

WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER Autumn 2014

From the Town Mayor, Cllr. Julian Cooper:

Greater Woodstock?

Scoping Opinion: erection of up to 1500 dwellings including affordable housing and a 150 unit care village with associated publicly accessible ancillary facilities; site for new primary school; up to 3,000sqm of retail space including 2325sqm supermarket; up to 7,500sqm of locally led employment space; site for a football association step 5 football facility with publicly accessible ancillary facilities; public open space; provision of site for new Park & Ride facility; and associated infrastructure, engineering and ancillary works, with vehicular access from Upper Campsfield Rd (A4095), Shipton Rd and Oxford Rd (A44).

The above, reproduced here in mundane detail, is the full title of one of the most important planning submissions made in the long history of this town. If accepted it has far reaching implications for future green field expansion around Woodstock. The document was initially submitted to Cherwell District Council because 80% of the proposed development is in the parish of Shipton-upon-Cherwell and Thrupp and the parliamentary constituency of Henley, not in Woodstock or in WODC. However, if allowed, Upper Campsfield and even Bladon would, in effect, become part of the substantially enlarged community of Woodstock.

The implications for town centre trading, traffic around the Marlborough School, a sewerage system which already serves both Woodstock and Wootton, airport activity, highways traffic particularly on the A4095 through Bladon, the buffer zone to the UNESCO World Heritage site, a retirement village remote from the centre of the community, a Park & Ride facility which may charge for parking as it is outside WODC territory and, above all, a threat of further growth for all the green land around Woodstock, reflect only a few of our concerns.



A 'scoping' operation explores the suitability of a site, in terms of matters such as geology, archaeology and ecology, for significant development. Even at this preliminary stage WTC feels sufficiently concerned to alert residents to this proposal. WTC responded to notice of the scoping application by stating that the scale of the proposed development is incompatible with the present social infrastructure and demography of Woodstock.

We shall keep you informed about the 'progress' of this development proposal and, most particularly, let you know when it is appropriate for Woodstock citizens to express their views about the development to WODC planning officers.

Julian Cooper

Death of the 11th Duke of Marlborough

WTC has conveyed sincere condolences and sympathy to the 12th Duke of Marlborough, The Dowager Duchess and all the family of the 11th Duke of Marlborough who died in October. He will be remembered by many as a regular attendee at events in Woodstock; as patron of a number of groups and societies; and as a loyal supporter of town activities, both in person and through generous financial contributions for special causes and events. His concern for the wellbeing of young people was shown through these interests and his connections with the schools.

WTC looks forward to working with the 12th Duke in joint action with Blenheim for the overall benefit of the town.

For those not familiar with local abbreviations

OCC – Oxfordshire County Council.

WODC – West Oxfordshire District Council

WTC - Woodstock Town Council

Town Meeting Wednesday October 8th

At the request of a group of residents a Town Meeting was held on October 8th to discuss the matter of the Blenheim/Pye proposal for 1500 homes and accompanying development on the fields in, and adjoining, Woodstock. The following motion was passed at the meeting by a huge majority of the over 150 residents attending the meeting: ***This meeting opposes any development or urbanisation on green fields abutting and surrounding our town of Woodstock.*** In addition, the Mayor was presented with a demand signed by eleven electors for a Town Poll on the question: ***Do you oppose any development or urbanisation on green fields abutting and surrounding our town of Woodstock?*** At the Town Poll on the 6th November turnout was **25.13% with 544 voting YES and 92 voting NO.**

Public participation at Council meetings.

Woodstock Town Council (WTC) meets on the second Tuesday of every month at the Town Hall. The Mayor's Committee and the Environment Committee meet on a two monthly cycle. The public are welcome to observe and/or address WTC on matters on the agenda. Those wishing to speak must submit their requests to do so by midday on the last working day before the meeting. They may speak for a maximum of five minutes. Regulations relating to public participation are in WTC Standing Orders (see website www.woodstock-tc.gov.uk).

Speakers from the public are usually asked to present early in the meeting but discussion on their particular issues may be listed later on the published agenda. WTC tries to bring items forward so the interested public are not kept waiting long but there can be competing priorities. Thus, at the September WTC meeting several members of the public requested to speak. Of the non-Council members present, most were there to speak or to hear the debates on one or other of two matters: planning and car parking. Planning was taken first and the discussion was lengthy. Those waiting to listen to the debate on parking had to wait a long time. WTC regrets that such delays occur but they are usually unavoidable.

New Playgrounds at Last

The refurbished playgrounds were officially opened on Saturday 6th September by County Cllr Ian Hudspeth who, after testing the zip wire, confronted the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk with an "ice bucket" challenge: follow him down the wire or donate to charity. The Mayor generously made a significant donation to Macmillan nurses but the Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk enjoyed the zip wire. Great fun! Try it yourself along with the trampoline and the giant footsteps to the log train.



County Cllr Ian Hudspeth zips down the wire
(attribution: The Oxford Mail)

Bunting, balloons, goody bags and a basketball coach created happy children and happy adults. Getting this project to completion has taken a long time but it was definitely worth it to see so many - young and old - enjoying themselves. The skate board facilities at Budds Close, another part of the playgrounds refurbishment, also encourage activity for older children.



Town Mayor, Cllr Julian Cooper, and Ugo Anagor who gave inspiring basketball training to some of Woodstock's youth.
(See next page for more about basketball).

