

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR NOVEMBER 2014

GSCE RESULTS RISE AHEAD OF NATIONAL AVERAGE

58.6% of Oxfordshire students gained five A* to C graded GCSEs including English and Maths in 2014. The national state-funded school average for the same measure was 56.1%. **Oxfordshire is also now in the top 25 per cent of local authority areas for progress in Maths and more students made reached the expected progress in English than the national average.**

The new system measures the results from the first time the exams are sat, without including resits as before.

The County Council is keen to move results ever higher. Cllr Melinda Tilley, Cabinet Member for Schools has said: "What we must now guard against is complacency. These results will mean little if next year we are back in line with the national average or below it. **The aim must be for our schools to get ever better and extend the gap between Oxfordshire and the rest of the country.**"

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/oct/oxfordshire-surges-ahead-national-averages-gcse>

ROADWORKS AROUND OXFORD

Due to a sequence of successful applications by the Local Enterprise partnership, a business led organisation that works alongside all Oxfordshire's councils. The County Council has **received significant funding from central government** to allow us to carry out major projects around Oxford.

We already had planned extensive repairs to the London Road in Headington, and this will **improve bus and cycle facilities at the same time**. The work on the Kennington and Hinksey Roundabout's **will increase capacity by 30% improving traffic flow** in the long term.

There are plans to improve Frideswide Square, the Cutteslowe and Wolvercote roundabouts, the Milton and Chilton interchanges on the A34 along with several other schemes across the county.

Full details can be found at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/major-current-roadworks>. Whilst we acknowledge these road works cause disruption in the short term, **to do nothing is not an option as it would result in far worse congestion in the future.**

OXFORD TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Oxford Transport Strategy is being developed to find ways to cope with rising demand for transport in and around the city and will form part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan. It follows a series of public meetings that discussed how we can create transport systems to sustain forecasts of **85,000 new jobs and 100,000 extra homes by 2031**.

Buses would remain a central part of the city's future transport, along with proposals for a 'mass transit system' such as a **tram route linking outer suburbs** to the city centre. **Increasing park and ride capacity** outside the ring road to encourage more drivers to take public transport into the city is another major part of the draft strategy.

The Oxford Transport Strategy is being developed using ideas and feedback provided as part of Connecting Oxfordshire. A final version will be published in Spring 2015 following further consultation.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/oct/better-oxford-despite-increased-future-transport-demands>

HEALTH & WELLBEING CENTRE HELPS RESIDENT REGAIN MOBILITY

A 71 year old man who lost his mobility following an 18-month illness has regained it thanks to yoga classes at his local Health and Wellbeing Centre.

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: "There is a wealth of activities available at our Health and Wellbeing Centres, which are all set up to help people live as independently as possible by encouraging them to stay healthy and engaged. By attending these centres people can interact with each other and make friends too which is so positive and helps with any feelings of isolation or loneliness. It is wonderful to hear how attending Wantage Health and Wellbeing Centre has helped Mr Rodda get his mobility back."

On 1st October, the County Council celebrated Older People's Day with our partners as we work to support people as they age to stay healthy, active and independent.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/sep/man-regains-mobility-thanks-health-and-wellbeing-centre> and <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/sep/older-peoples-day>

SUCCESS OF BOOKS ON PRESCRIPTION PROJECT HAS LED TO EXPANSION

A special national scheme via which library services provide books for people experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems such as anxiety and depression is proving successful in Oxfordshire.

The **Books On Prescription Scheme** was introduced into six Oxfordshire Libraries in June 2013 (Oxford Central, Abingdon, Witney, Banbury, Didcot and Thame). It proved to be so much in demand that the county council's library service **expanded the service to a further six libraries** in April 2014 (Bicester, Cowley, Wantage, Henley, Kidlington and Carterton).

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/oct/books-prescription-project-succeeds-oxfordshire-libraries>

FIRE SERVICES WORK WITH UNIVERSITY TO STUDY BEHAVIOUR DURING FIRES

Views from house fire victims are being sought to help Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service work to **limit the impact of future dwelling blazes**.

People can anonymously submit their written experiences online about how they behaved during a fire in the home which they encountered in the past 12 months as part of a pilot project. The scheme - **Lessons in Fire and Evacuation Behaviour in Dwelling (LIFEBID)** - is the result of a link-up involving nine Fire and Rescue Services and the University of Greenwich.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/sep/house-fire-victims-views-sought-knowledge-building-project>

To submit survey responses: <http://lifebid.gre.ac.uk/>

OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE EBOOK PUBLISHED BY LIBRARY SERVICE

Budding authors in Oxfordshire are being offered the chance to have some of their work published electronically as part of a competition run by the county council's library service.

The **Short Story Ebook competition** will run for just over two months starting on October 20 and the winners will see their work become available to be borrowed by Oxfordshire's library ebook customers.

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay Gale, Cabinet Member for Cultural Services, said: “Our librarians are looking forward to reading some imaginative and creative writing. This is a great chance for local people to share their writing skills. We hope the competition will draw people to our ebook service and it represents a great opportunity for those with aspirations in the field of writing.”

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/oct/ebook-opportunity-prospective-oxfordshire-writers>

REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICE IN FARINGDON, WANTAGE AND DIDCOT

Comments are invited on existing subsidised bus services largely in the Faringdon, Wantage and Didcot areas. Several routes operating in South Oxfordshire are also under review.

To access the consultation visit:

<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Busreview2014/consultationHome>

CONSULTATION CLOSES: 15th November 2014

BE WELL REMINDER: FREE FLU JABS, ELECTRIC BLANKET TESTS & INFORMATION

- **A free seasonal flu vaccination**, which must be done annually to be effective because different strains of the flu virus evolve each year, is now available: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/oct/join-fight-against-flu-%E2%80%93-get-your-free-jab-today>
- **Free electric blanket testing** is available from OCC and our partners: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/sep/free-electric-blanket-safety-checks-offered-across-oxfordshire>
- **AgeUK Oxfordshire’s free advice service**, supported by Oxfordshire County Council, is available to ensure Older people have the information they need. Please call 0345 450 1276 or view www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire.

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE CONSULTATION

The consultation document sets out our proposal, including the proposed stopping places, frequency and suggested times, for the mobile library service vehicles. **We are not proposing financial cuts to the mobile library service budget** and everybody who currently uses our mobile library service will continue to receive a level of provision. **It may however be offered in a different way.**

More information at:

<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/mobilelibraryserviceconsultation/consultationHome>

CONSULTATION CLOSES: 31st December 2014

CLlr Patrick Greene – Didcot East & Hagbourne Division – Oxfordshire County Council