

## **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS BY CLLR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE – MARCH 2020**

### **A busy month dealing with storms and flooding**

Our Emergency Planning, Fire and Rescue and Highways teams have had a busy February dealing with the local impacts of the storms and flooding that have made national headlines.

Highways teams dealt with more than 150 incidents as a result of Storm Ciara and more than 100 stemming from Storm Dennis. The Storm Ciara incidents largely related to high winds (fallen trees blocking roads, debris) whereas Storm Dennis was also about flooding with some roads closing and surface water causing issues.

### **Berinsfield Youth Centre successful Award from the Youth Opportunities Fund**

The Berinsfield youth club known as the Berry Youth Centre is one of 24 organisations to have been successful in receiving a share of Oxfordshire County Council's new £1m Youth Opportunity Fund. The Centre has been awarded £33,500 to develop their Beat the Streets project. The fund is aimed at groups that can provide activities and opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-18, and 11-25 special educational needs.

### **SODC Local Plan causes heated debate at County Hall**

On Tuesday February 11<sup>th</sup> the County Council held a debate arising from the Secretary of State (SoS)'s decision to put a Holding Direction on the District Council preventing them from withdrawing their Local Plan. Since October discussions between SODC, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have been taking place to try and find a way to allow the process of examining the Plan to continue. Since this has not been possible, at the moment of writing the Holding Direction remains in place. The SoS has written saying he is considering asking the County Council to prepare the SODC Local Plan which gave rise to the debate on 11<sup>th</sup> February. After a very heated discussion that included many speakers, the County Councillors voted that if they were to receive an invitation from the SoS they would accept it, by 39 votes in favour, 16 against with 4 abstentions. I abstained. I would far prefer that the SODC ruling group come together to find an acceptable way to take the plan before an Inspector. There is a motion coming to the District Council to that effect. I sincerely hope the District Councillors will decide that this route is far preferable to either the SoS taking control and running it from Westminster, or the County Council taking it forward against their wishes.

### **Oxfordshire offers new ways to repair and reuse small electrical items**

Oxfordshire County Council has launched a new trial service to residents with a way to ensure their unwanted small electrical items can be repaired and reused, reducing what the county would otherwise send to waste. Funded by Valpak, the

council is trialling drop off points for unwanted small electrical items that are still in good condition at a number of participating Oxfordshire libraries. The trial is to run at Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, Witney, Carterton, Oxfordshire County Library, Headington, Cowley, Littlemore & Blackbird Leys libraries.

Once goods have been dropped off, the items will be collected by Bicester Green or Orinoco – two local charities who help reuse and recycle waste – where they will be tested. Minor repairs will be made by volunteers and the items will then be sold on to benefit the charities.

The drop off point is for small electrical items only – toasters, kettles, radios etc – items you can easily carry. The libraries are not able to accept anything large or heavy – such as televisions, monitors, microwaves, white goods or fridges and freezers – or anything damaged and beyond repair. Drop offs can only be made when the libraries are open – please check opening hours before visiting.

The council is asking residents to ensure any disposable batteries – i.e. standard AA/AAA/9V batteries – are removed from donations of battery powered devices. These can be recycled at the kerbside. If the item has a rechargeable lithium-ion battery – like the ones in cordless power tools or mobile phones – please leave them in the device when donated.

### **Bicester revealed as start location for prestigious women's cycle race**

Bicester is to host the start of the prestigious Women's Tour professional cycling race on Monday 8 June.

This is the second year that Oxfordshire has hosted the Women's Tour. The district councils, Oxford City, and County Council are working in partnership with race organisers Sweet-Spot to deliver the event, in a three-year commitment which began in 2019. Different routes are planned each year to showcase the county's diversity to a national and international audience.

After leaving Bicester, about 100 professional riders will weave their way through towns, villages and rural areas, inspiring local schools to organise themed sport and fitness lessons. Highlights of the race will also be screened on ITV4. Cycling fans are expected to visit Oxfordshire to watch the event, generating additional business for restaurants, bars, hotels, B&Bs and shops along the route.

### **Seven recycling centres to close for Spring clean in March and April**

This March and April seven of Oxfordshire County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres will be closing for two days to carry out a deep clean and essential maintenance at the sites.

#### **Site closure dates:**

Alkerton 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Redbridge 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Ardley 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dix Pit 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Oakley Wood 31<sup>st</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

Stanford 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Drayton 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020

For those residents with permits, please note that these can be used at any of the sites.

### **Becoming a dementia friendly council**

Oxfordshire County Council is implementing plans to become a dementia-friendly organisation. The aim is to develop further awareness, understanding and support for vulnerable residents and staff who are impacted by the health condition.

The number of people with dementia in the UK is expected to rise to 1 million by 2021. About two in every 100 people aged between 65 to 69 have dementia, and this rises to one in five for those aged 85 to 89. Oxfordshire has an ageing population and the number of residents aged 85 and over is forecast to increase.

Oxfordshire County Council aims to help people who live with dementia to stay independent and live well in their communities for as long as possible. The council's plans are part of a wider Alzheimer's Society initiative that aims to create a network of four million Dementia Friends across the country.

As the first step to becoming more dementia friendly, the Alzheimer's Society held an event for staff and councillors at County Hall on Tuesday 25 February to complete a 'dementia friends' training session to improve awareness and learn about dementia friendly communities in Oxfordshire.

The next step in the plan is to help to develop dementia friendly communities across Oxfordshire to help to reduce isolation and support people to be aware of and understand dementia. This will enable people living with dementia to live well within their local communities for as long as they are able.