

# WODC VOICE

REPORTING BACK TO YOU, OUR RESIDENTS

NOVEMBER 2024

BAGS OF  
LOCAL  
MARKETS  
THIS  
FESTIVE  
SEASON!

SUPPORT YOUR  
LOCAL TRADERS  
AND SOAK UP THE  
SMELLS, SIGHTS,  
AND SOUNDS OF  
THE SEASON

*Also in this issue:*

**CHILD'S PLAY?**

**£80k cash boost for Kilkenny Lane Country Park**

**CREATING STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

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YOUR COUNCIL



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Cover image: One of our younger residents enjoying the festive market at Blenheim Palace in 2023

YOUR COUNCIL



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Cut out and keep

## Welcome

Hello, and welcome to our latest edition of WODC Voice. And, what a year it's been. We have seen a change in government, and locally three new MPs. I met and welcomed all three to our Council offices where we talked about the importance of working together to benefit West Oxfordshire.

We need to foster partnerships, not just with our MPs but with other local authorities, businesses and organisations so that we can achieve rural and urban investment that creates jobs and employment. We will work for the common good with other stakeholders who equally need to do the same thing. What matters is the outcome for you, our residents, and I believe that it's always the sum of the parts that makes the difference. With greater responsibility, and greater ownership we can have a greater chance of sustaining our communities by creating real, meaningful partnerships.

The festive season is just around the corner, and I wanted to highlight some of the fantastic upcoming open air Christmas markets. From Woodstock to Witney and across the district, there is something for everyone. We are very proud of our markets and are looking at ways we can make them even better. We recently ran a survey to ask residents what they liked about our markets and what could be better, and this feedback is helping us to support local traders and increase footfall, which we know is great for local business. See the Christmas feature on pages 8 and 9 and on the back page you can find information on Christmas and New Year waste collections.

In May 2023 we committed £500,000 to fund local projects, through our crowdfunding initiative, Westhive. We have helped a diverse range of projects that benefit the community to get ahead. If you have an idea that will benefit your community, we want to hear about it. Whether it's a new skate park, or a new play park we can help you to realise your ambitions. You can read about some of our successes on page six.

The Executive team continues its quest to reach out to the community and get you involved in democracy by taking our Executive meetings on tour across the district. Places our Executive toured in the last year include Carterton, Chipping Norton, Burford, Charlbury and more. The meetings are scheduled to be held in towns across the district over the coming months, with details published on the Council's website as venues are confirmed closer to each meeting. All meetings are open for residents to attend without pre-booking. After the meeting, everyone is welcome to chat to our Executive members directly. Come along and join the conversation. If you can't make one of the Executive on Tour meetings, we also broadcast a live Q&A every other month on Facebook. Follow our social media accounts for forthcoming venues and dates and Facebook live Q&A sessions.

I wish you a merry festive season and a peaceful and prosperous start to 2025.

And remember, this is your Council.



**Councillor Andy Graham - Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council**



# Home is where the heart is

Having a home is something most of us take for granted, but there are people living in housing that's unaffordable, unable to afford to get on the housing ladder or at threat of homelessness. Having a suitable home is the foundation from which we can all thrive.

Building more houses has been talked about a lot in the newspapers and by the Government over recent months. On this page we set out our approach to building more homes for local people and how we will need to respond to the new government's housing targets.

## Taking action to make sure we are building the right homes, in the right places

We are taking action to build even more affordable homes. Tackling the housing affordability crisis is one of our key objectives and this year we have taken steps to do more, faster.

The reality many local people face is that house prices still far exceed average earnings in West Oxfordshire, meaning local people can't afford local homes.

We updated you last year on some of the great progress made in building affordable homes across the district. More affordable homes have been built this year, which is great news, but we have decided that we will do more ourselves because the national planning system isn't delivering enough.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Andy Graham said, "Having homes that are affordable for local people is something we know residents want across the district. We are now exploring options to build our own homes and move forward with innovative schemes such as the self-build, zero carbon homes in Chipping Norton."

*We will be doing all we can within our power to deliver those affordable homes for local people."*

Here is what we have been doing over the last year and some of what is coming up:

- **Building our own socially rented homes**  
We are exploring options to build social rented homes in West Oxfordshire ourselves which would be truly affordable for local people. This would be on land we own, and we aspire to deliver 179 social rented homes by 2026.
- **Using funds to get more social rent and affordable homes in development**  
We are working with developers to make sure the highest possible number of affordable homes are delivered. We are using money we have received from other developments to fund them.
- **Providing temporary accommodation for people in need**  
Sometimes residents fall into hard times and need temporary accommodation to avoid becoming homeless. We are expanding that temporary accommodation by making use of empty properties.



**Geoff Saul - Executive Member for Housing and Social Care**

## Creating a better Local Plan for you

### Planning for the future as the Government changes national planning laws

We have been engaging with residents over the past two years on our new Local Plan. This document will set out where any new homes will be built along with the transport links, schools, GPs, employment and other elements that all new housing needs to thrive.

You will likely have read about the new house buildings targets brought in by the Government. As with previous Government targets, we will have to plan to build these homes as a Local Planning Authority, otherwise we will face unplanned development across the district.

