

ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the above Council held on Wednesday, 14th September 2016.

Present: Cllrs. G. Crossley, M. Day, L. French, P. Hetherington & P. Tinson (In the Chair) & D/Cllr. L. Lloyd.

- 1) **APOLOGIES:** Cllr. A. Green & C/Cllr David Wilmshurst
- 2) **DECLARATION OF INTEREST** – None.
- 3) **MINUTES of the meeting held on 13th July 2016, were approved and signed.**
- 4) **MATTERS ARISING**

The Clerk advised that an additional page on the website for the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan would be £35. There is a budget put aside of £500 for 2016/2017. The new signatories mandate is with the bank and should be approved in the next few days. Cllr. Crossley advised that he did not yet have the costs for Wifi in the Village Hall but he would report it for the next meeting.

- 5) **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS** – D/Cllr. L. Lloyd reported that there is a new Chief Executive of SODC. She also highlighted a problem with the recycling in the area – Occasional nappies are put in the green bins and when this happens, a whole lorry load of recycling instead has to go to landfill because of the risk of contamination. Notes will be put on bins over the next few weeks. She also highlighted that SODC have a scheme running where they will test electric blankets ready for the winter. The revenue grant scheme is now up and running (more details in the D/Cllr. Report) as well as a scheme called ‘Community Payback’ – whereby the Parish can ask for community jobs to be done by offenders given Community Payback sentences to help out. (See Item 12 below).
- 6) **OPEN FORUM** – Twenty members of the public were present. Questions were raised with regards to Item (7d) and (9) – See below.
- 7) **PLANNING**

a) **Applications** as follows were confirmed/discussed:

P16/S2537/FUL Demolition of two stable buildings and erection of replacement stables and office accommodation at Aston Park Stud, Aston Rowant, OX49 5SR – Recommendation: Should be Approved - *Noted*

b) **Decisions of S.O.D.C.** as follows were noted:

P16/S1521/HH Erection of oak framed double garage to front of existing dwelling at Beacon Hill Farm, Aston Hill near Lewknor, OX49 5SG – Granted - *Noted*

P16/S1925/HH Demolish store, construct timber framed garden room at The Old School House, School lane, Aston Rowant, Oxon, OX49 5SU- Granted - *Noted*

P16/S2090/FUL Erection of two agricultural buildings with associated hardstanding at Woodway Farm, Chinnor Road, Aston Rowant, OX49 5SE – Granted - *Noted*

P16/S2366/HH Single-storey link extension at 8 Dashwood Court Aston Rowant OX49 5TA – Granted - *Noted*

- c) Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr. Hetherington attended the meeting on 13th September in the absence of Cllrs. Green & Tinson. The Open spaces in the Parish were discussed and the Clerk was asked to forward the existing map with the registered spaces noted. The boundaries have now been agreed which is the same as the Parish boundary so an application will now be made for funding.
- e) Asset of Community Value – The Cherry Tree Pub – A group of 3 potential buyers of the Cherry Tree Pub in the Parish introduced themselves and explained that they would like to take over the pub, along with the accommodation at the back of the pub They propose to run it as a community pub, eventually serving food and with the intention of making it a ‘family friendly’ pub with a better outdoor space at the back & perhaps serving teas & coffees etc during the day. It was agreed that the Community Order would be lifted but before doing this, the Clerk will ask Legal & Democratic Services whether it is permissible to put a condition on the withdrawal, in order to encourage the agent to sell the pub and the accommodation together as currently, others are interested in the accommodation only.
- f) Land outside the barns in Kingston Blount – The owner of the barn at the end of Brook Street asked whether the Parish Council would support an application to take-over the land at the rear of his property so that access could be made from his back garden, thereby enabling him to cut the grass on the land. Cllr. Day suggested a pre-application and the Parish Council would be willing to give their opinion. A meeting will be arranged to inspect the area.

