

## **Report of District Councillors for Bladon, Blenheim and Woodstock to Woodstock Town Council Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024**

### **Environment and Climate Change issues**

**Nature Recovery Plan.** Full Council on February 28<sup>th</sup> adopted the Council's Nature Recovery Plan as part of its biodiversity duty to restore and enhance West Oxfordshire's natural environment. The Plan is ambitious and aims to provide direction for the Council, local groups (whose contributions to the Recovery Plan are recognised), Councillors and officers through a set of actions to achieve nature recovery across the District. The Council sees the three main areas through which to work for nature recovery as:

1. To facilitate communities and partnerships in landscape-scale recovery
2. To protect and enhance biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the Council
3. To safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development. (A 10% enhancement of biodiversity in association with major developments has been mandatory across England since the beginning of 2024. West Oxfordshire plans to aim for a greater than 10% enhancement of biodiversity with major developments in the District).

The Plan's success will be dependent on collaboration with local environmental groups, policy makers and residents.

The Plan is an interesting and aspirational read, possibly read along with Natural England's recently published Green Infrastructure Framework. This Framework aims to provide tools and guides for planners, developers and communities investing in nature in urban areas and creating climate resilient towns across England. It includes mapping tools and green infrastructure standards, principles and process journeys.

**Carbon Action Plan.** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was presented with WODC's Carbon Action Plan 2024-30 It aims to:

1. Define a set of guiding principles for planning future projects implemented by WODC
2. Set up a process for monitoring reviewing and updating the Plan
3. Present WODC's 2019 greenhouse gas emissions baseline

4. Provide modelling to illustrate the rate of change in emissions and how to align with the 2030 target
5. Detail the actions to be taken by 2030

Both WODC documents have ideas for action which WTC could consider adopting. Implementation of the Plans is the critical issue and will not happen quickly – but 2030 is (only) six years ahead!

### **Leisure issues**

**Woodstock Swimming Pool.** After considerable discussion with GLL (WODC's leisure centre managers) and WODC Officers by ourselves and Tim Sumner (Executive member for Leisure & Major Projects), it has now been agreed that the Woodstock Pool will be open from Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May until Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September. This is a few weeks longer than had been originally indicated for this year's opening.

The outline programme for activities at the Pool looks very encouraging. Periods of cold water swimming are suggested for early mornings and at the end of the day outside the holiday period. Other activities include sessions for seniors, gender specific swims for women, aqua aerobics (a water based fitness class) and a range of other activities in or on the edge of the Pool. Once finalised (some sessions such as swimming/diving lessons may be dependent on teacher availability) the programme will be advertised locally.

**Bowls & Tennis Club.** The application for low level lighting at the Bowls & Tennis Club was approved at Uplands Planning sub-committee on February 12<sup>th</sup> with conditions which included the lighting only being on if the courts were not in use and that no high-level lighting could be installed. The efforts the Club had made to achieve unintrusive lighting were commended by members.

It is of interest that another application later in the meeting for tennis court lighting elsewhere was refused. Those applicants were told that a further application with a design which took account of Uplands members' and the public's concerns would be considered. A comment was made that lighting similar to that finally chosen for the Woodstock Club might be acceptable.

**WODC Cllrs Julian Cooper & Elizabeth Poskitt**