

outlook

AUTUMN 2012
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The ever changing face of Didcot

Bigger, better and brighter than ever

PAGE 4



Your waste collection calendar is here

Cut it out, stick it on the fridge. It includes your Christmas collection dates

BACK COVER



The Big Clean Up rolls on

The council's tidy-up scheme could be heading your way next

PAGE 8



A bonus for Cholsey

Building is underway on a brand new, state of the art community facility which will help transform the village of Cholsey. South Oxfordshire District Council is supporting the project with £250,000 of funding towards its total cost of £1.1M.



Community hub: An artists impression of the new Cholsey Pavilion
Images: Courtesy of project architects and builders Pinelog.

The Pavilion, which is due to be completed in March next year, will be replacing the old pavilion that burnt down in 2005 after an arson attack. The existing facilities in the village are minimal and already struggling to cope with demand.

The new Cholsey Meadows develop-

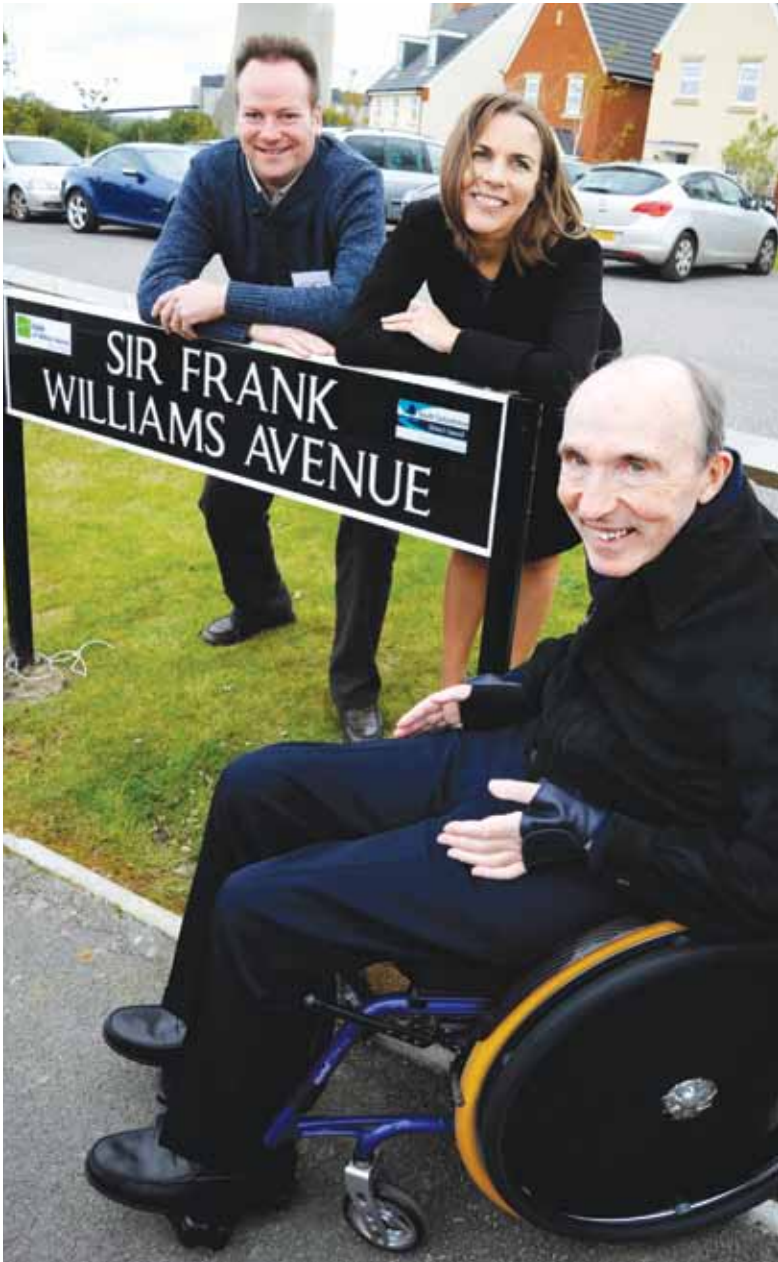
ment of 354 homes at the old Fairmile Hospital site means the village is facing even more pressure on its infrastructure. The council recognised that investment in Cholsey was vital as a result of this development, which is why the decision was taken to award the funding.

The money the council is contributing

comes from New Homes Bonus, which is a fund from the government to support areas which are affected by an increase in housing. The main purpose of the money is to help infrastructure and community facilities in these areas. The government hasn't ring-fenced this money so it can be used for other purposes, but South Oxfordshire District Council has taken the decision to use it as it was intended – extra homes in an area increase the demand on local facilities and the council wants to ease that burden and allow the families moving into the area to become a part of the existing community.

Cholsey Parish Council's project to build this facility is the first to receive New Homes Bonus funding in the district, but some others have already approached the district council for assistance with their community projects.

Continued on page 3



GREAT WESTERN PARK IN POLE POSITION

On Monday 15 October Sir Frank Williams CBE, Team Principal of Williams F1, unveiled the road sign for "Sir Frank Williams Avenue", the through road at the new Great Western Park development in Didcot. Sir Frank is pictured here with his daughter Claire and Didcot resident Duncan Sabiston who originally suggested naming the street after the Formula 1 legend. Turn to pages 4 and 5 for more information on Great Western Park and Didcot.

CONTENTS:

P.3

Town centre focus

Looking at the town centres of Henley and Wallingford

P.4

Didcot: a magnificent transformation

The once under-loved commuter town is fast becoming a highly desirable place to live

P.6

National policy, local action

How central government policy influences council decisions at a local level

P.8

The Big Clean Up continues

The Big Clean Up rolls on through South Oxfordshire

P.9

What to do with your Christmas waste

Find out what can be recycled and what goes to landfill

P.9

A rubbish quiz

How well do you know our waste service? Test your knowledge with this seasonal quiz.