Through the Local Plan we can decide as a West Oxfordshire community how we want our area to develop, and we will continue to develop the Local Plan with you as residents. The views you have given to us in our first consultations have shaped it and you will be invited to give feedback as it progresses. We want to be ambitious around providing more affordable homes, homes that are carbon-friendly and cheap to run along with the right infrastructure put in place.



**Hugo Ashton - Executive Member for Planning**

**We will promote the next stage of consultation across our social media, website and newsletters so please keep an eye out for more information over the coming months.**

# It's Christmas shopping season... (Oh no it's not!) Oh yes, it is!

Some of you may have already started your Christmas shopping or perhaps you've even finished, but for many the festive chaos has only just begun. But who says Christmas shopping needs to be stressful? What better way to spread Christmas cheer than to support your local traders whilst soaking up the smells, sights, and sounds of the season? A gift for a loved one is a gift for the traders who will be offering fresh produce and handmade trinkets at the fantastically festive markets and events that are happening across the district this year.

## Woodstock Festive Fayre

The Woodstock Festive Fayre has been entertaining the people of Woodstock for five years now and has more than earned its reputation for its curation of diverse and quality products from some of the best local artisans. This year, the fayre will return on **29 November** from 5-8pm and **30 November** from 10am to 7pm and promises to be bigger and better than ever before, expanding into three separate venues to showcase over 50 crafters with a stunning array of unique gifts. From decorations to trinkets, and specialty chocolates to artisan beers, there is so much to enjoy and explore.

**Where:** St Mary Magdalene Church, The Oxfordshire Museum and The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum (all three venues are next to each other in Park Street, Woodstock).

Leader of the Council Cllr Andy Graham after his festive shopping trip to Marriotts Walk

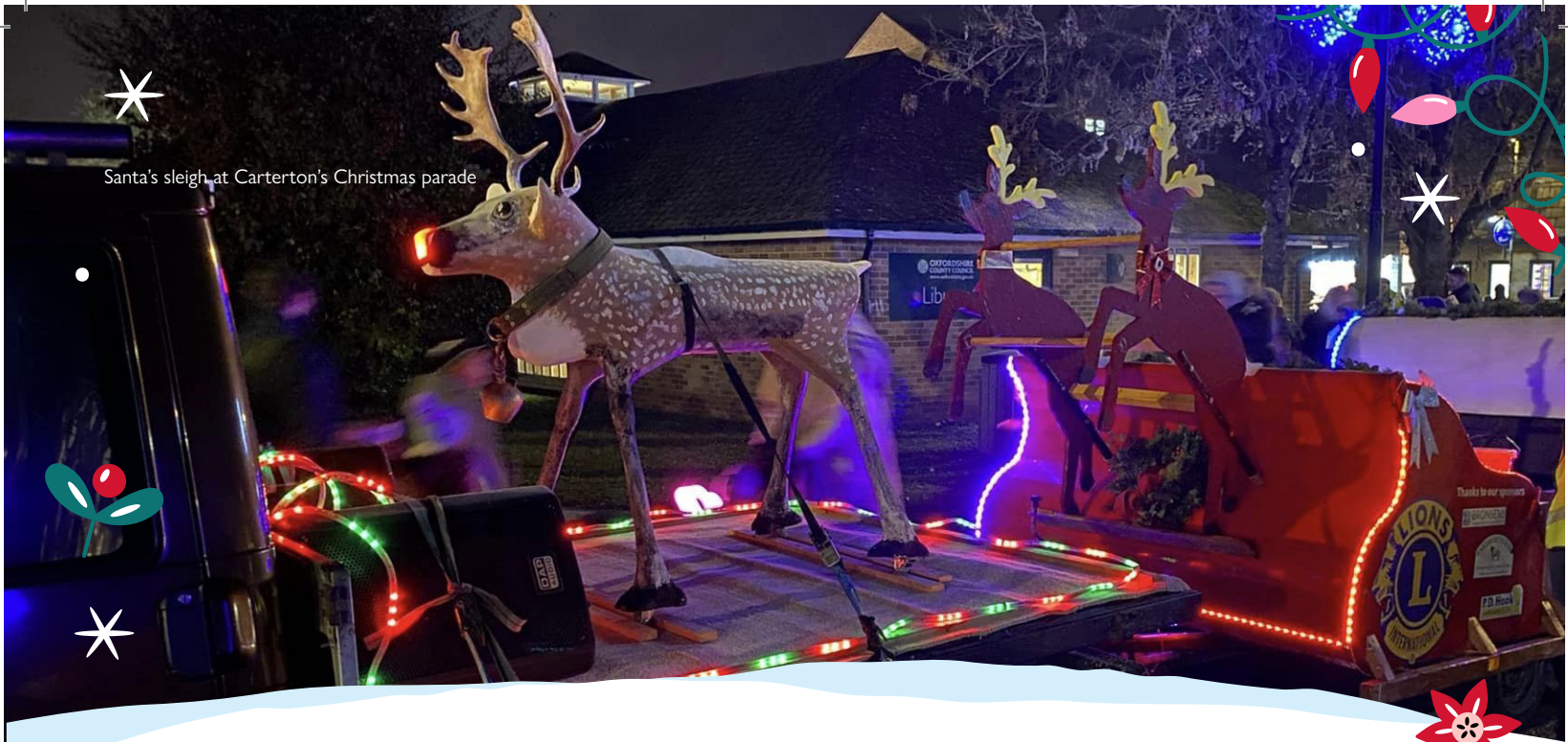
## Witney Craft & Gift Market

For those looking for a unique gift for someone special, look no further than the Witney Craft & Gift Market, taking place at the Corn Exchange Witney on **7 December**, 10am-4pm. As one of Mynt Image's top three markets in the country, the market will be a treasure trove of beautifully handcrafted goods. You are guaranteed to find the perfect gift!

