

TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER – SEP.2011

As we move into Autumn with very successful recent events such as ‘Woodstock Live’ and ‘Woodstock Literary Festival’ still happily in our memory we now look forward to an exciting programme of other events in the run-up to Christmas:

Saturday 1st October – MAYOR’S FUNDRAISING EVENT

The Mayor, Cllr. Jill Dunsmore, will be holding a special Coffee Morning at the Town Hall from 10a.m. which will run into the afternoon to raise funds for her chosen causes – Woodstock Youth Club and the Citizens Advice Bureau. There will be a scrumptious selection of goodies to spend your money on, some fascinating items of bric-a-brac and very desirable raffle prizes.

Sat 22nd – Sun 30th October – ART IN WOODSTOCK

A celebration of visual art, featuring over 50 artists in 20 venues around the town – talks, workshops and events. Don’t miss it.

Sat 26th November - A NIGHT OF A THOUSAND CANDLES

Mingle with the throng on the Town Square between 6-7p.m. for the turn - on of the Christmas Lights – always an exciting event eagerly anticipated for enjoyment of the music, stalls, chestnuts, mulled wine, entertainments etc.

Sat. 17th December – MAYOR’S CAROLS

Gather round the Christmas Tree at the Town Hall and join with the Mayor as she leads you in joyful singing of familiar carols. A special visitor is expected to add to the magic of the event which will include the usual Christmas fare

P.S. Many thanks for your continued support and to those who take the time and trouble to organise these events.

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The Mayor is chairing a Working Party looking at interesting ways to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee next year which will involve people in the community across the age spectrum. The highlight of a weekend of celebrations is likely to be Monday June 4 which will be a Bank Holiday.

There is no shortage of suggestions but, if you have a particular idea you would like the Working Party to consider, please write to the Mayor at the Town Hall as soon as possible.

COMMUNITY CENTRE REFURBISHMENT

Celebrations are already in order for this project as we have the exciting news of two successful bids for major grant funding – £50,000 from WREN and £35,000 from W. Oxfordshire District Council – which means we have a total budget of around £150k. for the refurbishment.

We shall not know the project's final shape until the tendering process is complete but we have already given you a flavour of the initial draft proposals in an earlier Town Council Newsletter, and it is certain to be a major advance on present day facilities. We guarantee that the Centre will be unrecognisable from its present tired appearance, and everyone at Woodstock Town Council is looking forward to providing the local community with a multi-purpose venue of which it can be proud. We will report further progress in our next Newsletter

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Town Council approval for an experimental period of 6 months has now been given for the proposals designed at encouraging more public participation at Council Meetings. For more detail please see the Town Council website or the Mayor's letter in the September edition of the Woodstock & Bladon News.

STATION SITE

After a long battle and several plan submissions West Oxon District Council finally approved a plan for the former Youngs Garage site. Residents have seen the outbuildings of both the garage and other buildings fronting Oxford Street, including the showroom, demolished, sadly also “ Mrs. Young’s house” –(the Victorian red brick house that graced the top of Union Street).

The old station building has been left standing following a hard fought campaign by the local community. This historic building will now become workshops – accompanying new residences, and providing continuation of employment on this site.

There will be some internal conversions of the Oxford Street office buildings into domestic accommodation, with the site as a whole providing 34 new homes.

A new house replaces the former showroom, but otherwise the line of the old station retains the open aspect on arrival at the town.

An application to stop up the footway in front of the station building has been withdrawn so pedestrians will continue to walk this pathway – away from the main road.

The old station building is to be restored to its former state with lost features e .g.chimneys,added. Instead of spoiling the entrance to the town as was feared the approved plan should add to its appearance.

Vehicle access will be from Oxford Street with pedestrian and cycle link (only) between Hensington Road and New Road and through the site.

The demolition of Mrs. Young's house and the loss of very old yew trees at the top of New Road were both resisted but there are times when compromise is necessary. Unfortunately had the Town Council held out to preserve these it would almost certainly have resulted in a new appeal on a less acceptable plan that could have succeeded.

The new plan is not perfect but it achieves so much of what the people of Woodstock wanted.

A NEW CEMETERY

It has been apparent for some time that burial space at the Green Lane cemetery is getting low. So, a few years ago the Town Council started to plan for the future and agreed to set aside an amount each year to build up a fund for the purchase and laying out of new land for a new cemetery.

The preferred option was always for adjacent land – to make it an extension to the current cemetery.

The Council can now report that agreement has been reached with Blenheim Estates for an extension to the rear of the existing site. Due to Blenheim's generosity the land purchase can be completed - subject to surveys and planning permissions - in the new financial year (after April 2012).

The extension will provide enough burial space for Woodstock residents well into the second half of this century.

P.S. To make comment on the content of this Newsletter or make suggestions for any future Town Council Newsletter, please write to the Communications Sub – Committee (Cllrs. Brian Yoxall (Chairman), Ann Grant, Elizabeth Poskitt) at the Town Hall. We have responded to reaction to our previous Newsletter by increasing the print size , hopefully improving it.

The Sub-Committee is grateful to Cllr. Trish Redpath for her contributions to this edition in respect of the Station Site and the New Cemetery.