P.10

Council energy savings

Our carbon management plan is making good progress

P.11

What’s on this Xmas

Find out what’s going on in the district this Christmas time

P.12

Waste collections dates

Oxfordshire to gain next-gen high-speed broadband by 2015

Dwindling download speeds? Online video streams constantly buffering? It’s time to do something about it!

A new project has been launched to bring the next generation of high-speed broadband access to Oxfordshire by 2015.

The OxOnline partnership which spans the private, public and community sectors, aims to bring the next generation of high-speed broadband access to Oxfordshire by 2015.

The target is to bring superfast broadband (up to 24Mbps) to areas of the county which may typically be overlooked during infrastructure improvements.

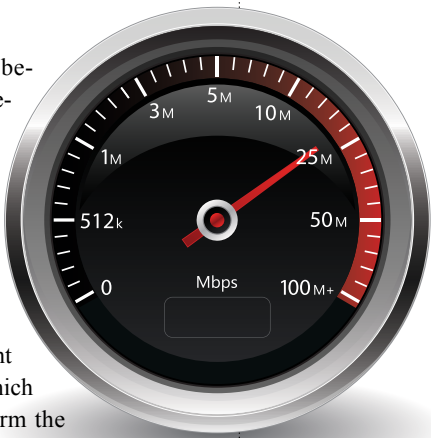
The benefits could include, boosting Oxfordshire’s high-tech, high-value economy while also giving a leg-up to small and medium sized businesses through faster, cutting edge communications. It could also open up new opportunities for communities and young people.

Although the broadband infrastructure is gradually extending into more rural areas, some parts of Oxfordshire

are being left behind. To help determine where the need is greatest, the requirements of both residents and business people are being sought via a survey which will help confirm the current broadband speeds across the whole county.

Broadband is the most important public infrastructure priority in a generation. Growing evidence from around the world confirms that broadband investment produces a significantly higher effect on growth and employment than any other infrastructure investment.

To take part in the survey visit www.oxonline.co.uk.



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Barking dogs the most common noise complaint

One of the most frequent noise complaints received by our Environmental Health team is that of dogs barking. It can be a nuisance, especially to those with young children or shift workers who need to sleep during the day. It can also be a problem when dogs are barking into the evening.

So what can be done about it? No dog owners want their animals to disturb their neighbours, but neither do they want to unnecessarily punish their pet. We thought we’d turn to you, our intrepid Outlook reader for your hints and tips on how you keep your animals quiet.

If there is anything specific you do to quieten your dog down when he or she is over-excited and noisy, why not share your ideas with your fellow Outlook readers. Email your suggestions to communications@southandvale.gov.uk with a subject heading of ‘Barking dogs’ and we’ll look at featuring the best ones in a future edition of Outlook.

In the meantime, you can have a look at some of the ideas we have come up with, as well as finding out what to do if you are experiencing a noisy dog at www.southoxon.gov.uk/barkingdogs. We also have a web page for dealing with other neighbour related issues you might be facing at www.southoxon.gov.uk/friendsacrossthefence.



New service to help Stop Hate crime

Victims of hate crime who are reluctant to go to the police now have an alternative reporting service. Stop Hate is a new 24 hour freephone helpline for anyone who has been on the receiving end of, or is witness to, hate crime.

Hate crime is a prejudice of disability, race or nationality, gender, religion or sexual orientation. The abuse can be verbal, physical or emotional and includes attacks to property, and written and electronic messages.

South Oxfordshire is one of the safest areas in the country with only a small number of hate crimes committed each year, however when a hate crime does occur it can have a major impact on the life of the victim. The South and Vale Community Safety Partnership recognises that no one should suffer abuse because of who they are and that help should be available for both victims and witnesses.

The Stop Hate scheme is being supported and funded by county and district councils and community safety partnerships across the Thames Valley Police Area, including South and Vale Community Safety Partnership.

Anyone who is a victim of, or witness to, a hate crime is advised to contact the police, however if they are reluctant to do so the Stop Hate free 24hour helpline is available on 0800 138 1625 as an alternative reporting service.



Photography by Charlotte Ayers

The citizenship awards are for those who are dedicated to helping out in their community, for example through volunteering at a residential care home or acting as a mentor for other young children.

The deadline for applications is 21 December. For more information on how to apply, please visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants.



“I used the money to purchase some music to perform as part of a course and also some John Williams scores to study”
Ben Hale

TOWN CENTRE FOCUS



Summer of events brings thousands of visitors to Henley

In the last edition of Outlook we introduced you to Peter McConnell, the new Town Centre Manager for Henley. Peter got in touch with us to let us know what he has been up to since taking up the role:

“Henley has had a particularly busy summer this year with an increased number of visitors, thanks to the many events in the town. A number of events that I have been involved with have contributed to this including the Olympic Torch Relay and Heroes Return both of which saw over 10,000 people lining the streets and riverside with a consequent knock on effect to shops, restaurants and cafe’s.

Working with the Henley Partnership we ran a campaign prompting Henley Regatta visitors to visit the town’s shops while also placing a temporary information centre on the regatta site. Shortly afterwards our involvement in the Independents Day promotion helped to boost trade into Henley’s independent shops.

As with every high street there are concerns about the number of empty shops in the town. It is a difficult environment for retailers even in a town as vibrant as Henley, so with the town council and district council I will be exploring ways of making better use of empty premises.

Having been through a period of discovery and investigation and written a plan to help promote business there are now three areas that I am concentrating on: the launch of a shop front improvement scheme; developing a loyalty card scheme and promoting the town as a visitor destination for the winter as well as summer months.”