8) FINANCE

- a) The following payments were noted (Costs include VAT):
- | | £ | p |
|---|-------|--------|
| Clerk June Salary | | |
| P. Hetherington expenses (Leaving gift for Cllr. Gibbons) | | 16.00 |
| Alice Surman (Litter) | 25.32 | |
| MK Watts | | 240.00 |
| OALC Chairmanship Course (Cllr P. Tinson) | 78.00 | |
- b) The following payments were approved (Costs include VAT):
- | | | |
|--|--------|--------|
| Clerk July Salary | | |
| Clerk August Salary | | |
| SODC (Dog Bin Emptying) | | 87.91 |
| Alice Surman (Litter - July) | | 12.66 |
| Alice Surman (Litter – August) | | 25.32 |
| Diane Malley MAAT (Payroll) | | 34.00 |
| George Stevens | | 150.00 |
| MK Watts | | 240.00 |
| Mh -P Internet Services | | 828.00 |
| RoSPA (Annual Playground Inspection) | 113.40 | |
| Mike Eaton (Purchase of Bulbs at Fiveways) | | 46.63 |
| BDO (External Audit) | | 240.00 |
| DJA Consultants Ltd (Traffic calming advice) | | 744.00 |
| S. Johns (Stationery – Ink Cartridges) | | 28.94 |
| S. Johns – Postage (From March 2015 to date) | | 54.19 |
| MK Watts (Not on the agenda) | | 240.00 |
| S. Johns (Not on the agenda) printing costs | | 21.92 |
- c) Receipts as follows were noted:
- | | |
|--|--------|
| Hillwerke Trust (Contribution towards Grass Cutting) | 750.00 |
| Walks Booklets | 27.00 |
- d) The current financial situation as at 30th August 2016:
- | | |
|---|----------|
| Barclays Bank – Community Account | 11297.31 |
| Barclays Bank – Business Saver Account | 1090.19 |
| National Savings | 11224.62 |
| Village Hall Reserve fund | (690) |
| Play Area Reserve Fund | (5730) |
| Parish Notes Reserve Fund | (1000) |
| Trees, Footpaths & Environment Reserve Fund | (5623) |
| Cash | 1.19 |
- e) Budget 2016 / 2017 v4 – *The clerk showed the Councillors a summary that explains the budget more clearly. Everyone agreed that this should be included with the report in the future.*
- f) *BDO Annual Audit Report – The clerk reported that a small omission on the submitted report had been flagged, together with the closing figure from 2015 / 2106 (£1 difference). This was noted and more care would be taken next year to prevent further query.*

9) HIGHWAYS

- a) Traffic Calming
- a) *Costs – Cllr Day explained that the Parish Council had to apply to OCC to 'build' on their roads. The Parish Council allocated funding for surveys which showed an increase in both the volume of traffic and mph of the through traffic. At Icknield Close this was 35mph, The Cherry Tree 29mph Eastbound & 25 mph westbound and just before Kingston Hill 40mph into the village and 41 mph out of the village. In January 2016, the Parish Council funded a visit from a Highways expert as well as 2 OCC officers who spent half a day walking the roads. Keith Stenning of Highways has confirmed that the area of concern is the exit/entrance to Kingston Blount coming from Aston Rowant. They have agreed to review this free of charge, however, OCC have no available money so the Parish will need to raise any*

applicable funding. Cllr. Day requested that a small fund could be made available for costs associated with traffic calming such as printing etc. It was agreed that this would come out of the administration budget.

i) Options & priorities – Cllr. Day explained some options:

- (1) Average Speed Cameras: These are considered unlikely as they are difficult to Police.
- (2) Speed Humps: Historically, residents have been against these as they cause a lot of noise and kerb to kerb 'steps' are needed for this.
- (3) Signage: Possibly a 'Slow Sign'
- (4) Road Lines: Historically, removing the lines has had a favourable result.
- (5) Different coloured tarmac: This is very expensive and would need to be replaced every few years.
- (6) Chicane & 'Speed cushion' every 60 – 90 meters: This has been recommended by the engineer as a first draft and possibly a pedestrian crossing (though this may not be feasible). The costs for this option are £8000 for the engineering design works and £15,000 for the chicane and speed cushion.

Other suggestions were changing the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph which may encourage more people to do 30mph & lights / signs warning people that they are in a '20 zone'.

D/Cllr Lloyd later suggested 'SPOC (Special Police Observation Camera) which is used by a trained person on a specific day, with police knowledge. The data from those caught speeding is sent to the Police who send a letter of caution but no prosecution. However, persistent offenders are prosecuted. The letter of caution however, is often enough of a deterrent and has proven effective. This will be investigated.

10) POORS HILLOCK CHARITY – None - Noted

11) HILLWERKE TRUST – None - Noted

12) KINGSTON BLOUNT PLAYGROUND

- a) Annual Playground Inspection Report – The Clerk showed the Councillors the annual report. A few minor repairs are suggested though these are considered low risk. The bark is in need of rotovating and the clerk will contact the Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company who can arrange for offenders given Community Payback sentences to help out, to see whether this is something they would consider.