## Witney Christmas Market by Cotswold Markets

The Witney Christmas Market at Marriotts Walk will be back for another year by popular demand following the success of last year's event, which was the first of its kind at Marriotts Walk and saw 15,000 people visiting across the three days. Following visitor feedback from last year, Cotswold Markets will bring the event to Marriotts Walk for four days this year, running from **5-8 December**. The event is free so grab your winter woolies and enjoy a long weekend of handmade gifts, baked goods, and freshly made food.





Santa's sleigh at Carterton's Christmas parade

### Long Hanborough Christmas Market

Join the festive fun at the Long Hanborough Christmas Market on **30 November**. From 9.30am to 12pm, the Recreation Hall will be buzzing with holiday cheer, offering Christmas goodies including mince pies, cakes, cookies, savouries, and preserves. There will also be a wide selection of handmade crafts and jewellery, perfect for gifting. Don't miss the chance to enjoy some tea, coffee, and hot bacon rolls whilst you shop, and place your orders for your Christmas menu for collection in December.

### Eynsham Country Market

Head to Eynsham Market Square on **7 December** for the Eynsham Country Market, featuring fresh, locally produced, seasonal baking including Christmas cakes, mince pies, decorated cookies, tray bakes, treats and preserves. In addition to delicious treats, there will be a selection of handmade crafts, including jewellery, cards, sewn, knitted, and felted gifts, as well as stained-glass decorations. The market is free to enter, and refreshments will be available.

### Carterton Christmas Lights & Lantern Parade

Experience the magic of Carterton's annual Christmas Lights & Lantern parade on **Saturday 30 November**. The fun will begin at 11am with children's activities and entertainment, and the lantern parade will begin at the Methodist Church at 5.30pm, making its way to the Market Square. At 6pm, watch as the town is illuminated with festive lights, switched on by a special guest. If the party atmosphere is what you're looking for, you can stay late for an evening of live music and delicious food and drinks until 10pm. You won't want to miss this kickoff to the holiday season!

### Combe Mill Christmas Fayre

On **1 December**, the historic Combe Mill will host its annual Christmas Fayre from 11am to 4pm. Enjoy a festive day out with the family, complete with a Christmas market, raffle, tearoom, BBQ, mulled wine, and chestnuts. You can even watch the blacksmiths in action in the forge, making unique items for your Christmas stocking. Children can listen to a story with Santa and receive a gift, while adults explore the range of handcrafted gifts. Entry is free, with plenty of parking available, so bring the whole family—including the dog on a lead!



Local trader at Woodstock Festive Fayre. Image source: Jay Alice Photography, Bokeh 8

### Blenheim Palace Christmas Market

Experience the festive magic at Blenheim Palace's Christmas Market, running until the **22 December**. Nestled in The Great Court, this seasonal market offers a variety of inspired gift ideas and festive goodies. The charming village of wooden chalets and street food stalls provide a perfect festive escape, with a tempting selection of tasty foods and treats to share under the stars. Pre-book your tickets online to ensure you don't miss out on this iconic Christmas experience.

# Investment brings success!



## A year of success at Marriotts Walk, from public art displays to national award nominations

This year brought more positive developments to Marriotts Walk, as we continue to work towards reinvigorating Witney Town Centre. In May, the Council's acquisition of the shopping centre was recognised with a nomination for the Property Week 'Deal of the Year - Commercial Property (under £50m)' award. The nomination was a proud moment for the Council and a nod to our commitment to revitalising Witney's town centre and ensuring that it remains a thriving hub for local businesses and visitors.

Marriotts Walk boasts anchor stores like M&S and Sports Direct, alongside favourites such as Bella Italia, FatFace, Trespass, and New Look. These brands draw shoppers in and pave the way for new businesses. We're actively working to bring in more exciting shops, blending big names with independent traders to create opportunities for a wider range of businesses.

The summer also saw the introduction of the new butterfly display, a bright and colourful touch to the shopping centre which has been a hit with shoppers and passersby.

Additionally, the much-loved Witney yarn mosaic, which beautifully captures the town's rich history, underwent essential repair work. The mosaic, a key piece of public art, depicts significant moments in Witney's past and remains an important cultural feature of Marriotts Walk.

These developments will help ensure that Marriotts Walk continues to be a lively and attractive part of our town, blending history with modern community life.

*And there's more to come!*



Pictured: Left to right: Cllr Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development; Cllr Andy Graham, Leader of the Council; Cllr Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance

The new play equipment at Kilkenny Lane Country Park



## £80k investment offers a fresh new look for Kilkenny Lane Country Park

Kilkenny Lane Country Park, a beloved family destination, has undergone a major transformation this year, thanks to an £80k investment into its facilities. In the spring, the play area received a full upgrade, with new and updated equipment installed, including a climbing frame, accessible swing, spring animals, picnic benches and zip wire. Additionally, the sandpit was replenished, with new metal diggers installed, providing a fun and safe environment for younger children to play. These additions will ensure that the park continues to stand the test of time, and cater for children of all ages, offering a variety of activities for them to enjoy.