Working for Wallingford

The new Market Town Co-ordinator for Wallingford, Kate Rayner began work in September. She spoke to us about taking on the role:

“Just by walking around the town, you get a real sense of the pride that business owners and residents have in Wallingford and the enthusiasm that exists towards maintaining a thriving town centre.

I’m really looking forward to getting to know the businesses and residents and to work with them to build the Wallingford brand and promote the town as a great place to invest, work, live and visit.”



About Kate:

- she lives in Thame
- her background is in marketing and communications working in the education and not-for-profit sectors
- she has previous experience in a similar role working for a Business Improvement District in London, promoting the area of Waterloo.

A bonus for Cholsey cont...

The facilities within the Cholsey pavilion will be based around an attractive central foyer with a glass ceiling and a café bar. Adjacent to the foyer will be the main multipurpose hall, which will be available for private hire. A number of local groups have already expressed an interest in using this hall for their activities, including the Red Cross, the Rotary Club and the Family Centre.

There will also be a dedicated youth facility for local clubs to use, which would have access to the café, kitchen and foyer.

The centre will also be home to a village library and medical consulting rooms. New sports changing facilities that have direct access to the recreation ground will be present at the rear of the building. They will be used by the vil-

lage football club as well as being available to other local sports organisations.

The parish council based their original proposals for the new pavilion on the requests and requirements expressed by villagers while putting together their Parish Plan in 2007. A Parish Plan is a document produced by parish councils and local community groups in partnership with the district council, which establishes a vision on how people in the parish want to see it progress. Cholsey’s Parish Plan being used in conjunction with this project is a working example of how local people can truly influence what happens within their neighbourhoods.

For more information on creating a Parish Plan, visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/communityledplanning.



PAINTING THE TOWN GOLD

In case you weren’t aware, South Oxfordshire has its very own gold postbox. The postbox on Hart Street in Henley town centre was painted gold in August in recognition of the town’s prestigious Leander Club, which has trained more than 100 Olympic medal-winning rowers.

The Royal Mail painted dozens of postboxes gold across the country following the record-smashing gold medal haul from Team GB and Paralympics GB at London 2012.

COUNTING DOWN COUNCILLORS

In the April edition of Outlook this year we ran a story on how we were seeking to make the council more efficient. We submitted a proposal to the Local Government Boundary Commission to reduce the number of councillors in South Oxfordshire from 48 to 36. The Boundary Commission ran a thorough consultation on these proposals and we are happy to say that they have now been agreed.

The next stage of the process is for the Boundary Commission to decide on how the size of the areas represented by each councillor will change to accommodate this reduction in councillors. We have submitted a proposal that has general cross-party agreement locally and we await the Boundary Commission’s response.

A decision is expected some time in November, so by the time this copy of Outlook has found its way into your letter box, we might already know the outcome.

All the news will be published on our website as it happens: www.southoxon.gov.uk.



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This is in response to new legislation requiring us to notify you that our website uses cookies. A cookie is nothing to worry about – it is a small piece of data that is saved in your internet browser’s files, which helps enhance the service our website offers.

For example, if you use the helpful My South Oxfordshire section of the website, a cookie is used to remember your details so you don’t have to re-enter them every time you visit the site.

The most important thing to note is that the cookies created by our website cannot access your personal data, nor do they transmit any information to the council. They simply exist to enhance your browsing experience.

You can turn cookies off in the settings of your internet browser if you’d prefer, although this can reduce the effectiveness of some of the services on our website.

DIDCOT: A magnificent transformation

1 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Residents in and around Didcot are being reassured that plans to extend the Orchard Centre will still be going ahead, despite the economic climate having an impact on the process.

Across the country, many retailers have recently been cautious about committing to new stores, but many are still interested in coming to Didcot.

The council, along with development partner Hammerson, is looking beyond national financial uncertainties. Cllr Ann Ducker, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, explained: "Didcot is recognised as a town that has a great future and while many retailers are scaling back their expansion plans they still want to talk about coming here."

"We are fortunate to have Hammerson as our partner. They are owners of the existing Orchard Centre and we are confident that they can deliver what a fast growing town like Didcot needs."

The multi-million pound retail development will almost double the amount of shopping in the town and will include a number of leading high street brands, restaurants and cafes. The development, with its emphasis on a high quality environment, will make Didcot one of the premier centres in Oxfordshire for both residents and visitors.

2 POP UP COMES TO DIDCOT

Preparations are being made to open a pop up shop in Didcot Broadway and the council is on the look out for wannabe retailers who want a real taste of what

running a shop is like, without having the long term financial commitment.

Pop up shops are premises that are occupied by a number of different retailers on a short term basis until the premises are re-let. They not only give wannabe retailers an opportunity to see if their idea might succeed on the high street but also fill empty shops, create more variety in a town centre and create more reasons for shoppers to visit a town centre.

The pop up shop is an initiative by the newly formed Town Team made up of South Oxfordshire District Council, Didcot Town Council, Harwell Parish Council, East Hagbourne Parish Council, Didcot Chamber of Commerce and Didcot First. The Town Team has come together to breathe new life into Didcot Broadway

The idea for the pop up shop was one of those originally included in Didcot's bid to become a Government backed 'Portas Pilot' town. The bid was not successful but the town team has decided to press on with ideas to boost the town centre and support independent retailers.

If you're a wannabe retailer and want to find out more contact Toby Warren, Didcot Project Manager, 07717 779171 or toby.warren@southandvale.gov.uk

3 GATEWAY TO DIDCOT

Many local people feel that the first impression of Didcot when visitors arrive by train is not very good. The council would like to see the site opposite the station re-developed so that a welcoming gateway to Didcot and Science Vale UK is created.



