

## **Cllr Andy Graham Annual report 2022-23**

### **Home to School Transport-Improvements to Policy**

Chaired the working group to investigate areas of improvement to the Home to Schools Transport Policy.

Evidence was received by County councillors, officers and residents

Recommendations were made in the following areas:

[Discretionary School Transport \(Spare Seats Scheme\)](#)-reviewing the scheme so that it maximises the number of seats available available to parents.

[Walking Route Safety](#)- ensuring all county councillor report parents concerns over the safety of walking routes and where necessary reassess routes

[Independent Travel Training](#)- SEND training provision for post 16 students to increase independent travel,

[Transport Eligibility Appeals](#)-more accessibility and streamlined process

[Decarbonisation of School Transport](#)

**This is now with the cabinet for determination April/May 2023.**

### **30 to 20 mph Reduced Speed-Pedestrian Safety-Putting pedestrian Safety First**

Schemes consulted upon by the following parish councils were approved by the County:

Combe, Bladon and The Bartons

And the following in the pipeline signalled for 23/24: Wootton by Woodstock, Tackley and Woodstock,

Kiddington have also signalled their aspiration meaning all towns and villages in the division will have signed up for the scheme by the end of the 24/25 and put in place.

Current road safety issues / proposals are current and ongoing with thanks to SAFER in Stonesfield for their diligence and thoughtful proposals.

## **Woodstock Traffic Advisory Group**

County Council Officers, Councillors from the town and open to the public met twice this year and reported on highways safety issues in particular reference to the A44, updates on highways maintenance, car parking arrangements for off street and on street parking, freight strategy following the lifting of the ban on Burford bridge, Village travel network, improvements to the footbridge at the Black Boar pub, bus routing improvements outside Woodstock schools and Blenheim Traffic management arrangement for major events.

This is reported to the town council.

## **Bus Service Issues**

A subsidised and welcomed one charge anywhere in Oxfordshire of £4 adults and £2 young people was introduced during January- March improving passenger capacity on all routes and assisting in the cost of living crisis.

The S7 bus route was changed without notice avoiding the original bus turning point and instead diverting down the high St, turning at the town hall and through Market Street raised considerable concern over pedestrian safety and congestion issues. Having viewed the situation on a number of cases and raised the issue on behalf of residents at the highest levels at county hall, a safety audit is being undertaken.

Subject to the outcome of the safety audit , other measures may well need to be introduced and I welcome the petition that residents have signed resulting out of this disruption caused by this unilateral decision to avoid using the turning point as designed at the other end of old Woodstock. Supplementary evidence such as photos/videos have highlighted the concerns.

The issue over the lack of bus shelters in the Park View is currently receiving my attention

## **The S3 Service through Stonesfield, Combe and Charlbury**

*Following a Covid-related decline in patronage and subsequent increase in operating costs, the Council stepped in with emergency funding to save service S3 and several other routes which would otherwise have been withdrawn. These contracts run until August 2024, but no decisions have yet been taken on provision beyond this date.*

*We would hope that by then patronage levels would have recovered, and/or costs reduced, to a point where the service does not require financial support. The Council will be undertaking a review of all the contracts secured with these emergency funds in spring 2024 to consider the case for retention of each service and the funds that may be available at the time. Ultimately, the best way to secure bus service provision*

*in the long term is for the communities on the route to make as full use of them as possible*

## **School Admissions**

A total of 93.55 per cent (6,729) of applicants have been awarded their first choice for starting infant or primary school in Oxfordshire.

Last year's figure was 91.49 per cent (6,459), which means a higher number of parents across the county have been offered their first choice of primary school for 2023/24.

A total of 99.01 per cent (number 7,120) have been offered one of the four choices they listed on their application.

The percentage receiving a first choice of primary school in England in 2023 is not yet known. However, Oxfordshire's percentage receiving a first choice is generally better than the national average.

This year there are 7,189 Oxfordshire children who need school places for September 2023. This is 129 more than last year when 7,060 Oxfordshire children needed school places.

## **Flooding Issues**

Have agreed to a catchment area study in Tackley to address the land drainage/flooding issues in Tackley with thanks to OCC officers, parish council.

Happy to report the satisfactory conclusion to the flooding issue in Sandford St. Martin which was resolved through partnership working with the cricket club, Sandford estate and county highways work to the drains now avoiding flooding in the village.

## **Parking**

On street parking is now the enforcement responsibility of the county in West Oxfordshire whilst the district retains responsibility for the car parks.

Parking permits in the centre of Woodstock can be applied for and hotel parking permits. This comes into effect from May 2023.

## **Library**

Library options are now being considered with a commitment to bringing back a library /community hub to the centre of the Woodstock. Ongoing discussions are taking place with the district council as well as key stakeholders.

The report reflects progress in some areas and a few drawbacks but as your county councillor, it is always my intention to address the issues brought to my attention by the residents of the district albeit a challenge to find the best solutions.

Thank you for your patience and kind wishes,

**Andy Graham**