13) ASTON ROWANT SCHOOL - None – Noted

14) GRASS CUTTING & GENERAL PARISH MAINTENANCE - None - Noted

15) ASTON ROWANT CRICKET CLUB (ARCC) – None - Noted

16) FOOTPATHS AND AMENITIES (FAAG) -

- a) Report from Cllr. P. Hetherington:
 - I. Moors Path update: Cllr. Hetherington reported that he had met with the contractor along with the father of the farmer and Peter Gibbons (member of the Footpaths & Amenities Group) to discuss the width of the path. Decisions are still to be made and discussions are ongoing.
 - II. Fiveways update: There is slight damage by an agricultural vehicle to a sleeper so another one will be needed (though the damaged one can be used elsewhere). Costs are to be obtained.

17) OTHER MATTERS & WRITTEN REPORTS

- a) Appointment of a new Councillor by co-option – During the Parish Meeting, one parishioner expressed an interest in becoming a Councillor. The Clerk will email some information and invite them to the next meeting.
- b) Standing Orders – Standing Orders, adopted September 2016 were presented by the Clerk. They were then proposed by Cllr. Tinson and seconded by Cllr. Day. The Clerk will arrange for them to be displayed on the website.

18) CLERK'S REPORT – ITEMS NOT NEEDING NOTICE OF DECISIONS

- a) The Clerk announced her resignation as Parish Clerk of Aston Rowant Parish Council but offered support in the transition to a replacement. An advert for a replacement will be placed in the Parish Notes for October / November.

19) CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Letter Lions Roar Magazine – Summer 2016
- b) J. Parkers Wholesale Brochure
- c) Oxfordshire Comet Transport Service
- d) Chiltern Society Magazine – Autumn 2016

20) WEBSITE

- a) Item for amendment on the website – Cllr. Tinson will write a new piece for the front page of the Parish Council website.

21) OTHER URGENT MATTERS at the discretion of the Chairman

- a) *Cllr. Tinson broke the sad news that the previous Parish Clerk, Brenda Wilson had sadly passed away. Brenda was Parish Clerk for over 12 years and was a very well respected member of the Parish Council. Her funeral will be held on Friday 30th September at St Andrews Church, Chinnor. The Council asked for a £50 donation to be made to a charity of her family's choice. This was proposed by Cllr. Crossley and seconded by Cllr. Hetherington.*
- b) *The Clerk advised that the litter picker had resigned from her role. The Clerk will place an advert in the Parish Notes so that a replacement can be found. The Clerk is to write an acknowledgement letter asking for the equipment to be returned and to thank her for doing a great job keep the Parish clean and tidy over the last 2 years.*

22) DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 12th October 2016 at Kingston Blount Village Hall at 7.30pm.

CHAIRMAN

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL SEPT 2016 FROM CLLR David Wilmshurst

GENERAL OCC REPORT

UNITARY DEBATE

There have been reports suggesting that proposals for reform are off the table due to the lack of agreement between the City and District Councils, and the County. While it is true that Government wishes to proceed by consensus where possible, OCC hopes that the debate is not over – particularly when Grant Thornton has put forward a new compromise proposal, which has yet to be fully discussed. With £200,000 spent on independent advice, and with both reports showing that savings in excess of £100m are possible over a five-year time period through a single strategic authority for Oxfordshire, it is everybody's interest that the debate continues. The OCC Leader has asked officers to bring a paper to Council on 13th September, and Cabinet on 20th September, to ensure that Councillors have been able to express a view on this debate, and how OCC should move forward.

LIBRARIES MINISTER SEES “GREAT EXAMPLE” AT BICESTER

Plans to expand Oxfordshire's Home Library Service and joining up services 'under one roof' were among the hot topics at Bicester Library, during a fact-finding visit from Minister for Civil Society Rob Wilson MP. The flagship county council facility offers a wide range of council services and activities, and has attracted more than 2,000 new members since opening in April. Heralded as a “great example” by Mr Wilson, Bicester exemplifies an emerging identity for Oxfordshire's libraries as focal points for a broad range of services, help and advice. The council has also announced plans to grow its Home Library Service so that people with mobility problems who can't get to a library can have books and other items delivered to their door.

