

Town and parish digest



Listening Learning Leading

AUGUST 2007

Annual Canvass – don't lose your right to vote!

During August to November each year, the Council sends out a canvass form to every property in the district to collect information on those eligible to vote.

By law, every property in the district must make a return for their household to register everybody who is living at the property and eligible to vote. We use the updated information we receive from the forms to produce a new Register of Electors that we publish on 1 December each year. If you do not fill in your form and your name is not included on the register then you will not be able to vote when there is an election. You may also have difficulty obtaining credit or a loan or opening a bank account as the Electoral Register can be used to check residency for these purposes.

To make sure that you are registered and able to have your vote please complete your canvass form as soon as you receive it. Any delay will cost the Council, and therefore the council taxpayers money as we have to send reminder forms and visit properties that don't respond.

If all the pre-printed details on the form are correct then you can use our telephone, internet or text response service to record that no changes need to be made to the information we hold. For more information on this service please read the notes on your form.

If you need to make changes to the information that is on the form, for example because you are a new resident at the property or you have changed your name, please make the amendments clearly on the form and post it back in the pre-paid envelope provided.

For help and advice about the annual canvass please call 0800 389 5560 or email elections@southoxon.gov.uk

Recycle door stepping campaign

The Council is offering residents the chance to ask questions, gain advice and have a say about recycling – all from their own doorstep! Starting in August, Council canvassers will be going door-to-door to speak to nearly 10,000 homes in Thame, Chinnor and Wheatley. A further 10,000 households in Didcot and Berinsfield will be canvassed later in the year. We are carrying out the canvass as part of the countywide Recycle for Oxfordshire campaign to promote recycling, funded by the national Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

For further information, contact Matthew Beesley, Waste Reduction Officer
matthew.beesley@southoxon.gov.uk

Recycling of electrical items

From 1 September, residents of South Oxfordshire will be able to take their unwanted electrical goods such as stereos, irons and toasters to a county waste recycling centre for recycling or safe disposal. Sites such as Oakley Wood, Drayton and Redbridge will have clearly labelled containers designed to collect an assortment of electrical goods. To help prevent electrical waste going to landfill and harming the environment, we will not use community waste vehicles to collect electrical goods and we advise residents not to dispose of them through their normal refuse collection.

This development is part of the new Waste Electrical and Electronics Equipment Directive (WEEE), which sets collection, recycling and recovery targets for all types of electrical products.

We will still collect larger electrical items such as fridges and cookers through our bulky waste collection at a cost of £7.75 per item. You can book a collection online at www.southoxon.gov.uk/bulkywaste

For further information contact Environmental Services 01491 823416

Waste consultation

Throughout September, residents in South Oxfordshire will be able to take part in a consultation on options for collecting waste in the future. Residents will be able to have their say on issues such as the collection of food waste and glass, the frequency of refuse and recycling collections and the use of wheeled bins. A questionnaire will be available on our web site from 3 September where you can give us feedback – www.southoxon.gov.uk/haveyoursay. If you don't have access to the internet please ring Environmental Services on 01491 823416 and we will send you a printed copy.

Parish Planning Training Day

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) is running a parish planning training day on Saturday, 20 October 2007 at Steventon village hall. The event lasts all day and is open to any parish council, individual, group or organisation interested in finding out more about how to develop a parish plan. Examples of parish plans produced by communities in South Oxfordshire are available on the planning policy pages of our website at www.southoxon.gov.uk. If you would like further information about the event or about parish planning generally, please email Anton Nath at ORCC at anton.nath@oxonrcc.org.uk or telephone him on 01865 883488. For information about how the Council can support parish plan groups please contact Emma Morris at emma.morris@southoxon.gov.uk or by telephone on 01491 823612

Code of conduct training for parish clerks

We recently sent the minutes of the Standards Committee dated 17 July 2007 to parish and town councils. In the minutes were details of the committee's decisions about code of conduct training for town and parish councils.

During their discussions, members of the committee made it clear that they wished to extend their gratitude to town and parish councillors for the low number of complaints about parish and town councillors made to the Standards Board for England, thus indicating high standards of conduct within the district.

As parish and town councils have now adopted a revised code of conduct, it is important that these high standards are maintained. To make this possible we have arranged two training sessions on the code of conduct for parish *clerks* as follows:

- Session 1: Thursday 27 September at 2.00pm
- Session 2: Tuesday 2 October at 6.00pm

Each session will last around two and a half hours

These sessions are for parish clerks and we will arrange training sessions for chairmen later in the autumn taking into account any feedback from parish clerks about the content of their training.