Looking to the future: Plans to extend the Orchard Centre will be going ahead despite the economic climate

The Homes and Communities Agency are supporting the council's plans for the successful growth of Didcot and have purchased several properties opposite the railway station to help in overcoming some of the issues that stand in the way of a comprehensive and appropriate redevelopment.

The council is now working with the Homes and Communities Agency on a masterplan for the future of the site and will be consulting with local people once draft plans have been prepared.

4 CREATING COMMUNITIES

Not only is Didcot improving, it is also expanding. Great Western Park is an exciting new development for the

town and the area as a whole. The first residents moved into their houses on the park in June 2011 but there are plenty more people to move in.

For all of these residents, this needs to be more than a housing estate – it needs to be their home. How do you turn 3,000 new houses from bricks and mortar into homes and communities?

The first step is right back at the very beginning - when we grant planning permission for developments on this scale, one of the most important factors we consider is the quality and quantity of the facilities other than houses that are included in the application.

The developers at Great Western Park are investing £60 million to ensure residents have good communal facilities that

encourage a vibrant community spirit.

A family atmosphere is vital to any neighbourhood so a number of new play areas as well as quality new schools and park land are at the heart of the development.

In order to create a social atmosphere, a focal point at which people can meet up with their neighbours is essential, which is where the new shops and community centres will come in.

Plenty of open spaces as well as important facilities such as a modern health centre provide the finishing touches that will allow Great Western Park to be a wonderful and vibrant self-contained community.

As you will be aware though, plenty of work is going on elsewhere in Didcot

The Didcot of today is unrecognisable when compared to the same town just ten years ago. What was once just an under-loved commuter town is fast becoming a highly desirable place to live as well as a thriving centre of industry and commerce. The town has made enormous strides already, but as we will discover here, there is plenty more good work to come...



Creating communities: Great Western Park, a new housing development in Didcot



to improve the infrastructure and provide wider facilities for both new and long-standing residents to enjoy, ensuring that everybody moving into the new homes will be able to integrate with the town of Didcot as a whole.

To help make buying a brand new home at Great Western Park simple and affordable, the developers are offering a range of incentives including part exchange, shared equity schemes and the Government-backed NewBuy incentive – for more details, visit www.newbuy.org.uk.

5 THE NEW DIDCOT LEISURE CENTRE

We have started to draw up the project plan which will be used to help bring a new leisure centre to a site somewhere

in Didcot. The project was given the go ahead by the council in April and it is hoped that construction will begin in 2014. Watch this space for information on how you can keep up to date and be involved as things progress.

6 DIDCOT A POWER STATION TO CLOSE

Didcot A (the 2,000MW coal-fired power station which is operated by RWE npower) will close on 31 March 2013, after 42 years of service.

The site which lies on the outskirts of the town and straddles the boundary between our district and the Vale of White Horse has been an important part of the community since it first opened. We are now working alongside the Vale,

The work will reduce traffic congestion and will help to keep vehicles away from pedestrians.

Pedestrians will be given greater priority with a piazza and clear footpaths, while vehicles will be kept separate in designated areas to reduce congestion.

There will also be more bus stops, a larger taxi rank, and new pick-up / drop-off areas as well as disabled parking and short-stay waiting – all with a covered footpath.

The station forecourt will become exactly the kind of transport interchange that rail passengers and the people of Didcot deserve; one that is uncluttered, easy to get around and reflects a modern and vibrant community.

The improvements are set to be complete by October 2013.

First Great Western is refurbishing the station's concourse in a separate £1.8 million project funded by the Department for Transport and Network Rail. The works, which include changes to the interior layout and café, and the installation of new ticket barriers, will complement the external improvements to the forecourt.

For the latest updates and information, visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/didcot, twitter.com/southoxon and www.didcotparkway.info.

DIDCOT STATION DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

September 2012
Construction begins, the lower east car park closes and excavation starts for a new rainwater storage tank and retaining walls.

January 2013
Work in the upper east car park begins.

April 2013
The east car park fully reopens and permit holders will be the first to benefit from the £5.7 million forecourt redevelopment. Work switches to the west car park.

August 2013
The west car park reopens and the new taxi rank, drop-off point, disabled parking, waiting bays and motorcycle parking come into use. Work begins in the central bus area.

October 2013
The redevelopment project is complete and the new station interchange fully opens.

Power station to close: Didcot A will close on 31 March 2013 after 42 years of service.



Station improvements: The station forecourt is getting a much needed revamp.

National Policy,

When reporting political decisions, the national press and media largely focus on those taken by central government. Sometimes it is very obvious how these decisions affect individuals, sometimes less so.

The line between what decisions are made by parliament and which ones are made at a more local level can often be a bit difficult to understand. The diagram on the right is a simplified representation of what each tier of local government is primarily responsible for, although even this doesn't tell the full story.

Here at the district council your elected councillors make political decisions that affect your day to day lives, but we also have to put into practice those decisions

handed down from parliament in London. Sometimes, national policy that is handed down to a local level provides us with opportunities and avenues we can use to benefit and enhance the lives of you, the resident. On other occasions though, particularly during the current economic climate, it can create significant challenges.

Across these pages are some examples of work we carry out that is very much dictated by the decisions made centrally in Whitehall.

Changes to benefits

Among the most difficult challenges currently facing the district council is to implement the Welfare Reform Act which was passed by the coalition government. The overall changes to the benefits system are hugely varied and in some instances quite complicated, although the general impact is almost always to reduce or restrict entitlement to claimants.

The reforms intend to save £18bn nationally, including £1.9bn of savings from housing benefit.

The district council is responsible for allocating both housing and council tax benefits, and these reforms will have an impact on some of our residents.

The Welfare Reform Act also includes the new benefit cap which restricts the total amount of financial support an individual can receive. This will only affect a very small number of residents in South Oxfordshire. The act also includes provisions to reduce housing benefit to residents of social housing who are over-

accommodated, which means people whose social housing is deemed to be larger than their requirements. This will affect in excess of 1,000 of our residents.

