

Woodstock in Bloom

With the Gold Medal awarded to Woodstock in 2007 comes a lot of expectation and on your toes+activity to keep up the Gold standard in 2008.

We have just learned that the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain in Bloom theme for 2008 is **Local Roots**. The suggestion is that entries find out what makes their community unique and look to celebrating local and cultural history and heritage of the area through Bloom displays and activities.+ We have much to draw upon to meet this challenge in Woodstock.

A new bed has already been constructed in Old Woodstock which will further enhance our low maintenance but colourful displays for which Woodstock is known. Three towers have been ordered for the Town Square and we shall add two more tubs at the entrance to Market Street.

We keep costs to a minimum by relying on volunteer support. We welcome sponsorship. If you are able to help in either way please contact the Town Clerk (on 811216).

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

1. The Town Council has recently restated its request to OCC to:
 - a) Put up the promised signs rerouting lorries off the A44 and onto the A40, A429 and A474, as Gloucestershire has done.
 - b) Consider removing the A44's Primary Route status sooner rather than later.
 - c) Work to ensure that Warwickshire County Council withdraws its Freight Quality Partnership Map recommending lorries to use the A44.
2. The Town Council is stepping up its efforts to persuade OCC to introduce speed reactive signs on the A44 through Woodstock.
3. It had been hoped by this time to provide concrete information on the Cotswold Railway Line redoubling project. The signs are encouraging but no announcement has been forthcoming from Network Rail as yet, so fingers crossed!
4. The new double decker buses are already operational on our route between Oxford and Chipping Norton/Charlbury. It is hoped to replace the bus shelter in Oxford Road before the end of April. There are no plans to provide any other new bus shelters in the town at the moment.

TOWN COUNCIL SPRING NEWSLETTER 2008

TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2008

The election of Woodstock Town Councillors to serve until May 2012 will be held on Thursday 1 May 2008. The Polling Stations will be at the Town Hall and Ryegrass, Flemings Road. The hours of opening are 7am to 10pm. The election of a Councillor for Woodstock and Bladon to serve on the District Council will take place on the same day.

To be able to vote, your name must be included in the current Register of Electors. If you are not on the Register you can apply for your name to be added. This must be received by the elections office at West Oxfordshire District Council by no later than Wednesday 16 April. A form is available from the elections office at the Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB or via the District Council's web site www.westoxon.gov.uk/electoralregister

If you are not able to attend at the Town Hall or Ryegrass to vote in person you can apply to the District Council for a postal or proxy vote. Such applications must be received by 16 April for postal votes and 23 April for proxy votes.

All information concerning the elections can be found at www.westoxon.gov.uk/elections2008

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Did you know that, apart from specific confidential items, meetings of the Town Council and its Committees are open to the public? Did you also know that members of the public can speak at meetings of the Council? If you wish to speak on an item on the agenda we just need to know before the meeting commences. Each person can speak for up to three minutes. If you want to speak on an item which is not on the Agenda, you need to advise the Town Clerk by 10am on the Tuesday of the week before the meeting. For further details, telephone the Town Clerk on 01993 811216.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENT

Woodstock Town Council would like your comments about your town. We are placing comment slips on the table inside the Market Place door of the Town Hall for your convenience. Please use this system to express concerns, ideas and even compliments for consideration. Our staff will do their best to deal with these slips and put items forward where necessary to the Council for their consideration.

REPORT FROM THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, 18 MARCH 2008

Tribute was paid to the excellent progress made during the past year on conserving our civic infrastructure. Special mention was made of the refurbishment of the Town Hall and the work done by the Green Gym volunteers on the town's cemeteries and the Watermeadows.

The measure of a thriving community is as much the voluntary effort of its citizens as it is the organisation and direction of its civic authority. In Woodstock we are extraordinarily blessed with an active citizenry, as the rich tapestry of events taking place in the town during the year testified.

With regard to the property portfolio, the value for money achieved with the refurbishment project at the Town Hall during the past year was stressed. The budget discussions of Autumn 2007 saw a continuation of the planning to improve the Town Hall still further for people with mobility issues. Although a long term project to improve access to the first floor by the provision of a lift did not find budget approval, there is consolation hopefully for those who want to see a disability friendly Town Hall in the fact that we shall soon be building on some minor measures to facilitate access for disabled persons with the provision over the next two years of a disabled toilet. Another project envisaged over the next two years is the replacement of the Stonesfield slate roof of the Park Street block that includes the Post Office.

The next Town Council may soon have to decide whether it wants to spend a significant amount of money on improving the existing Community Centre or think about providing a brand new building.

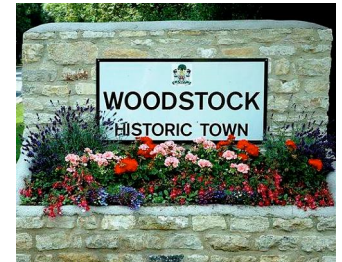
On the Environment front, progress was reported in containing the growth of Himalayan Balsam on the Watermeadows as a result of the grazing programme using the Dexter cattle owned by a Tackley farmer. Bank erosion is a major concern . not least under the vehicle bridge . much of it caused by the burrowing of American signal crayfish exacerbated by high water levels. These have been fished both professionally and by amateurs and some 2,000 of the larger fish removed. Bank restoration has been another matter . some done by volunteer effort by sandbagging; and the employment of professional engineering contractors has to support more permanent options. However, nothing can proceed without the support of the Environment Agency . which takes into account the wildlife in the vicinity. There have been sightings of water voles, a protected species, so negotiations on permanent solutions can be slow.

This year, for the first time in Oxfordshire for many years, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) is undertaking a training programme based in the Woodstock Watermeadows. This will be the equivalent of 130 man days of conversation work on the meadows . at no charge to our community!

The Annual Town meeting heard that West Oxfordshire District Council is beginning to prepare a Local Development Framework to act as a planning control after 2012. Four possible housing sites in Woodstock have been ~~not~~ formally submitted+They are:

- 1) The Recreation Road football pitch.
- 2) A site in Banbury Road which includes the Hensington Farm barns.
- 3) The field behind Budds Close between the OWL reserve and the Marlborough School
- 4) The site previously proposed between A44, Hedge End, Flemings Road and the Pest Houses.

Public consultation is to be between 1st April and 12th May. The District Council has asked for comments from WTC and from individuals



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Lawn Cemetery

The large ugly wooden rubbish container has been removed and replaced with 2 Wheelie Bins. There have been some teething problems with this change over as they have not been emptied regularly enough. The problem being the West Oxfordshire District Council insistence on the bins being at the roadside. Hopefully the new positioning by the roadside with its neat surround will solve this. **Please may we appeal for your help to keep this special place tidy by asking you to take your rubbish home and pop it in your own bin. Thank you.**

Hensington Road Cemetery

This cemetery has had a facelift! These works have been long overdue and we are well aware there is still much to do. Hopefully with the continued enormous help from the Green Gym and budgetary provision for the next financial year our goal will be achieved.

Green Gym

Woodstock Town Council wishes to thank the Green Gym for all their hard work with the Cemeteries, Watermeadows, Owl project and Memorial Garden Hensington Road. For more information on the Green Gym telephone Nina Sperink on 07740 899729. Office . 01296 330033