With the growing popularity of the park, the car park also underwent expansion to accommodate more visitors comfortably. The new layout includes 29 parking spaces, three disabled bays, bike racks, and four new public toilets, so that the park is more accessible and convenient for everyone. These improvements have made Kilkenny Lane Country Park an even more welcoming space for families across the district and beyond to enjoy, whether visiting for a day of play, a relaxing picnic, or a peaceful countryside walk.

## Celebrating 50 YEARS of West Oxfordshire District Council



Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Lynda Atkins, and WODC Youth Champion, India Mae Thompson, pictured at WODC's 50th Anniversary event alongside councillors old and new

West Oxfordshire District Council celebrated its 50th anniversary this year, marking its service to the community with a special event that brought together residents, current and former Council members, and community leaders. We were pleased to welcome Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Lynda Atkins, and WODC Youth Champion, India Mae Thompson, who opened the event with speeches and the cutting of a cake.

The event was an opportunity to reflect on the Council's achievements over the years, with speeches recognising all the progress made and the challenges that lie ahead, and the unveiling of our newly refurbished Council Chamber and community space, which has since been used for several Council meetings and will be available for broader public use. The event was not only a time to reflect on how far we've come since the Council was first formed, but also an opportunity to look to the future and the continued commitment of the Council towards serving its communities.

# Partnership working for a prosperous future

West Oxfordshire District Council Leader Cllr Andy Graham recognises the importance of partnerships and their contribution to the Council's success. A priority this year has been to build and maintain relationships with West Oxfordshire's new MPs. Cllr Graham tells us why it's so important for the district to foster strong relationships with partners.



Cllr Andy Graham and Charlie Maynard, MP for the Witney constituency

## Q: Why do we need strong relationships with our MPs?

Partnerships are an important part of what we do in West Oxfordshire.

We've recently seen some boundary changes, and we now have more MPs representing us at government level.

Our MPs are Charlie Maynard, who represents Witney constituency, Sean Woodcock for the Banbury constituency and for Bicester and Woodstock, Calum Miller. Having three MPs gives us far more ability, and far more entitlement to get further than if we had just one MP.

## Q: We have MPs representing two political parties in West Oxfordshire. How difficult will it be working with them?

Our MPs represent two different political parties and that is a challenge. Are three people working within the district, taking the voice of the people from our local area to parliament a good thing? I believe it is and it's a great opportunity to ensure our voice is heard and that we can work together. The three new MPs have created another layer. If we are patient and give the relationship with them some time to build trust, I think we can make change happen.

We need partnerships to achieve our residents' wishes. We can do this better when we work with other stakeholders.

But to have a partnership, you've got to have trust, integrity, transparency, and accountability. All parties need to be bold about that.

## Q: What can strong partnerships achieve that we cannot do alone?

You can achieve an enormous amount in a partnership, far more than we do by just moving forward on our own. It takes hard work to make partnerships successful. You need to convince all sides to work together, towards a common goal. Partnership working means you need to consider other's

views but work towards a consensus. You unpack the layers of complexity and find the simplest solutions. We need to work together and share responsibility. We get more done as a partnership than we do alone.



Cllr Andy Graham and Sean Woodcock, MP for the Banbury constituency

## Q: Will partnerships achieve 'quick wins' or is there a longer-term strategy?

We've only just begun with our new MPs, and we need to glance over short-term goals. Some things can be achieved quickly, but we need long-term visions. How can we make West Oxfordshire even better going forward? It's about legacy, how do we leave something behind. You can do that with strong partnerships with all organisations across the district. In West Oxfordshire, let's box above our weight. Let's set a template for how things can be in the future and share it with other authorities.

## Q: How often will meetings be held and what difference will it make to residents?

By regularly meeting our MPs and speaking to them and other partners, you need to be honest and open. I can't predict what they will do, but I hope that I can influence them enough to share the baton of responsibility. We're off at the same starting block, and I think we need to learn to run together and if we fall over, pick each other up, and carry on running.

Cllr Andy Graham and Calum Miller, MP for the Bicester & Woodstock constituency







## Creating stronger, healthier communities

This year seven local organisations were awarded funding through our new three-year grant scheme, offering them long-term financial stability and the ability to plan for the future. With a total of £500,000 allocated to the initiative, each group is eligible for up to £25,000 per year. Combined with our community crowdfunding platform, Westhive, this approach puts local communities at the heart of our support efforts, empowering them to drive the changes that they want to see in their areas.

### **The Theatre Chipping Norton: More Than Just a Stage**

One recipient of the three-year grant programme is The Theatre Chipping Norton which sits at the heart of the Chippy community. The theatre has operated in partnership with WODC since the 1980s, and with around 50,000 visitors each year, it serves to both entertain and support its community.

John Terry, Artistic Director of The Theatre Chipping Norton, said, "We're delighted to receive community grant funding from WODC, which enables the theatre to provide arts, culture, leisure, and entertainment services across the district, supporting our outreach and participatory work.

"We work with WODC to create real social impact, focusing on how we can reach people who don't otherwise engage with us and could benefit from our support."