1.9bn
The amount the government intends to save from cuts to housing benefits

The full impact on specific individuals is not yet clear, but we would like to reassure residents that we will try to help those most in need of support by awarding short term discretionary housing payments through the transition.

If anybody has any concerns about the Welfare Reform Act, they can seek advice at the Citizen's Advice Bureau, their registered housing association or contacting us on 0345 302 2313.

The district council is responsible for allocating both housing and council tax benefits, and these reforms will have an impact on some of our residents.



Contaminated land

Areas of land, whether public or private, which were used in the past for industrial purposes sometimes need to be checked to ensure that they do not pose a danger to the public.

By law the district council is required to carry out routine land quality investigations to test whether any potential contaminants are present in the ground.

Often an investigation will need to be carried out because there is lack of information about the history of the site and whether it could present a risk to the environment or local residents.

Where we decide to carry out such an investigation we write to the land owner to inform them; requesting their permission to test the site and asking whether they have noticed any abnormal conditions.

In most cases there will not be an issue and our tests will provide peace of mind for the landowner. If contaminants are found on the site we then work with the landowner to ensure any risk to the public is addressed.

For more information contact our Contaminated Land Officer on 01491 823244.

Local Action

Neighbourhood Planning

Central Government Decision

Through the Localism Act, the coalition government is seeking to empower ordinary people within local communities to help shape the future of the places in which they live and work.

ready five Neighbourhood Plans under way. Both Thame and Woodcote were granted Front Runner status by the government, which means the plans are being assisted by a financial grant to get them up and running. The other areas currently preparing neighbourhood plans in the district are Benson, Chalgrove and Sonning Common.

Woodcote
Woodcote is developing its neighbourhood plan using work already put in place by its recent parish plan. The village has responded well to approaches for opinion. Over 85 per cent of households have responded to various consultations and appraisals over the years, so the neighbourhood planning group have an excellent measure of the feelings of villagers and how these have changed, or not, over the past quarter of a century.

How it affects the work we do
Neighbourhood Planning means local communities can contribute to how decisions are made on where new homes, shops and offices are built in their neighbourhoods, as well as having a say on what those buildings and developments should look like.

The council uses an existing document called the local plan to assess planning applications. Our new core strategy, which will form part of our next local plan, will help to direct development for the years to come. However, new neighbourhood plans allow us to work side by side with community groups, parish councils and other interested parties to ensure we are taking very specific local issues into account when making decisions on building developments.

In South Oxfordshire there are al-

Thame
Thame's Neighbourhood Plan is well under way. The neighbourhood planning group have identified their initial preferred sites for additional housing that has been earmarked for the town in the council's draft core strategy. The preferred options were drawn up after Thame Town Council hosted public fact-finding meetings, which identified many common preferences locally, including that new housing should not be in one big cluster but spread over several sites. They also specified that new housing must be integrated into the town, be well connected with good pedestrian, cycle and bus routes with access to the town centre to support local shops. They have highlighted the desire for the town to retain its market town character.

Do you think your town, village or community would benefit from a Neighbourhood Plan? A good way to start is to contact some local community groups to see if there is any interest in helping set up a neighbourhood plan. Your local town and parish council might also be a good place to start.

"I want children growing up in the village today – and in the future – to be able to enjoy the social and natural environment that my children did"

Geoff Botting

Meeting housing needs

Central Government Decision

There is a significant shortage of housing in the United Kingdom which must be addressed urgently.



How it affects what we do
We have to find space for over 11,000 homes in South Oxfordshire over the next 15 years. Housing sites have been found for just over half of this amount, but land still needs to be identified for the rest. Needless to say, it is going to be a hugely challenging task to allocate this number of houses within the district, while also paying attention to the individual and specific needs of the various towns and villages across our part of the county.

It is absolutely vital that these houses are built, but we need to find a way of allocating them that helps to enrich the communities into which they are built, rather than to spoil them.

We are putting the finishing touches to our Core Strategy which will provide an overall strategy for the location of the houses we are required to build throughout the district and will allocate specific housing sites at Didcot and Wallingford.

We are also drawing up a follow-on document to this, a site allocations document, which will identify specific housing sites in some of the larger villages in the district. We are engaging with local communities to help prepare this document. One of the first things we did was to talk with all of the relevant parish councils about how the task of apportioning housing numbers between the larger villages should be approached. Views from a broad spectrum of interested parties have been taken into consideration.

There are some town and parish councils, including Woodcote and Thame as front runners, who are creating what is known as a Neighbourhood Plan. This can be used to help decide the nature of developments within a community. You can read more about these in the adjacent article.

We have been tasked with providing homes for many thousands of people within our district. South Oxfordshire is a wonderful place to live and we are doing everything we can to ensure that will always remain the case, not only for those that currently live here, but also for those that will be joining us in this beautiful corner of the country.



Big Clean Up

The Big Clean Up continues...

