Shed Or Garage**

Opportunist thieves identify sheds and garages as easy pickings because they are usually fairly unprotected and lack basic security measures. The buildings often contain property that can be sold on or implements that can be used to force entry into the owner's home. Many people fall short on basic security of their sheds and garages.

- Keep your shed/garage in good condition.
- Fit a closed shackle padlock to the door.
- Fittings should be bolted through the door and any screws concealed.
- It is easy to unscrew the ironmongery, steal contents and in some cases replace the screws to make it look as if the shed has not been tampered with.
- By using tamper proof screws or coach bolts, together with a good quality pad bar or hasp and staple and close shackled padlock, the shed owner will make it harder for the would-be thief.
- Bond any window glass in with mastic to prevent easy removal. Fit grilles or mesh to windows to slow down the thief.
- Ensure all equipment and tools are locked away when not in use.
- Install a shed/garage alarm.
- Post-code or mark all property such as lawnmowers, bikes, and tools using ultraviolet pens, forensic marking such as Selecta DNA, SmartWater or engravers.
- Install security lighting as a deterrent, and plants such as thorny shrubs to act as a barrier at potential access points.
- If building a shed, put it where it is most visible to you and neighbours.
- Ensure ladders are locked to a secure fixture in the shed or garage so they can't be used to reach top floor windows.

- Chain large items such as bicycles together, making it much more difficult for a thief to carry away.
- Fit a wire cage inside a shed where more expensive items can be locked away.
- No thief wants to hang about longer than they have to so delay the time it will take them to get their hands on your tools

### **Making our mobile homes energy efficient**

Our residents at Foxhall Manor Park in Didcot will now be able to afford to insulate their homes, thanks to new grant funding we've secured from Npower.

We're piloting a new scheme which will provide up to £4,000 per home for insulation. This will significantly reduce heating bills and make people's homes healthier and more comfortable.

For the most vulnerable residents the work may even be free of charge and, where possible, Npower will also upgrade old, inefficient boilers for free.

Park homes use expensive heating fuels and are very inefficient to run. Insulation can be very costly, and with residents often on lower incomes, until now, many have been unable to afford energy-reducing work.

### **10 Years of Cornerstone**

It has been 10 years since Cornerstone first opened its doors! This season marks this special occasion with a special exhibition by resident photographer Peter Savage, an open day on Sat 22 Sept with all manner of free and fun activities inside and out for all the family, and a gala cabaret dinner on Sat 29 Sept.

Further to this, they have a very exciting and diverse programme of work across the Autumn leading up to the brand new Christmas production in December: The Pied Piper. Featuring a professional cast and 45 young people from across South Oxfordshire, The Pied Piper will be a fitting end to an amazing season of work. If you saw the Nutcracker And The Mouse King, produced by the same people, you will know that they put on fantastic shows!

Details of the season can be found at

<https://r1.arts-mail.com/3NBK-FM5G-3JAKQM-AD33W-1/c.aspx>

Alternatively, you can get the new Brochure from the Box Office.

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