As the theatre celebrates its 50th anniversary, we reflect upon all it has achieved over the years, including the expansion of its outreach programme which includes a free school meals initiative, support for adults with learning disabilities, and mental health initiatives in local schools. All demonstrating that The Theatre Chipping Norton's value extends far beyond the stage.

# Supporting services that support you

Our commitment to supporting our communities goes beyond the arts. Through the three-year community grant scheme, we are proud to fund a range of other essential community services and organisations, such as:

**Volunteer Link Up**, which provides a community transport scheme serving nearly 1,000 local people who have difficulty accessing public transport.

Barry Beadle, Manager of Volunteer Link Up, said, “We have a long history of working in partnership with and receiving financial support from WODC. The funding is a further improvement in the already invaluable support we receive and will assist us in being able to make more concrete plans over a longer period than ‘year on year’ funding. This can only improve the service we give to our 993 clients.”

**Home-Start Oxford** also does incredible work with families across Oxfordshire. With our support, they continue home visits and offer free groups and holiday sessions for families with children under five at several locations in Witney.

Katharine Barber, CEO of Home-Start Oxford, said, “We are thrilled to have been awarded funding for our services across West Oxfordshire. We have been working in partnership with WODC for several years.

The increased, longer-term grant really demonstrates the commitment of the Council to support families with young children, at what can be a difficult and isolating time.”



Making a difference in your community



A session for young families run by Home-Start Oxford

## Westhive: Bringing ideas to life

Since its launch in September 2023, Westhive has been bringing people across West Oxfordshire together to make the changes they want to see in their communities, and already it's making big waves.

So far, we've helped fund projects like sustainable cycling initiatives, arts programmes for schools, initiatives for adults with autism and learning disabilities, and efforts to reduce food waste. These are just a few examples of the creativity and passion that we've seen so far.

Westhive continues to welcome new projects, inviting residents and community groups to submit their ideas, support ongoing initiatives, or spread the word about this opportunity to make West Oxfordshire an even better place to live.

Cllr Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, said, “With our new approach to community funding — through both the three-year grants and the Westhive platform — we're giving local organisations the chance to take the lead in shaping the future of West Oxfordshire.

“By offering long-term support alongside grassroots fundraising opportunities, we're helping communities take control of their own futures, whilst also focusing on important Council priorities like sustainability, community health and wellbeing, and tackling climate change.”



The Westhive team at West Oxfordshire District Council

## A first for our community - empowering young people

The District Council has introduced a new youth development role, reflecting our dedication to fostering strong, inclusive communities where young people thrive.

This role emerged directly from the 2022 Youth Needs Assessment, a survey of over 3,900 young residents which identified key areas impacting their lives and opportunities. The Council wants to build a brighter future with young people's voices and the youth development officer will tackle these issues head-on. The role will focus on breaking down barriers and removing obstacles faced by young people in our district, expanding support by offering a wider range of activities, services, and resources tailored to their needs and requirements, amplifying youth voices by ensuring young people participate in shaping council decisions and community development.

Mel Kayani, the Youth Development Officer, tells us how the role will develop, “This is an exciting initiative which puts our young people at the heart of everything we do, making sure they have equal and easy access to a fantastic range of activities, the best services and support available, have their say, and actively participate in shaping the development of their own thriving and vibrant communities. I am proud to be a part of such a wonderful initiative and look forward to working with young people and partners across the community to make a positive difference.”



Have your say, learn more, contact our youth development officer at: [melanie.kayani@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.kayani@westoxon.gov.uk)

Mel Kayani, WODC Youth Development Officer

# Fit for the future



Cllr Duncan Enright is Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development at West Oxfordshire District Council. Duncan has overseen investment into the business and wider community through local and national funding schemes. We sat down with Cllr Enright to discuss the schemes that have been supported over the last three years.

**Q: What is the aim of the funding we've allocated?**

Funding is obviously very important to get projects off the ground and maintain those that are already being delivered. We've invested in several projects that we believe are going to make our district better and meet the priorities that we have as a Council.

**Q: Does the funding help local people?**

Yes, some of the funding has been committed to helping people build their skills. I was at Abingdon & Witney College recently launching new, free training places for people in the care industry. Instead of just doing a job, people can develop a career path and can build a life here in West Oxfordshire.

We are also investing in green skills so that our plumbers and other traders can develop their net zero expertise, enabling them to fit heat pumps in place of gas boilers. These are the skills of the future that we know we're going to need.

**Q: What does the future hold?**

I'd like to think we will continue to make changes as a more active Council and try to drive a fairer and better West Oxfordshire to get us ready for the future. We're keen to support our town centres. We all know that internet shopping has brought in real challenges for businesses and it's

tough to make a living on the High Street, but we're investing in our town centres to make them lovely places to be.

**Q: Has the Council received any funding from the government?**

Yes, we were very lucky to be awarded £1.7m from the government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This money has enabled us to support a huge range of projects across the district – they are too numerous to mention all of them, but we have upgraded Deer Park south in Witney to make it accessible for wheelchair users and prams, and made finance available for infrastructure improvements through our crowdfunding platform, Westhive. The funding for skills that I mentioned earlier has also been allocated from the SPF.

The money has also helped us to look at how we can improve our market towns and rural services as well as produce a strategic study for Carterton, which identifies how we can deliver a future vision for Carterton. We have also made money available to businesses that want to improve their green credentials through a Carbon Action Fund, which will help make them more resilient and sustainable.

