

# WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER Spring 2014



## From the Town Mayor, Cllr Julian Cooper

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2014. Your Council looks forward to a year with important issues facing the Town. We continue our vigilance over planning applications, particularly the PYE homes proposal for housing off Shipton Road. Development will also follow the sale of the police station. In addition, applications to convert shops into residential property raise concern. Woodstock must retain a vibrant town centre.

Many of you responded to the parking survey. The findings (see <http://www.woodstock-tc.gov.uk/>) will be discussed with the relevant authorities in the hope of improving parking in the town centre.

In November, WTC allocated the following in grants:

- Woodstock Youth Club - £1000
- West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau - £ 250
- Volunteer Link Up (Good Neighbours) - £150
- Guides and Scouts - £ 900
- Woodstock Carnival - £ 500
- Woodstock Passion Play - £ 200.

Sadly we cannot support all the splendid organisations which make positive contributions to our community.

Over the years Council has spent a lot of time in meetings checking long (17 pages in January 2014), excessively detailed, minutes before approval. WTC has now resolved that minutes will record decisions taken and only essential explanatory text. This should not affect the transparency of Council activities but will allow WTC more time for issues on the current agenda.

### WOODSTOCK ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Community Centre (New Road)

7.30pm Tuesday March 18<sup>th</sup>

**This is your meeting: all welcome**

If there are items you would like to be on the Annual Town Meeting agenda please let the Town Clerk know: 01993 811216. This is *the town's* Annual meeting, not the Council's, so I look forward to seeing you there.

**Julian Cooper**

## Update on the Jubilee Bench

Our previous newsletter showed a photo of the Jubilee bench. Here is the bench again, *in situ* at The Museum of Oxfordshire, being inaugurated by County Cllr Ian Hudspeth and District Cllr and Town Mayor Julian Cooper with a support guard of Joe Sandford, Ben Franklin, Ben Vickars, Jordan Bunning and Max Cox who made the bench at the Marlborough School.



## New Councillor: Louisa Maybury

Welcome to Louisa Maybury who was elected to Woodstock Town Council on February 6<sup>th</sup> to fill the vacancy left by the death of Cllr Pauline Richardson. Louisa has lived in Woodstock for many years and is well known for her colourful shop *Maybury* in Market Street.

## Litter Pick: 10am Saturday March 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Meet at the Brook Hill lay by at the bottom of Union Street.** All welcome. Arm yourselves with strong gloves and shoes. If you are unable to attend please do your own litter pick around town when you have time.

### For those not familiar with local abbreviations

- OCC – Oxfordshire County Council.
- WODC – West Oxfordshire District Council
- WTC - Woodstock Town Council

## What's happening at the Watermeadows (apart from flooding)?

Woodstock's watermeadows are a valued resource for the town. They provide an area of wilderness in the midst of a busy town; a haven for wildlife and wetland flora; a recreational area for dog walking; and a few minutes peace and quiet whilst walking beside the rushing waters of the River Glyme. The land was gifted to the town under the Royal Charter of 1453 and has been in the town's control ever since. In 1995, conscious of the need to ensure that the land was properly looked after in the interests of conservation and public access, the Council drew up a management plan. The plan was updated in 1997 and again in 2000. Now, under the expert guidance of *The Wychwood Project* ([www.wychwoodproject.org](http://www.wychwoodproject.org)), we are updating it again. *The Wychwood Project* is an OCC funded ecology group whose purpose is "to understand, conserve and restore the rich mosaic of landscape and wildlife habitats within the ancient Wychwood forest area".

This year we plan to re-introduce cattle and to sow suitable meadow plant seeds. Light grazing with the right livestock can enhance the habitat and we are taking advice on this. There is also a pressing need to thin and coppice some of the dense scrub in the south west corner, perhaps removing some of the older, less stable, poplars. Whatever is done will be under the guidance of ecologists from *The Wychwood Project*. There is no intention of changing the character of the meadows irrevocably.

We are also regulating fishing in the Glyme and the millstream by introducing fishing permits. These will be free for residents - subject to the requirements of reasonable rules for the protection of the meadows, their flora, fauna and fish stocks. Please apply for permits at the Town Hall.

In years past, there was a "Friends of the Watermeadows" group. If anyone is interested in reviving this group, please let the Town Hall know.

**Sunday June 15<sup>th</sup>.** Oxfordshire Conservation Volunteers will be working at the watermeadows

## Our watermeadows (in summertime!)



## Playgrounds

Progress refurbishing the Playgrounds has been slow and continues to present challenges. However, the contract for improvements to Budds Close and New Road playgrounds has now been awarded to Wicksteed, an experienced and reputable company. Designs are being completed and will be discussed with those residents who have expressed interest in the project as well as with young people from the Youth Club. The final proposals will be made public as soon as they are available.