Basketball Club Newsflash

Following requests made at the Playgrounds Opening, a trial basketball club will take place at the Marlborough School on Friday evenings from November 14th. Ugo Anagor, who was at the Playgrounds Opening will run the sessions. There are details on Woodstock notice boards and at the schools and youth club.

New WTC Councillor

Following the resignation of Mrs Victoria Edwards an election was called to fill the vacancy. As the only candidate to stand, Sandy Rasch has been duly elected a member of WTC. We welcome her to Council and look forward to working with her.

....and many thanks to Cllr Victoria Edwards

Cllr Edwards will be much missed on the Council. She was first co-opted on to WTC in October 2008 and served as Deputy Mayor 2010/11. For the last eighteen months she has worked hard to manage the Council's property portfolio. She was instrumental in modernising the Town Hall's IT systems and promoting refurbishment of the Community Centre. Her hard work has been greatly appreciated.

Responses to Old Woodstock footpaths questionnaire.

There were over fifty responses to the questionnaire about the Old Woodstock footpaths (in the summer newsletter) and several respondees wrote on the history of these paths.

The public footpath running from Rosamund Drive playground towards Wootton via Field Barn (Path 1 on the map with the questionnaire) dates back at least to the 18th century. It links Old Woodstock and Wootton and provides access to the Oxfordshire Way. After diversion to the edges of the first field some years ago the path is now on its mapped course across the middle of first field on a track partly lined with hollyhocks planted by local residents. Where this path meets the Wootton road, OCC have installed wooden steps on to the road although the stile at the top, the landowner's responsibility, is in a precarious state.

Path 2 (St Andrew's Church to Field Barn) is not a public footpath but an unofficial permitted way – permission being provided by the landowners and

tenants of the land. The first part of this path is recorded in the Wootton Enclosures Act of 1770 and was developed for Manor Farm tenants to access fields beside the Glyme. Balliol College owned Manor Farm whence the name of this part of the path as Balliol Lane. It links paths 3 and 4 (from the back of Hill Rise and Vanbrugh Close respectively) to Flaggy's - a favourite bathing spot for children in the Glyme. Once Path 2 leaves Balliol Lane its use has been more controversial. It goes past a pheasant breeding area and, further on, across farmed land making uncontrolled dogs a concern for those working the land. The path, clearly marked with white arrows, leads up to Field Barn where it joins the public footpath (Path 1) to Wootton. A notice at the beginning of Balliol Lane states that walking the path is dependent on the owner's consent and some respondees expressed concern that the notice implies the path can be closed to the public at a landowner's whim. The instruction to keep dogs on the lead is not popular with some dog walkers.

Paths 3 and 4 are unofficial paths but keep close to back gardens except in Hill Rise where path 3 begins/ends between two houses. A few years ago the landowners who had recently purchased the land, applied to build a house on this site. Development was refused and there was no appeal. The replies to the questionnaire suggest these paths are well used, treasured and yet subject to some awkwardness between tenants/landowners and the public. The Footpaths and Open Spaces Working Group and WTC are keen to resolve any such tensions in the interest of both farmers and walkers. Thank you to all who responded with such interest.

....and a note from Ady Cole at WODC

WODC has two environmental enforcement officers and asks residents to report any offences of dog fouling they witness to 01993 861000 giving the date, time of the offence, description of dog, owner and vehicle registration number. Offenders can be fined £50 if they fail to clear up after their dogs.

(Regrettably dogs have been fouling New Road playground. This creates a health hazard. Please DO NOT exercise dogs in the playgrounds.)



The Mayor's Parlour – for weddings and special events

Looking for a local venue for a meeting or celebratory event?

WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL

← The historic **TOWN HALL**, in the centre of Woodstock, offers opportunities for weddings, naming ceremonies and other celebrations in the beautiful Mayor's Parlour or upstairs in the Assembly Room, as well as providing facilities for a post-event reception.

Looking for a central venue for small group meetings, business meetings or classes?

The **TOWN HALL** is an ideal venue.

Facilities: Versatile room set up
 ← Disabled access
 Kitchen

And there's also:

WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY CENTRE

Suitable for small or large events. Recently refurbished to provide a superb, light, versatile, space.

Ideal for activity classes, private functions, group meetings, clubs, birthday parties, receptions.

Facilities: Full AV equipment available.
 ← Kitchen. Small meeting room.
 Flexible staging. Disabled access.

Saturday November 29th A BUSY DAY!

CHRISTMAS MARKET 10am – 7pm

St Mary Magdalene Church. Stalls and coffee, tea, cake

NIGHT OF A THOUSAND CANDLES 6 – 7pm

Town Square. Christmas lights are turned on with music, mince pies, mulled wine and fun.

Saturday December 13th 5pm.

MAYOR'S CAROLS. Town Square (in Town Hall if wet).

Carols around the magnificent Christmas tree donated by Blenheim Palace....and a 'special' visitor for children!



The Town Hall – a central and historic meeting place



The Community Centre – a versatile space for all sorts of activities

TOWN EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY-----

Saturday November 8th. 10am – 12noon.

MAJOR COX BRITISH LEGION COFFEE MORNING.

Woodstock Social Club.

Sunday November 9th 10.45am

ACT OF REMEMBRANCE at the War Memorial followed by a service in St Mary Magdalene church. Music, procession, wreath laying, flags.

Friday November 14th – Sunday November 16th

WOODSTOCK POETRY FESTIVAL. Events around town.

Details from Woodstock Bookshop