RESIDENTS CAN GET THEIR ELECTRIC BLANKETS CHECKED FREE

Now is the time for residents to book their blanket in for a free check in October. Oxfordshire County Council's Fire & Rescue Service and Trading Standards are urging electric blanket owners to get their blankets tested free of charge ahead of the approaching colder months. Testing electric blankets annually is important as all electrical systems have the potential to go wrong. In 2015 a total of 22 per cent of the electric blankets failed the safety test and were declared unsafe to use. They can be perfectly safe to use provided they are in good condition and have the necessary overheating safeguards incorporated into the design. Station Manager Chris Barber of Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service said: “Like any other piece of electrical equipment, it is vitally important that electric blankets remain in safe working order, last year nearly a quarter.” Testing is by pre-booked appointment only, strictly on a first come, first served basis. Residents should call Trading Standards on 01865 815 000 option 4 to arrange an appointment or email communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

SUPPORT FOR YOUNGSTERS MAKING NEXT STEPS AFTER EXAMS

Help is at hand for young people considering their next steps after receiving exam results this month. Oxfordshire County Council is giving advice and support for 16 to 19-year-olds about staying in learning, finding a job or starting an apprenticeship. Throughout the results period and beyond, staff will be available via the web chat service on the [Oxme website](#) or over the phone (01865 328460) to talk to young people and parents about the wide range of learning and employment opportunities available in Oxfordshire, and to help with applications.

OXFORDSHIRE COMET: A BOOKABLE TRANSPORT SERVICE

The Oxfordshire Comet is a not for profit, bookable transport service for those who can't access suitable public transport. It can be booked for any type of trip, whether it's to meet friends in town, travel across the county, attend an appointment or pop to the shops. The service is available 10.15am - 2.30pm Monday to Friday (not Bank Holidays). It uses vehicles that normally take children to school and adults to day care centres. (OCC identified the times of the day when they weren't being used and are making them available so that residents can make the journeys they want.) Because OCC already owns these vehicles, the Council only has to cover running costs, meaning charges are low for passengers. More information can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-comet>

CARERS' STRATEGY AND CARERS' PERSONAL BUDGETS CONSULTATION

OCC and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group work in partnership with other organisations to identify and support many of the 61,000 family, informal or unpaid carers in Oxfordshire. Both organisations do this because they recognise and value the important role that carers have in the lives of the more vulnerable members of our communities. A joint consultation is taking place in two parts: Part 1 of this consultation is about the Oxfordshire Carers' Strategy. This is a document about priorities for carers' support and the outcomes desired for carers of all ages. It also gives an overview of how carers are supported in Oxfordshire. Part 2 of this consultation is about the proposed options for carers' personal budgets. There is no longer enough money for OCC to carry on doing things in the existing way, so OCC wants to find the best way of spending the funding available to meet the needs of as many carers as possible. Please take part by completing the online questionnaire here <https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Carers/answerQuestionnaire?qid=4183363> or by attending one of three workshops. Please first read the strategy and supporting documents available as part of this consultation. If you require a paper copy of these documents, please contact OCC by email on carerssupportreview@oxfordshire.gov.uk or phone 01865 323410.

Consultation workshops

All taking place from 10.30am - 1:00pm on the following dates:

- 13th September at Didcot Civic Hall
- 15th September in Banbury Town Hall
- 29th September in Oxford Town Hall

To attend, please phone 01865 323410 or email carerssupportreview@oxfordshire.gov.uk

SODC A Conservative District Councillor's View
(Or What The Council Is Doing)

September 2016.

First of all, we hope that everyone has been able to take as much advantage of the sun this summer as they wanted, and if you have been away on holiday, or stayed at home, that you had a good one.

Chinnor Specific.

Lynn and I have become conscious that we are duplicating a great deal with our own briefing document and the one that I produce for all Town and Parish Councils across the District, so from this issue, I shall summarise our Chinnor specific activities at the beginning of the Letter.

By now you will be aware that our presentations to the Planning Committee regarding the development next to Mill Lane School were unsuccessful in achieving a refusal. I believe that between us we covered the issues thoroughly and made good points but we were unable to overcome the points that are presently ham-stringing the District. I will not revisit these as they have already been covered in our column in the Chinnor Pump.

Planning is still a major part of our work, and we have been working with residents on individual concerns and we have been able to draw these to a satisfactory conclusion.