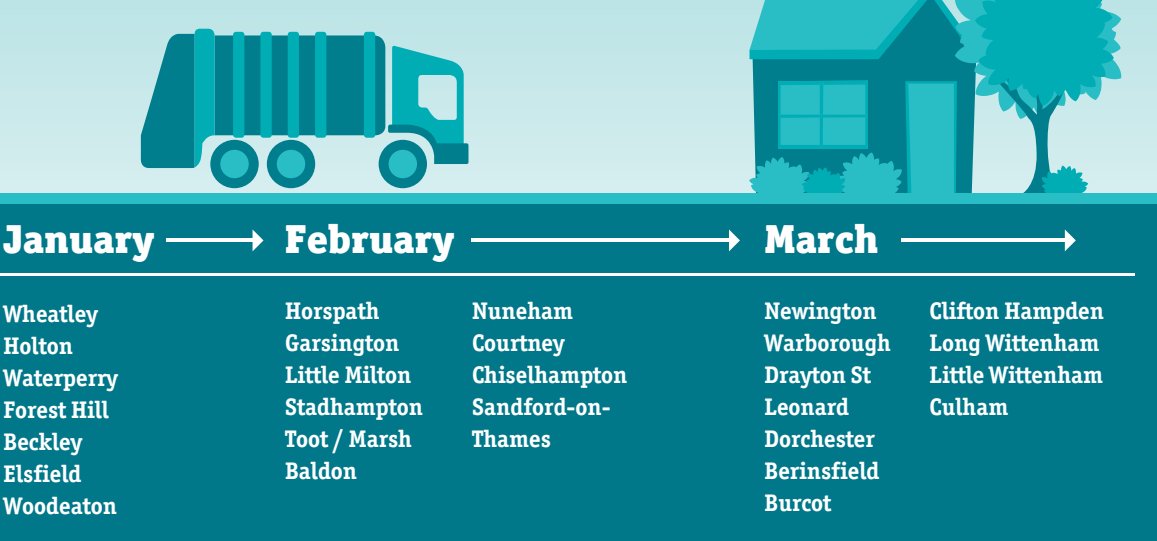
In April this year, we launched The Big Clean Up – a programme to get South Oxfordshire looking its very best.

We introduced The Big Clean Up after you told us that keeping your neighbourhoods clean and tidy was very high on your list of priorities. Specially dedicated crews from our waste partner Biffa have been despatched to every corner of the district to remove weeds, and to tidy verges and pavements. They're picking litter, clearing gutters and doing anything else that might need doing when they arrive. As you can see from the photos, it is hugely effective and makes a real difference. Don't forget that this is in addition to our normal and on-going street cleaning programme.



All cleaned up: A collection of images showing the before (top) and after states of a number of Big Clean Up sites around South Oxfordshire.

Follow the Big Clean Up truck as it makes its way through South Oxfordshire



REAL JOBS, REAL PEOPLE...

Alan, Big Clean Up operative for Biffa

I have been working on the Big Clean Up since it began around six months ago. I've thoroughly enjoyed the experience so far. I start at six in the morning at the depot in Culham where I meet the rest of the crew and we collect all of the gear. On the Big Clean Up we have six people, three vehicles and our special bit of kit we call weed rippers for clearing weeds and overgrown verges. We also have a specially adapted vacuum

which is attached to a wheelie bin to gather up all the waste. We are working our way across the whole district which is brilliant because it means I've got to spend time in some of the nicest places in South Oxfordshire. It's particularly pleasant on the few occasions in the summer when the sun shone, although it is quite physical work so we could get a bit on the warm side. That's a bonus for us now though, as keeping active

helps keep us from seizing up with the cold as we unavoidably plough head-long into the winter. As you might expect, my favourite job is to be in charge of weed ripper, which is a large lawnmower style machine. It has rotating blades which we use to strip weeds out of gaps in the pavements, as well as cutting back the overgrown verges that have encroached onto pathways. Once the other boys have cleared away the debris, the dif-

ference is immediately noticeable. We regularly get compliments and thanks from members of the public, who can see the difference we're making. Seeing the difference your job makes and being told that it's appreciated makes all the hard work worthwhile. If you see us out and about, give us a wave or say hello. We're all wearing Big Clean Up jackets, so you can't miss us!

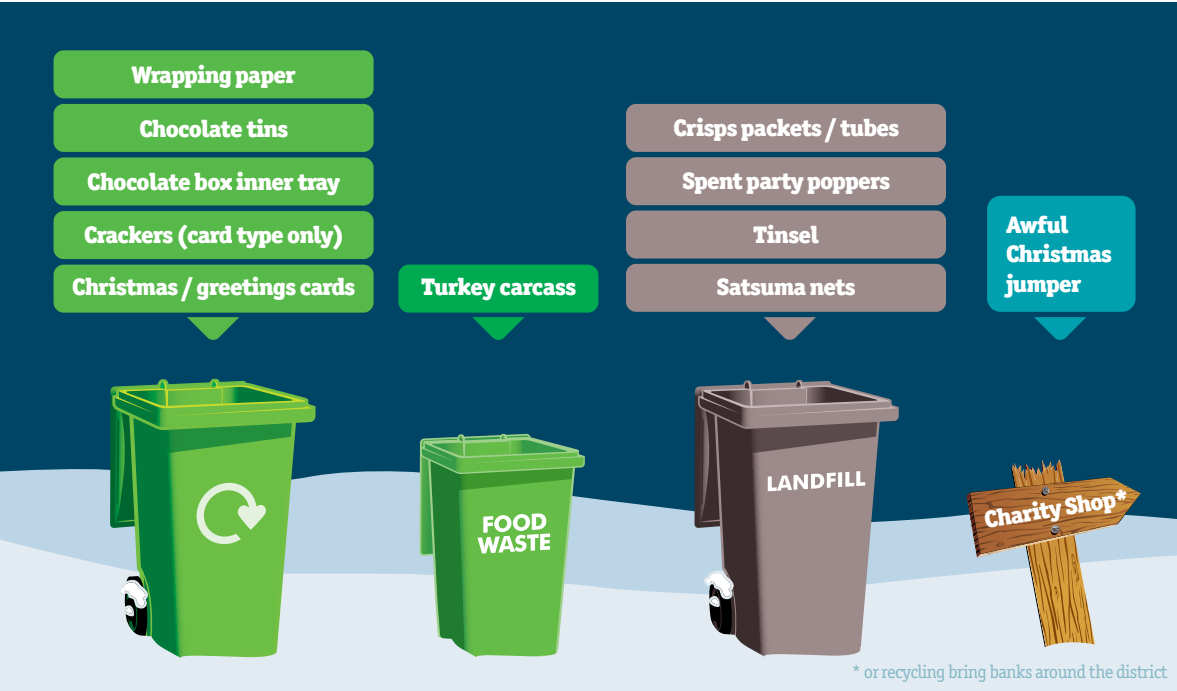


Waste

What to do with your Christmas waste

Try as we might, Christmas inevitably means more waste. No doubt, everybody is quite familiar by now with what can and can't be recycled in your green bins (to refresh your memory, you can always go to www.southoxon.gov.uk/recycling). However, the festive period comes along with different

types of waste and you might not know where they go. The diagram below is our guide to Christmas-specific waste and what bin it goes in:



Get your info from Binfo

Don't forget to download Binfo to your iPhone or Android smartphone. Scan the QR code or visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/binfo to download the app. Simply input your postcode or use the GPS tracker when you're at home and Binfo will let you know on what day your next waste collection will be. Binfo will also inform you whether or not it's a green recycling week or a grey rubbish week. You can use Binfo to set an alarm at any time of the day you like on the day before your collection to remind you to put your bins out. Binfo will also send you a notification if there is a change to your normal collection day, during Christmas and bank holidays for example, or if there is disruption to the service due to adverse weather. If you're signed up to our text message service, but would rather use Binfo to remind you when there's a change to your waste collections, simply install the app and then text the word Binfo to 07797 870370 to unsubscribe from the text service.



Scan this code to get Binfo



Garden waste service update

In addition to our recycling, residual and food waste collections, the council offers a brown bin garden waste collection service to residents for a small charge. There have been occasions in the past where we have inadvertently continued to collect garden waste from people who were no longer paying for the service. We have now rectified this situation and have a system in place to ensure garden waste collections are only provided to those who are paying for the service. The implementation of this system includes the recovery of brown bins from customers whose contract has come to an

end. Our waste contractor Biffa is undertaking this task on behalf of the council.

If you would like to receive a garden waste collection, the annual cost is £34, payable by direct debit which you can set up over the phone by calling 01749 341247.

A rubbish quiz

Back by popular demand – it's the waste quiz! How well do you know our waste service? Your knowledge will be stretched to its limits with our exhaustive and taxing waste quiz – the Christmas edition:

Question 1: What should you do with all the flat batteries created by endless hours of play time on new electronic toys?

- a) dump them in a huge pile in the middle of the living room and call it art
- b) wait until next door get around to re-doing their kitchen and then chuck the batteries into their skip
- c) put them out in a small sandwich or freezer type bag on top of your green bin on recycling week.

Question 2: What should you do if you don't know what day your bins will be collected over Christmas?

- a) panic
- b) cancel Christmas
- c) cut out and keep your updated waste calendar on the back page of this edition of Outlook - you can also download Binfo to your smartphone.

Question 3: What should you do if you end up with more food waste than will fit in the food waste bin?

- a) chuck it in the grey bin
- b) sweep it under the carpet and hope it goes away
- c) put it out for collection in a normal compostable bag tied up, on top of the food waste bin, or put it in your home composter.

Question 4: What should you do if you can't fit all of the used wrapping paper into the recycling bin?

- a) wrap the kids up with it to keep them quiet during the Bond movie on TV
- b) build a bonfire and send smoke signals to Santa
- c) leave it as side waste in an open box or clear/white bin bag next to your green bin on recycling week.

Question 5: What should you do with your Christmas tree in the new year?

- a) leave it up in the corner of the living room until it takes root and becomes a year-round horticultural feature
- b) stick a stamp on it and post it back to Norway
- c) leave it out next to your brown bin if you're a garden waste customer or take it to one of the many Christmas Tree recycling points around the district.

ANSWERS:

Of course, all the correct answers were "C". Here's a bit more information on some of the questions:

Questions 3 and 4: This isn't restricted to Christmas alone – you can leave extra recycling or food waste like this all year round. Please note that we cannot accept extra grey bin rubbish as side waste.

Question 5: Garden waste customers – please don't put the tree in the bin as it can be very difficult for the crews to remove. Please put the tree out next to the brown bin, even in your brown bin is empty – this is so we know you're a garden waste customer. We will be providing a number of Christmas tree recycling locations across the district for residents who don't use the garden waste service, please visit our website over Christmas or in the new year for details of these locations. www.southoxon.gov.uk.

REMINDER FOR GARDEN WASTE CUSTOMERS

Don't forget that from Thursday 27 December, we will not be collecting garden waste for one full recycling week. This is so that crews can concentrate on collecting the extra waste created during the festive season. To make up for this, during the week commencing Monday 15 April, customers of the service can put out two bin loads worth of garden waste.



Council energy savings in the past year

As set out in our Carbon Management Plan we committed to reducing our carbon emissions by 30 per cent between 2007 and 2013. This not only helps us reduce our impact on the environment, but a more immediately measurable effect is the money that it saves the council, year after year. Here are the energy savings that we have made in the past year alone, as well as the savings made by some of our partners.



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON DATES

Didcot Christmas Street Fair:
Thursday 29 November

Henley Christmas Festival:
Friday 30 November

Thame Christmas Lights:
Friday 30 November

Wallingford Christmas Event:
Sunday 2 December.

DIDCOT CHRISTMAS STREET FAIR

Didcot's 19th Christmas Street Fair on Thursday 29 November will have a vintage theme this year and a new four day Christmas Market in the Orchard Centre.

The Christmas Market opening hours:
4pm – 9pm on Thursday 29 Nov
9am – 5pm Friday 30 Nov - Sunday 2 Dec.

THAME CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Shops open for extended opening hours.

