



Blenheim Estate, Woodstock Town Council and Community First Oxfordshire Press Release

Woodstock Community Development Project

Blenheim Estate, Woodstock Town Council, and Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) are delighted to launch the **Woodstock Community Development Project**, starting in April 2021 and initially running for 3-years. The project will provide an on the ground community development worker, who will work with existing community groups and residents and support those moving into new housing developments.

There is a huge amount of fantastic community activity taking place in Woodstock, the way that local people have supported one another throughout the pandemic has been inspiring. The community development project is here to support, strengthen, and develop that activity, if and where it is needed.

The *2019 Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Plan* identified a range of ideas and initiatives that the community wanted to see – the project will work with the community to help make these, and new ones, happen. At the same time, Woodstock is changing, with new people planned to join the community over the coming years. The community development worker will act as a bridge between existing and new communities, organising welcome events, identifying the needs of new residents, and working with existing (and perhaps new) community groups to help meet them.

Tom McCulloch from Community First Oxfordshire says: *perhaps more than anything the pandemic has shown us the true value of community. We know that really good things can happen when people come together. We want this project to really benefit the community and be a go-to resource for advice about existing and new initiatives - but importantly, we want the work of the project to be guided by what the community says it wants and needs.*

The project will be overseen by a steering group that will initially include Blenheim, the Town Council and CFO. However, an early aim is to bring other community representatives onto the steering group to ensure that the project and its plans represent a wide cross-section of Woodstock residents.

CFO manages community development projects at Upper Heyford and Graven Hill. It believes that strong, inclusive, and thriving communities are built using the skills and gifts that people already have rather than starting with what might be missing. Every Woodstock resident has a stake in the future of the community. If you (or a group that you are involved with) want to make your voice heard in the new Woodstock Community Development Project, then please get in touch: kay.sentance@communityfirstoxon.org