Left to right: Edward Collett, Commercial Director at Abingdon & Witney College; Amy Braganca, Marketing Director at Abingdon & Witney College; Cllr Duncan Enright, Executive Member for Economic Development at WODC; Emma Phillips, Market Towns Officer at WODC



# Health and wellbeing through the power of leisure



West Oxfordshire District Council is dedicated to fostering a healthy, active community by providing quality leisure facilities. We strive to promote a sense of inclusion and make health and wellness accessible and enjoyable for all residents.

## Not for the faint hearted! Cool water swimming makes its debut at Woodstock pool

This year we introduced cool water swimming at Woodstock pool for eight weeks ahead of the summer holidays. Pool temperatures ranged from 18c and reached 22c at its highest. It proved to be a great success, drawing in regular cool water swimmers as well as those looking to take the cooler plunge for the first time.

Swimming has huge benefits, not only is it a low-impact exercise, suitable for many, it also builds muscle strength, improves cardio fitness, flexibility and can reduce stress. Our leisure centres offer swim fitness slots daily at their pools and have also introduced new water-based classes: Aqua Aerobics at Windrush, Water Based Mindfulness and Aqua Yoga at Carterton. If you or your child want to become a better swimmer, our centres also have swimming lessons and courses for children, adults, and those with disabilities.

## Shaping the future of leisure

The Council is currently developing a plan to shape the future of leisure and wellbeing services in West Oxfordshire. This strategy is designed with residents at its core, aiming to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality facilities and services that encourage healthy, active lifestyles for all.

Through the strategy, we can make informed decisions about where best to invest in local leisure projects. It will build on existing plans like the Playing Pitch Strategy and connect with other key initiatives, such as promoting active travel and making the most of our open green spaces.

Most crucially, the strategy will identify key priorities for improving leisure services, particularly focusing on breaking down the barriers faced by those that find it hardest to stay active. We're committed to delivering the best leisure services possible and making sure they are inclusive and accessible for all.

## From the Euros to Wimbledon - A year of inspiring sport

2024 has been a fantastic year of sporting events. There has truly been something for everyone to enjoy and follow, from tennis and football to swimming and athletics, we have had the chance to witness world-class performances, exciting competitions, and inspiring stories. Perhaps it's encouraged you to get back into playing a sport you used to love, or you feel motivated to try something new.

**Enjoyed Wimbledon? Why not book a racquet sport session such as squash, badminton, table tennis or pickleball.**

**Want to kick-off your football skills after watching the Euros? Get your team together and book a pitch.**

**Feeling inspired from watching the Olympics and Paralympics? Break new records and try something new! Our leisure centres offer many sports hall activities for you to enjoy.**

## Get connected this winter

During the colder months of autumn and winter, people are often less likely to spend time outside; there is a natural inclination to hibernate, and we see less sunlight during these months. This can have a huge impact on our mood and overall well-being. Winter is therefore an important time to invest in your physical and mental health, through maintaining enjoyable exercise and connecting with others at this often-isolating time of year.

Leisure centres are more than just gyms and sport centres, they are community hubs, the perfect place to reconnect with ourselves and others while staying active and having fun. If you are looking to reenergise or relax your mind and body, try a yoga class. If you want to improve your cardio and get your heart pumping, try a Boxfit or group cycle class. If you want to burn calories while having fun, book a dance class. All classes offer a welcoming environment, so bring a friend or come alone and meet some new friends. What's important is to keep moving and connect with others.

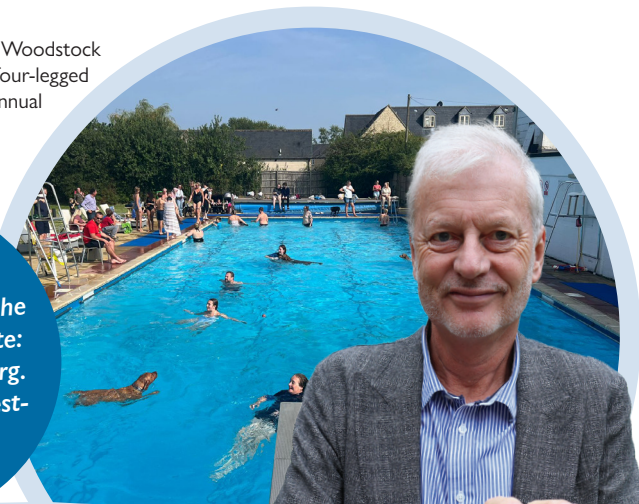
Carterton and Chipping Norton leisure centres are also part of the 'Warm Spaces' initiative. For a few hours a day, customers and non-customers can relax in a comfortable setting, charge phones, enjoy free Wi-Fi, take a shower and enjoy a complimentary tea, coffee, and biscuit with others. We know it can be challenging during the winter months, especially with the current cost of living, so we're here to support you with these small comforts.

**For times and more information, please visit:**

**[www.better.org.uk/healthy-communities/warm-spaces](http://www.better.org.uk/healthy-communities/warm-spaces)**

Visitors flock to Woodstock pool with their four-legged friends for the annual end of season dog swim

To book any of the facilities please visit the Better Leisure website: <https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/west-oxfordshire>



**Whether it is trying a new fitness class with friends, swimming to relax after work or enjoying a leisurely coffee, our leisure centres offer something for every interest and age. It is essential to incorporate wellness into your daily life and we encourage everyone to explore what West Oxfordshire has to offer.**

Cllr Tim Sumner,  
Executive Member  
for Leisure and  
Major Projects

## Council funds new community orchards in the district

A successful bid for funding from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund has enabled us to support the creation of 13 new community orchards over the last 12 months.