Work should begin in May 2014 and be completed by August. This will cause some disruption and we may have to close the playgrounds for a while but any such closure will be as short as possible. Notices posted at the playgrounds will keep you informed about what is happening and when.

## Woodstock in WWI

The book *Woodstock and the Royal Park* recorded Woodstock citizens killed in action in the Great War but what was Woodstock like during WW1? What about those who returned from the War? If you have materials relating to Woodstock or stories to tell about friends' or relatives' activities then, please contact: John Banbury ([johnnbanbury@yahoo.com](mailto:johnnbanbury@yahoo.com)), Robert Edwards ([wredwards2@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:wredwards2@tiscali.co.uk)) or Elizabeth Poskitt ([e.poskitt@btinternet.com](mailto:e.poskitt@btinternet.com)).



### **Profile: Lorraine Watling, Town Clerk**

Lorraine became Woodstock Town Clerk at the end of 2009 with considerable experience already as Parish Clerk to Deddington Parish Council, a post she retains (part time). Her varied career has included twenty years with AEA Technology Ltd. where her final post was Project Manager marketing renewable energy and energy efficiency projects for the EU and the UK government. Of her present job she writes:

‘As the Council’s Proper Officer I manage the Council’s administration and ensure that the Town Council complies with its Standing Orders, legal obligations and statutory requirements. This involves managing the Council’s budget and resources, implementing Council decisions and ensuring that Council and committee meetings are legal and accurate minutes are produced. In addition, I support Councillors at WTC civic events and in their specific roles dealing with Council property, the environment, playgrounds etc. Each day is different but can include: assisting residents and/or Councillors with queries; meetings with the Mayor, Council’s professional advisors, insurers and/or others; liaising with officers at WODC or OCC; interacting with potential or existing contractors; helping families trace ancestors through Council records ... and that’s not all!

‘When not at work I enjoy gardening, pub quizzes, being part of a book club, drama group and choir, and going to concerts and the theatre.

‘The Town Hall staff are here to help you so please do get in touch if you have queries. We always try to solve problems but when things are beyond our remit we do our best to identify the right person for you to contact’.

Tel: 01993 811216 or [info@woodstock-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@woodstock-tc.gov.uk)

### **Submitted a planning application?**

Planning matters are always a hot topic in Woodstock. An outline of the planning process might help general understanding of the issues.

WODC Planning Department notifies the public about planning applications by yellow notices outside relevant properties. Plans are downloadable from WODC webpages or viewable at Woodstock Town Hall. Send your comments to WODC and to WTC. These, along with those from bodies such as OCC Highways, are taken into account when the Planning Officers make their recommendations.

Most decisions on applications are made by Officers, following principles agreed by Council, without involving the Uplands sub-committee (which deals with applications in our part of West Oxfordshire). Such decisions are reported to Uplands members for final approval. Applications deemed controversial or for which a Councillor has specifically requested discussion, are presented at the Uplands meeting on the first Monday of every month. Site visits for Councillors often take place before the more questionable applications are discussed. Observers are welcome at Uplands meetings and, if they contact WODC Committee Services (01993 861523) before 12 noon on the Friday before the meeting, may be able to speak at the meeting. The public has only three minutes to speak against and three minutes to support proposals, so may need to choose who will speak for them or share the ‘for’ or ‘against’ slot.

There is usually lively debate over each application after which a motion is put to approve, refuse, or occasionally defer, decision on the application. Conditions, such as translucent glazing to overlooking windows, may be included with an approval. The debate and final decisions of the eleven voting Councillors quite often go against WODC Planning Officers’ recommendations.

Fighting an appeal against a planning refusal can be an expensive process for WODC if the inspector rules against Uplands’ decision. Thus refusals must be supported by specific references to the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. Stating ‘We don’t like it’ does not justify refusal.



**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  
Kitchen.  
Disabled access*

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.*



## **TOWN EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **Tuesday March 18<sup>th</sup>**

Community Centre, New Road

### **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 7.30pm**

Come and learn what is going on in your town.

### **Sunday April 13<sup>th</sup> afternoon.**

Church, Town Centre, Museum Garden

### **WOODSTOCK PASSION PLAY**

An innovative, involving and moving event

### **Saturday June 21<sup>st</sup>**

Town Centre

### **WOODSTOCK CARNIVAL**

Floats, music, stalls and fun for all

### **Sunday July 20<sup>th</sup> MAYOR'S SUNDAY**

St Mary Magdalene's Church

### **CIVIC SERVICE 11am**

British Legion band; 'Chain Gang' of Town Mayors.

### **Friday July 18th - Sunday July 20th**

### **CLA GAME FAIR, BLENHEIM PARK**

An exciting event (which may disrupt local traffic).

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