We have also been dealing with consultation at Scrutiny regarding the question of Temporary Accommodation for people made homeless. Council has a duty to provide this and there is evidence that demands on our resources will increase. A plan has been compiled and we are now reviewing this to fine tune it and make sure that it best fits our needs.

We have other on-going work, but this covers the main areas for this month.

Planning Matters.

Here's a quick update on some large developments the Planning committee has recently approved:

- up to 1,880 homes north east of Didcot
- 280 homes at the former Didcot A Power Station
- 78 homes at Mill Lane, Chinnor
- 52 homes at Bayswater Farm Road, Oxford

These will all need Section 106 agreements to make sure they provide enough affordable housing, and to pay for on-site infrastructure. With the exception of the north-east Didcot site, which is allocated in the Core Strategy, the developers will also have to pay significant contributions via the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Since introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1 April we have:

- issued 66 notices confirming developments are liable for CIL - that's an average of four per week, meaning we'll receive more than £2m for infrastructure improvements
- granted 26 claims for self-build exemptions
- received two notices to say work on CIL developments has started.
- Our building control and enforcement teams are also helping to identify any unauthorised development that should be paying the levy, or where applicants have failed to confirm that they've started building work.

If you have any questions about CIL, please contact planning.

The first consultation on our Local Plan 2016 – 2032 has now finished and we are examining the responses. We will let you know the results and the next steps as soon as we can.

PCSO update

Each year we provide £100,000 to part fund six PCSOs. Here's a quick update of just some of the activities they carried out to support people in South Oxfordshire.

Between April and June 2016, our PCSOs organised and attended a number of events, including a talk for older people in Henley to help them avoid being scammed by fraudulent cold callers, giving crime prevention advice to almost 300 homes in Wheatley, and giving an internet safety talk to pupils in Wallingford. They also assisted 268 victims of crime.

To read the full quarter one report from our PCSOs visit our neighbourhood policing page.
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/community-advice-and-support/community-safety/neighbourhood-policing>

Flying the flag

Wallingford Castle Meadows have again been awarded the Green Flag, the national award given to parks and green spaces by Keep Britain Tidy. This is now the ninth time that the site has received the award.

Wallingford Castle Meadows, which is managed by the Earth Trust, has also received Green Heritage Site Accreditation for the third consecutive year.

July Town And Parish Forum

We held our Town and Parish forum in July. These help us to stay in touch with town and parish councils and keep them up to date with the work we're doing. At the July event we provided updates on our bid for district-based unitary councils and progress on our local plans. We also took the chance to talk to councils about our new corporate plan.

These are an important opportunity for dialogue and in future, we aim to hold two of these each year, instead of just the one.

Our new Chief Executive takes up his post

New Chief Executive David Hill started with us on Thursday 1 September.

David, said "I'm pleased to be in post and really looking forward to meeting colleagues and councillors over the coming days and weeks."

We thank David Buckle for all of his hard work and wish him a very happy retirement.

Better Broadband

As you will be aware the council has provided additional funding to the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme to extend broadband coverage across the district. The delivery of the additional district funded coverage is now underway and runs until December 2017. You can find out the latest plan for your local area by visiting the postcode checker map at <http://www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk/cms/content/coverage-map>

However, please note that the map is not able to identify remaining coverage issues at a premises level and there may be some gaps in coverage. As the Better Broadband team has achieved savings in delivering the first phase this could be available to help plug coverage gaps and we are therefore keen to hear from communities or areas where there are still issues to help us identify specific

problems. To highlight any issues contact broadband@oxfordshire.gov.uk with your full address (including postcode) and telephone number.

Changing sacks to boost recycling

From 3 November, we'll only empty green wheelie bins if the recycling in them is loose or in clear sacks.

Despite a recent campaign to raise awareness about the problem of contamination, some people continue to contaminate recycling, particularly with food waste and dirty nappies. When this happens whole truckloads of recycling are rejected at the recycling centres - take a look at our video to see how bad the problem is when people use black or coloured sacks.

<http://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=baaa88f201&e=eda6ce4f57>

So we're insisting on clear sacks or no sacks to help us identify contaminated bins.

From 3 October we'll leave a bin hanger on any bins containing black or coloured sacks explaining the problem. We'll empty the bin on that occasion, but if it happens again after 3 November we won't empty the bin but will leave another note to explain why.

For more information please contact the waste team on 01235 422406.