Delivered by community groups in our district, six orchards were planted in the spring, with a further seven orchards - totalling 124 trees - set to go in the ground during this winter's tree planting season.

With 80 per cent of orchards having disappeared across Oxfordshire in the last century, and half of those which remain reported to be in poor condition, the new trees will play a vital role in restoring lost habitat, important for birds, bats, and insects, and providing sustenance to pollinators and other wildlife.

It is hoped that these publicly accessible orchards will also help connect more people to nature and their local green spaces and create opportunities for communities to work together on a project and learn new skills.

Cllr Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, and Cllr Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery



We still have some remaining funding to allocate, so if you have an idea for a community orchard (or would like to expand an existing orchard), do get in touch: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/coronation-community-orchard-scheme/](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/coronation-community-orchard-scheme/)

## Supporting community-led action to reach net zero

With predictions that the UK's electricity demand will at least double by 2050 as the country moves away from fossil fuels for heating and transport, taking a local approach to energy planning can play an important role in managing future demand from the grid, increasing local energy resilience and supporting net zero targets.

Below, Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery at the Council, tells us more about the Community Action Plan for Zero-Carbon Energy (CAPZero), a ground-breaking project that's helping West Oxfordshire communities take an innovative approach to cleaner, greener energy:

*"A first of its kind in the UK, CAPZero focuses on the Eynsham Primary Substation Area - the local part of the grid covering all or part of the parishes of: Cassington, Eynsham, Freeland, Farmoor in Cumnor, Hanborough, North Leigh, South Leigh, Stanton Harcourt and Sutton.*

*"With support from Low Carbon Hub, the project empowers residents, businesses, and other organisations based in these 8 catchment areas to transition to a net zero energy system through the development and adoption of a local energy action plan. Developed with and by the community with expert input, the plan details the priority actions needed to achieve net zero energy by 2050, such as by improving the fabric of existing and new buildings to boost their energy efficiency, switching to renewable energy sources, and placing greater emphasis on active travel and electric powered vehicles.*

*"We're delighted to match-fund this exciting project which is helping our communities take a leading role in adopting green energy solutions which are right for them. It is hoped CAPZero will act as a model for others and inspire similar, locally focused projects in the county."*

**Visit the Low Carbon Hub website: [www.lowcarbonhub.org/cap-zero/](http://www.lowcarbonhub.org/cap-zero/) for more details.**

CAPZero has been developed as part of Project LEO (Local Energy Oxfordshire), a large-scale energy innovation project aiming to accelerate the transition of the energy system to net zero. It takes the county-wide net zero targets and translates them into ambitious but realistic targets for a smaller geographic area. CAPZero is supported by Low Carbon Hub, GreenTEA (Transition Eynsham Area) and Freeland Energy Group.



## Join others benefitting from regular garden waste collections!

Each year, thousands of households sign up to take part in our popular garden waste service. This opt-in service offers fortnightly collections throughout the year, helping West Oxfordshire residents compost around 10,000 tonnes of lawn cuttings, hedge prunings, fallen leaves and more, all from the convenience of the kerbside. The service is especially beneficial to those who can't compost at home or who want to save themselves a trip to the tip.

While we review the cost of providing the service annually, the price of the current licence is £50. For those who signed up early, this charge equates to as little as £2 per collection.

Unless asked otherwise, each spring we contact our current customers to invite them to apply for the year ahead. However, the service is open to everyone. So, if you'd like to give garden waste collections a go, head to our website from mid-February when the window to sign up for 2025/26 goes live.

**To find out more, visit: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenwaste)**



# New crime fighting partnership is protecting the fields and farms of rural Oxfordshire

Rural crime can have a significant impact on victims and can leave our most isolated communities feeling vulnerable. But a partnership between Thames Valley Police and three district councils, including West Oxfordshire, is working to make a difference to crime rates in rural communities.

Rural crime includes offences targeting farms, equine centres, agriculture, wildlife, and heritage sites, often due to their remote locations.

A £150,000 grant from the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund through the Thames Valley Police (TVP) and Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley (PCC) will fund interventions to protect rural communities from crime.

Since the project began in May, over 100 farms have been visited to improve their security, recognising farms as vulnerable locations often targeted for theft due to their valuable equipment and rural settings. These visits, led by a dedicated Rural Crime Advisor on behalf of TVP, aim to assess security risks, provide crime prevention advice, and issue free property marking kits. The kits help deter theft and allow stolen equipment to be tracked back to its rightful owner.

By improving farm security and gathering intelligence, the project is helping shape TVP's response to rural crime, including identifying crime patterns, targeting repeat offenders, and focusing resources on the most at-risk areas.

## What are we doing?

West Oxfordshire District Council is actively combatting fly-tipping with new covert cameras installed in rural hotspots across the district. Previously, WODC shared four cameras with a neighboring council, but now, 20 additional cameras have been deployed to us, with extra units also going to South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils.

