

## **PARISH COUNCIL REPORT OCTOBER 2015**

### **FROM CLLR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE**

#### **BUDGET**

The hard work of preparing a budget for 2016/17 is well under way. Later this month OCC will be announcing the areas that are being considered for making savings. There will be a series of road shows and a consultation to enable residents to express their views.

#### **CHILDREN'S CENTRE AND EARLY INTERVENTION CHANGES**

The council's Cabinet endorsed a proposal for a full public consultation to take place during the autumn on the future of children's centres and early intervention hubs. The proposals follow the findings of a cross-party review of the council's early intervention services, and children's centres, which was reported to Cabinet in June. That review recommended that a network of Children and Family Resource Centres for 0-19 year-olds be developed targeted to those areas of greatest need, with a good geographical spread of centres. The focus would be on supporting the most vulnerable children and families. Under the proposals £8m would be saved from the current overall £16m budget for children's centres and the Early Intervention Service. The remaining £8m budget for the current children's centres and early intervention services would be combined with the existing £4m budget for children's social care's Family Support Teams, creating a new £12m service. There will be extensive consultation throughout the autumn before any decision is taken.

#### **REFUGEE CRISIS**

People in Oxfordshire have been shocked and saddened by the images they have seen of refugees fleeing brutal regimes such as that in Syria, where civil war is raging. After the Prime Minister announced that Britain would need to accept more refugees from Syria, the County Council has been talking to partner agencies to see what can be done. The County Council has a legal responsibility to protect young children known as Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers; the number in the care of OCC has doubled over the last year to around 50. Government is being asked for additional funding to minimise the impact on OCC services.

#### **MINERALS & WASTE LOCAL PLAN: Part 1 Core Strategy**

The public consultation into the Core Strategy has closed. Our local action groups – PAGE and BACHPORT have submitted strong objections to the Plan on the grounds that it is unsound and not legally compliant. I support these views and have taken every opportunity available to me to challenge the plan at County Hall: as a member of the Cabinet Advisory Group, at our Cabinet meeting in November 2014, and at full Council on 24th March 2015 when I supported an amendment bringing these failures to the attention of all County Councillors. Sadly, we lost by only three votes. The Plan now proceeds to Public Inquiry. We will have to wait and see what the government Inspector decides.

#### **A40 LONG TERM VISION**

When the A40 strategy was debated at the July Cabinet meeting, it was decided to develop a long-term strategy for the A40 corridor looking at all possible options. Council Leader Ian Hudspeth briefed the Prime Minister and Witney MP, David Cameron, ahead of the planned consultation. David Cameron said: "I am pleased that Government funding is enabling the

County Council to make vital improvements to the A40. Absolutely more needs to be done but it is good to see progress being made and I encourage residents to respond to the consultation." The proposals can be viewed on Friday 9 October between 12 noon and 7pm. Cassington Village Hall, The Green, Cassington, OX29 4AX. Then on Saturday 10 October between 10:30am and 4pm. Eynsham Village Hall, 46 Back Lane, Eynsham, OX29 4QW.

## **ROAD WORKS AT WOLVERCOTE AND CUTTESLOWE ROUNDABOUTS**

The road works at Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts are a necessary part of the A40 strategy and are inevitably causing disruption but they have the backing of the business-led Local Enterprise Partnership. Once completed, the works will improve the capacity at both junctions improving traffic flow. The recent works at the southern roundabouts have demonstrated the improvements to traffic flow once complete. The challenge is to carry out the work whilst still allowing traffic to flow through the junctions safely. One of the most costly and important elements of road projects is the traffic management for safety, not only for the workforce but also for all road users. If the junctions were done separately, then the traffic management would have the same effect but the works would take longer, creating more of a problem. A lot of planning and thought went into this project to try to reduce the cost and keep the disruption to a minimum. The planning is carried out with OCC's Partner Skanska, a leading international engineering company, who have expertise in this field.

## **HIGH SHERIFF'S 2015 COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AWARD**

A special award that is intended to provide support for projects that foster or encourage integration between different groups in Oxfordshire is now open for applications. The event is organised through OCVA and provides financial support up to a maximum of £3,000 for any individual project, or in smaller amounts depending on the requirements of the project. The deadline for applications is October 9 and the Awards Ceremony will take place in the Mayor's Parlour at 5.30 on 8 December. The High Sheriff Tom Birch Reynardson said: "Oxfordshire is a county which enjoys great diversity in its geographic character, its economy, its social structures and its people. This award seeks to reward and promote new initiatives to foster community integration and to build greater common knowledge and understanding between communities in the great county of Oxfordshire. Projects may focus on any aspect of community life and may be new or already exist. We very much look forward to receiving applications from the local community." Applications can be made via the OCVA website at <http://ocva.org.uk/high-sheriff-2015/>

## **FREE ELECTRIC BLANKET TESTING NEAR YOU**

As winter approaches Oxfordshire County Council's Fire & Rescue Service and Trading Standards are arranging free electric blanket testing around the county to help people stay safe as well as warm. Free tests will be available in October at 10 venues throughout Oxfordshire. Testing is by pre-booked appointment only, strictly on a first come, first served basis. Anyone wanting to get an electric blanket tested should call Trading Standards on 01865 815 000 option 4 to arrange an appointment or email [communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk). The electric blanket testing team will be visiting venues in the following different locations around the county and have a target of 100 tests a day. Details here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/sep/free-electric-blanket-testing-near-you>