Five Councils update - Changes from 1 August

As Council explained in the email sent to you last month, the first of our services to be handed over to Capita and VINCI on 1 August has been completed.

The next changes to our services in the five councils project are due to take place at the start of October, although most of them are internal so you shouldn't notice anything different. The biggest change is the way we provide HR support, and we're keeping staff up to date with how it will affect them.

One change that will affect a small number of residents is that from October, Capita will be holding new benefits claim interviews by appointment only.

Yellow letter

All homes across both districts should receive a yellow letter from us asking residents to confirm who currently lives at their address. We need this information to make sure everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so in future elections.

As soon as people get their yellow letter they should visit

www.householdresponse.com/southandvale

to confirm their details are correct or, if not, provide the correct information. If someone doesn't have access to the internet the yellow letter contains details on the alternative ways to respond.

If there's a public noticeboard in your area please help us spread the word by displaying this poster.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/pyg5dx1iueykq81/Yellow%20letter%20-%20when%20it%20arrives.pdf?dl=0>

Devolution/unitary councils update

In case you missed the email we sent out, we've published the PwC report we commissioned along with the other Oxfordshire district councils into the future structure of local government in the county. You can download the report and a summary document from our website:

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/about-us/devolution>

The county council has published its report as well - you can read that here.

<http://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/review-of-future-options-for-local-government-in-oxfordshire/>

Rats and mice

Two cases our Food and Safety Team have been dealing with received a lot of publicity following successes in court last month.

On 15 August Little Angel's children's nursery, based in Marcham, was ordered to pay £6,740 after we found mouse droppings in their kitchen during an inspection last October. Then on 19 August Magistrates backed our decision to order Didcot takeaway Delight 2 to close its food storage area following a rat infestation and awarded us costs of £1,280.

Blanket testing events

If you know someone who uses an electric blanket please encourage them to get it tested before using it this winter. To help out, we're working with the other district councils and Oxfordshire Trading Standards to put on a series of 'Blanket Check' events this October:

Monday 3 October - Oxford

Wednesday 5 - Wallingford

Thursday 6 - Abingdon

Monday 17 - Wantage

Wednesday 19 - Henley

Thursday 20 - Oxford

Anyone wanting to book an appointment should call 01865 815 000 (option 4) or email communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Can your community benefit from payback?

Are there any areas of your community that could do with a bit of a tidy up, or a lick of paint? Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company can arrange for offenders given Community Payback sentences to help out.

They can do work such as clearing overgrown pathways, removing graffiti, repairing public benches or repainting play equipment in public spaces. By making things tidy it can also help deter vandalism and other crime from taking place.

To find out more get in touch with Diane Major on 01869 328500 or

Diane.Major@thamesvalleycrc.org.uk

Selling goods online

There's a new online scam that vulnerable people in your area, and people inexperienced at using the internet, need to be aware of.

Fraudsters are contacting people selling things online through sites like eBay - they agree to buy what's on offer but then send a fake payment confirmation to the seller. The buyer then comes up

with an excuse to send a courier to collect the goods, however after the goods are collected the seller finds that they haven't actually received payment.

If you know anyone who's been targeted by this scam please encourage them to report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040.

New grants scheme

We've launched a new revenue grants scheme - any non-profit organisation can apply, like a charity or local village committee. The grants are from £10,000 to £100,000 over four years and can be used on revenue spending - so things like rent and rates, salary costs, and marketing and publicity.

We're launching these grants to help us meet our new corporate objectives, including investing in the district's future and building thriving communities. Applications are open from 27 July until 15 September this year. We know that councils spreading the word is one of the main ways groups find out about grant funding, so it'd be a great help if you could let your communities know - just put them in contact with the grants team on 01235 422405.

Low emissions strategy

Residents in our main air quality hot spots will get another chance to say what they think about actions that could cut vehicle emissions.

We had an encouraging response to the consultation on our proposed Low Emissions Strategy and there was broad support for the suggested actions in Watlington and Wallingford. We now want to get a better understanding of how people's day to day lives could be affected.

In the coming months our researchers will carry out doorstep interviews and residents in Wallingford and Watlington will also be able to have a look at the ideas at stands in the two towns. We'll let you know more details on this as soon as everything's been confirmed.

Air quality experts couldn't come up with any easy-to-implement actions that would significantly reduce vehicle emissions in Henley, so we'll also ask residents there to see if they can come up with any viable ideas.

This is just a long brief summary of the work we are doing.

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