Town Carols and Parade of Lanterns. Lantern parade will leave the Regal Centre at 6pm. Carols with the Cholsey Silver Band and others around the Christmas tree in the market place at 6:30pm. All welcome.

LIVING ADVENT CALENDAR, HENLEY

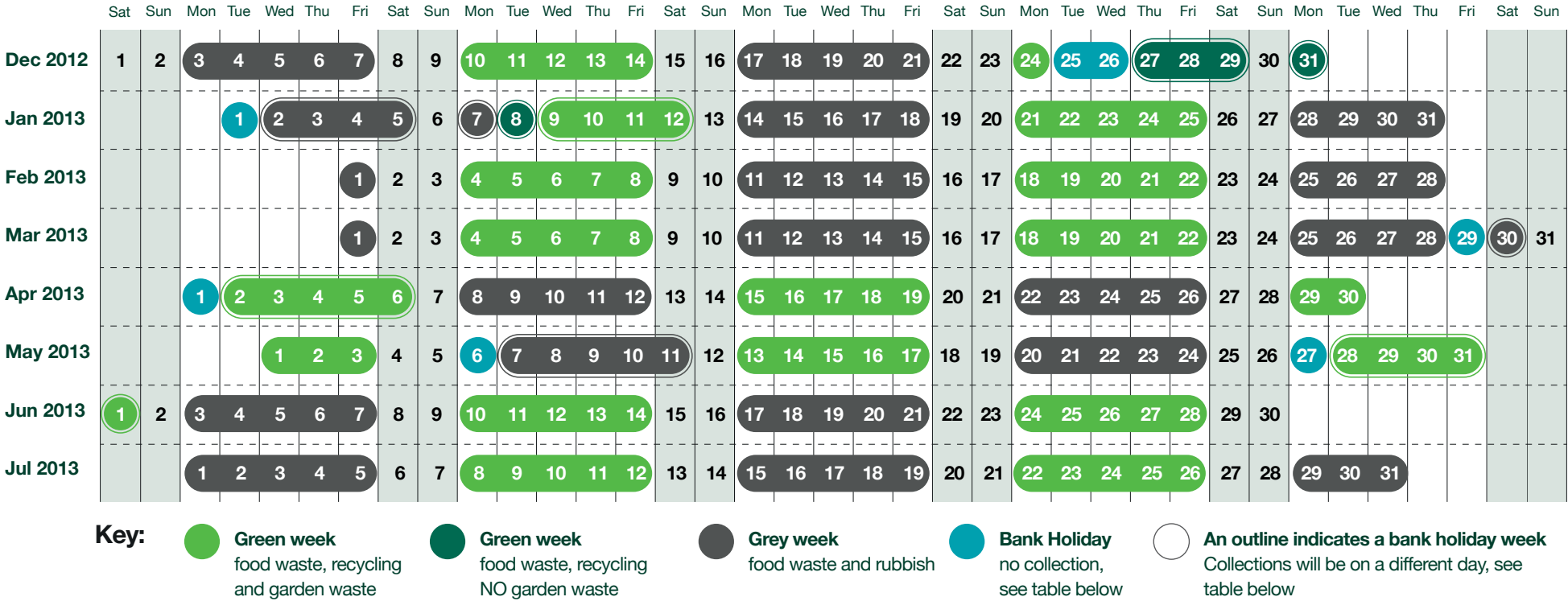
www.livingadventcalendar.co.uk

The Living Advent Calendar provides a live performance on the twenty four days leading up to Christmas, each in a different venue, raising money for three local charities.

Every evening in December from 6:15pm – 6:30pm, up to and including Christmas Eve.

Waste collection dates

Here are your waste collection weeks until July 2013. There are no changes to your normal collection days.



YOUR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR COLLECTION DATES

Please see the table below for details on when your bins will be collected over the Christmas period. Adverse weather: In the event of extreme weather conditions over the winter, there may be some

disruption to the collection schedule. We will communicate any changes through local radio and media outlets as well as on our website and through our smartphone app Binfo (see page 9 for details).

	NORMAL COLLECTION DAY		REVISED COLLECTION DAY	
GREEN	Tuesday	25 December	Thursday	27 December
	Wednesday	26 December	Friday	28 December
	Thursday	27 December	Saturday	29 December *
	Friday	28 December	Monday	31 December
GREY	Monday	31 December	Wednesday	2 January
	Tuesday	1 January	Thursday	3 January
	Wednesday	2 January	Friday	4 January
	Thursday	3 January	Saturday	5 January *
GREEN	Friday	4 January	Monday	7 January
	Monday	7 January	Tuesday	8 January
	Tuesday	8 January	Wednesday	9 January
	Wednesday	9 January	Thursday	10 January
	Thursday	10 January	Friday	11 January
	Friday	11 January	Saturday	12 January *

* Saturday collections begin from 6am, so please put your bins out the night before if possible.

WORDSEARCH

How many names of places in South Oxfordshire can you find in the word search? Find as many as you can and send in your wordsearch by 21 De-

cember 2012 to the address below for a chance to win a £20 Amazon voucher, kindly donated by Outlook's designers, One Ltd. Good luck!

N R Z G E T O C D O O W D
N O S N E B E I L R K O L
U K M I P U D M P A V L E
T E L M S C R T A S R D I
W A R B O R O U G H D E F
E C Y T A C F P Q A T E S
E Y E S K U G G S L H C N
P M S O L L N N O X C H I
Y E L N E H I I I R B I R
R F O E Y A L B I N I N E
T T H I W M L N Y G N N B
O S C W H E A T L E Y O G
N A H T R O W S T E T R S

Congratulations to Mr K Knight from Woodcote winner of last months Cross-word competition. Your Amazon voucher is on its way to you.

This magazine is printed on PEFC approved paper from a sustainable and ethically-managed source.

Please remember to recycle it once you've read it.

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