**PARISH REPORT JULY 2014**

**Ofsted**

I reported last month that Children's Services have been subject to a detailed Ofsted Inspection concerning their Child Protection and Looked After Children's (LAC) Services. In addition, the Local Safeguarding Board have also been subject to a simultaneous but separate inspection.

The outcome of the 4-week inspection is that Children's Services have been judged as Good in all six categories.

These include:

• Children who need help and protection

• LAC

• Adoption

• Experiences and progress of Care Leavers

• Leadership Management and Governance

• Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Needless to say we are delighted with this outcome which is the result of a lot of hard work from staff, our partners and local councillors.

**MJ Award**

There was further good news for Children’s Services when they was awarded an MJ Achievement award, along with Health & Police partners, for joint working in the Kingfisher Unit. This is a specialist Unit working with vulnerable children. Unfortunately there was also the news that 6 men were arrested in Banbury as part of an investigation that the Kingfisher team carried out into child sexual exploitation. We will continue to work hard to catch the criminals and stop them from harming children.

**Connecting Oxfordshire**

I have been presenting Connecting Oxfordshire across the county with an emphasis on the local area showing the strategic transport schemes which will be delivered by the County Council and partners such as Network Rail, between now and 2020. The attendance has been good with some interesting debate. There are a further four meetings in July all of which start at 7.00pm:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Mon 7 July | Witney | Henry Box School |
| Tue 15 July | Didcot | Cornerstone |
| Wed 16 July | Henley | Town Hall |
| Wed 23 July | Oxford | County Hall |

We are starting the process for the Local Transport Plan 4; the debate will feed into that Plan. It is vital that we have a transport system which will enable residents to move around the county. Consultation on the Goals and Objectives of the new plan runs until 1st August. A draft plan will be worked on during the autumn and presented for consultation in the spring of 2015.

**CLA Game Fair**

The CLA Game Fair is returning to Blenheim Palace on 18th, 19th & 20th July. This is a national event and will attract 150,000 visitors over the weekend and obviously this will cause added traffic particularly on the Friday. A traffic management plan, similar to that in 2011, has been put into place with all organisations working to reduce the traffic impact on the area.

**Duke of Edinburgh Awards**

I was delighted to attend the ceremony at St James’s Palace where the Gold Awards were presented by the Earl of Wessex. It was good to see 50 young adults from Oxfordshire achieve the high standard of the Gold Award.

**Firefighter receives British Empire Medal for Innovative Flood Work**

Firefighter Gary Mattingley has been awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours in recognition of his national work around flood management and the innovative approach he hatched which was used by Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service to keep Oxford open to traffic during February's floods.

**Summer Reading Challenge**

Children across Oxfordshire can explore a Mythical Maze as part of this year’s Summer Reading Challenge.

The Challenge encourages children to read at least six books over the summer holiday, collecting amazing rewards on the way. When they’ve finished the children will get a wristband, a medal and a certificate.

The Challenge runs from July 12th to September 13th and it can be done in only three visits to the library. All the children have to do is pick up a Mythical Maze poster and start reading, all for free!

**Future of Learning Disability services in Oxfordshire**

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group are jointly reviewing the commissioning and provision of all services for people with learning disabilities. We welcome the HealthWatch and Oxfordshire Family Support Network report, published on 26 June, and will involve them and examine their findings in our review.

Our primary objective is to ensure the safety of those who are being cared for and we continue to work closely with Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust which provides many of these services in Oxfordshire.

This review is part of our planned reassessment of services and our aim of supporting more people with learning disabilities to live in the community with appropriate support with fewer living in hospital-type settings. This also follows national guidance.

**Consultation on Housing-Related support services**

A 12-week consultation has launched on how to save £1.5m over two years from services for homeless people and substance misusers with a proposal that would see three hostels in Oxford remain open.

The proposal, approved for consultation by the multi-agency Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board, seeks to challenge and engage with stakeholders, including providers and service users, on how relevant services - known collectively as housing related support - could be delivered in the future.

Oxfordshire County Council had subsidised a reduction in central government funding for housing related support for the past four years but decided in February that it could no longer do so.

**New Children’s Homes to Protect Vulnerable Young People**

Plans for two new children’s homes to ensure the safety of vulnerable young people in care – or at risk of coming into the care system – are set to be unveiled.

The council is proposing to build an Assessment Centre in Thame, for up to six children on the ‘edge’ of the care system, and a ‘move-on’ home in Didcot for up to four older teenagers preparing to leave care. The homes would enable more of the county’s vulnerable young people to live closer to home and reduce the need to send children to costly out-of-county settings where the council also has less control over the quality of placements.

**Tackley Playground**

Congratulations to everybody involved in the fund raising for Tackley playground, it was a fantastic achievement. The new equipment, especially the sensory items, will become popular for children in the surrounding area. The sun shone when our MP David Cameron performed the official opening with most of the village attending.

**Woodstock Primary School**

After attending Tackley, I then had to dash to Woodstock Primary School to be there where David Cameron MP was opening the new buildings. The extension to the school looks excellent with the new layout giving children (& teachers) a wonderful environment to learn in.

**Town/Parish Councils**

I try to attend as many Town and Parish Council meetings as possible, although my role as Leader of the County Council does mean that some clashes are inevitable. Since October I have made presentations at 22 public meetings across the county.

However, if there is something of importance on the agenda, I will try to attend a Town or Parish Council meeting.

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