These new cameras, equipped with invisible 'No Glow' night vision LEDs, are specifically designed for rural settings and are placed in known hotspots and are regularly moved to address any emerging issues.

TVP is also using additional cameras to monitor known crime hotspots, including targeting spots with rising vehicle thefts.

## How can I get involved?

The Rural Crime Partnership is currently targeting specific crimes such as theft and fly-tipping, however, we recognise that rural crime can encompass a wider range of issues. To address these issues effectively, we need your input!

Fly-tipped waste in West Oxfordshire



*If you live or work in West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire, or the Vale of White Horse, we want to hear from you through our rural crime survey. By sharing your insights on rural crime, you'll help us identify emerging problems and guide future strategies to effectively tackle rural crime and make our communities safer.*

The PCC and TVP carrying out a farm visit in West Oxfordshire



# Rural Crime Partnership

KEEPING RURAL COMMUNITIES SAFE



Left to right: Sergeant Liam Dunkley; Katie Chandler, Rural Crime Advisor for Thames Valley Police; Matthew Barber, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley; West Oxfordshire farmer

Learn more about the project and partnership, take part in the rural crime survey, sign up for advice, or find details about events at <https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/folders/r-c-p>

# How you can contact us

How to contact West Oxfordshire District Council:  
Send us an email [customer.services@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@westoxon.gov.uk)

We have made it possible to access more of our services online, quickly and easily. You can still contact us by phone from 9am-2pm Monday to Friday, or visit us face to face at our Welch Way office in Witney.

Main switchboard: **01993 861000**

Out of hours: **01993 861000** For urgent issues only such as flooding, dangerous structures or homelessness  
Telephone payments\*: **01993 861045**

\*24 hour payment line for Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Fixed Penalty Notices. You'll need the relevant bill or Fixed Penalty Notice to use this service.

3 Welch Way, Witney, OX28 6JH

How to report issues and request services online:  
[westoxon.gov.uk/report-it](http://westoxon.gov.uk/report-it)



## KEY CONTACTS:

Contact your local councillor in West Oxfordshire  
[westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council](http://westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council)

**Oxfordshire County Council**  
County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND  
01865 792422  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**Thames Valley Police**  
Non-emergency - 101  
Emergency - 999  
[www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk)

**Thames Water**  
[www.thameswater.co.uk/contact-us](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/contact-us)  
Report a problem: 0800 980 8800  
[www.thameswater.co.uk/contact-us/report-a-problem](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/contact-us/report-a-problem)

**Citizens Advice**  
0808 223 1133  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

**Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse**  
01865 965055  
[reducingtherisk.org.uk/oxfordshire](http://reducingtherisk.org.uk/oxfordshire)

## Witney & West Oxfordshire Food Bank

To order parcels or to contact the Supervisor Megan Gosling between 10:00-14:00 or to leave an answer phone message after these hours please ring 07949 442342  
[witney.foodbank.org.uk](http://witney.foodbank.org.uk)

## The Chippy Larder

The Guildhall, Goddards Lane, Chipping Norton, OX7 5NJ  
Thursday 13:00-18:00  
[chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk/the-chippy-larder/](http://chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk/the-chippy-larder/)

## Carterton Community Food Bank

Burford Road, Carterton, OX18 3AG  
07915 301842  
[cartertonfoodbank.co.uk](http://cartertonfoodbank.co.uk)

 @westoxfordshire

 @WODCNews

 @westoxondistrictcouncil

 West Oxfordshire District Council

[www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



# Christmas and New Year waste collection arrangements

Find out when we'll be making your waste and recycling collections over the festive season.

Garden waste is suspended from Monday 23 December 2024 and will resume on Tuesday 7 January 2025.

## Week commencing 23 December 2024

Food waste, recycling or refuse collections due this week will take place on:

Date due	Revised collection date
Monday 23 December	No change
Tuesday 24 December	No change
Wednesday 25 December	Friday 27 December
Thursday 26 December	Saturday 28 December
Friday 27 December	Monday 30 December

## Week commencing 30 December 2024

Food waste, recycling or refuse collections due this week will take place on:

Date due	Revised collection date
Monday 30 December	Tuesday 31 December
Tuesday 31 December	Thursday 2 January
Wednesday 1 January	Friday 3 January
Thursday 2 January	Saturday 4 January
Friday 3 January	Monday 6 January

## Week commencing 6 January 2025

Food waste, recycling, garden waste (if subscribed) and refuse collections due this week will take place on:

Date due	Revised collection date
Monday 6 January	Tuesday 7 January
Tuesday 7 January	Wednesday 8 January
Wednesday 8 January	Thursday 9 January
Thursday 9 January	Friday 10 January
Friday 10 January	Saturday 11 January

## CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION

Real Christmas trees will be collected from all households (including those without a garden waste licence) on their scheduled garden waste collection day between Tuesday 7 and Monday 20 January 2025. Help our crews by removing all decorations, tree lights and stands, and reducing larger trees down to 1-metre lengths.

Extra recycling (except glass and cardboard) can be put out in a clear bag beside your recycling bin.

Flattened cardboard - no more than a recycling box worth - can be left loose next to your recycling bin on collection day as well.

PLEASE HAVE  
ALL CONTAINERS  
OUT BY 6 AM



Collections for our business waste customers will also follow the revised Christmas and New Year timetable.