It is vital that parish clerks attend one of the two sessions. As this involves some 80 parish and town councils around the district, please confirm to Kathy Fiander, Democratic Services Officer by the end of August which session you wish to attend (kathy.fiander@southoxon.gov.uk, telephone 01491 823649).

Police community support officers – update

Since April, we have been collecting new information on the work of the police community support officers (PCSOs) in the district. The attached document is the first summary report and covers the period from 1 April – 30 June 2007.

It shows the PCSOs have been particularly active in making visible patrols, and visiting victims of crime. They have also been working with crime reduction advisers in raising awareness of reporting crime as part of Operation Mend, which is an operation aimed at reducing criminal damage. They are also working to reduce under age drinking and are reporting environmental crimes.

Some of the information we have asked for is a new requirement for the PCSOs, so in a few areas is not reported correctly. This includes information regarding the number of town and parish councils contacted, number of foot patrols and case studies. We will improve these aspects of reporting during the next quarter.

There has been an increase in numbers of PCSOs in South Oxfordshire during the past three months due to a recruitment drive to provide all neighbourhood areas with at least two PCSOs. As from mid-August, there will be 24 PCSOs operational in South Oxfordshire with a target of 32 by the end of September. All PCSOs in South Oxfordshire

will contribute to the quarterly reports, including the eight that the Council part funds and those part-funded by some town and parish councils.

For more information, please contact Hilary Green, Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Officer, on ext 3615 or email hilary.green@southoxon.gov.uk

Free websites for parish councils and voluntary organisations

Parish councils and voluntary organisations in South Oxfordshire now have the chance to create a website free of charge on www.oxnet.org.uk

This is an excellent opportunity for organisations that do not have the resources to set up their own websites but would like to enjoy the benefits of being online. Setting up a website on Oxnet is easy; people do not need any previous technical or web design experience just some basic computer skills and the commitment to keep the website up to date.

To check the date of our next training workshop or to find out more about Oxnet and our one-to-one training sessions, contact Christine Lightfoot, Community Web Manager on 07921 881205 or 01491 823423 or email her at christine.lightfoot@southoxon.gov.uk

PCSO Key performance indicators

SUMMARY REPORT, QUARTER ONE 2007-2008

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Henley area	Didcot area	Wallingford area	Thame area	Wheatley area	Total
Number of town and parish councils contacted	5	2	37	N/A	28	71+
Number of foot/cycle patrols undertaken	Henley Daily plus 31	Daily	Daily	128	96	255+
Number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued	110	71	27	21	4	233
Number of CLE2/8s (re vehicle tax)* issued	21	22	2	24	12	81
Number of crime victims visited (quality of service visits)	27	27	18	44	14	130
Number of Unique Reference Numbers (URNs)** attended	93	76	28	42	22	261
Number of community meetings attended by PCSOs	14	17	13	25	3	60
Number of abandoned vehicle incidents reported by PCSOs	4	7	1	2	4	18
Number of fly tipping incidents reported by PCSOs	0	1	0	1	0	2
Number of crime reduction initiatives that PCSOs have been involved in	17	12	7	20	5	61
Number of alcohol confiscations from under 18s	16	13	6	4	0	39
Number of abstractions (events etc)	0	0	4	13	0	17

* CLE2/8s are issued when a valid tax disc is not displayed on a vehicle

** URNs are incidents the PCSOs attend following a report by a resident or local organisation

CASE STUDIES

Criminal damage

- PCSO had contacted Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) lighting department to report graffiti. OCC repainted 14 lamp posts covering the damage.

Reducing crime and the fear of crime

- PCSOs arranged collection of abandoned supermarket trolleys with the local supermarkets.
- A PCSO attended a Neighbourhood Watch meeting regarding residents concerns about the historical fear of antisocial behaviour on a local recreation area. The PCSO explained measures the Police could employ to reduce their fear and deal with any fresh incidents should they arise
- A PCSO arranged for Trading Standards to assist a resident who had been targeted by rogue traders.
- A PCSO caught and detained a young girl shoplifting in a supermarket. The PCSO alerted Police colleagues who attended and dealt with the incident.

Drug and alcohol abuse

- Whilst patrolling a PCSO came across two males smoking cannabis. The PCSO called Police colleagues to assist and this resulted in an arrest.

Tackling antisocial behaviour

- A PCSO was subjected to verbal abuse and a minor assault while dealing with youths for ASB. The PCSO sought assistance from police colleagues the youths received £80 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).
- A PCSO tackled fears of residents about the number of youths gathering and acting in anti-social manner, by carry out a number of reassurance visits to the residents.