

**SODC A Conservative District Councillor's View**

**(Or What The Council Is Doing)**

**January 2018.**

Firstly, I hope that you have all had a great Christmas and I wish you a Happy New Year!

**Planning Matters.**

**Figures for appeals**

The Henley Standard recently ran an article suggesting we were close to being put into 'special measures' due to the number of our planning decisions that are successfully appealed. The article used figures supplied by the government, which we disputed.

The government has now clarified the figures they will be using and we remain confident we will not be at risk of being put in 'special measures'.

**Judicial Reviews:**

**Thames Farm, Shiplake**

Along with Shiplake Parish Council, we are seeking a judicial review in respect of an inspector's decision to allow an appeal for 95 houses to be built on the edge of the village.

Although both councils have been refused permission to proceed with the applications, we have the right to renew our application and to present our case at a hearing and this is what we intend to do.

**Land off New Road, East Hagbourne**

A developer has been seeking a judicial review in respect of a planning inspector's decision to dismiss their appeal to build 170 houses on the site between Didcot and East Hagbourne.

Following a hearing at the High Court to seek a review of the inspector's decision, it has been refused. Grainger PLC, the developer, now has the right to lodge an appeal to be considered at the Court of Appeal.

**Enforcement action:**

**The White Lion, Crays Pond**

Last year we successfully prosecuted Mr Sandhu, owner of the property, for failing to comply with an enforcement notice. Since then we have continued to investigate the case to support further legal action as Mr Sandhu still resides in the premises, which is a breach of the notice.

The magistrates ordered Mr Sandhu to pay £2,500 fine with £170 victim surcharge and £2,000 towards prosecution costs.

### **The Lamb Inn, Satwell**

An appeal by the owner of The Lamb Inn, Satwell against our enforcement notice was heard at Henley Town Hall on 17 October. The inspector's decision supported our enforcement.

### **Local Plan 2033**

We are now processing comments from the recent publicity period, to submit alongside the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate next month. We will also submit a report detailing all the consultation we carried out during the plan-making process.

We expect that the examination will require public hearing sessions, which are likely to take place in the spring or summer next year.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

Kidmore End - the six week publicity period for the plan area finished on 4 December. You can read more about the plan [here](#).

Dorchester on Thames - the examination has now concluded with a recommendation that it proceeds to referendum subject to some modifications.

Benson and Watlington - Both parish councils have submitted their plans and these will be publicised for a minimum of six week starting on 11 December.

Brightwell cum Sotwell, Chinnor and Long Wittenham - all three plans were approved at the council meeting on 12 October and are now the starting point for making planning decisions in their respective areas.

### **Government consultation: Our response**

We have submitted our response to the latest government consultation 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals' regarding changes on

- how housing needs are calculated
- how neighbourhood planning groups can have a better idea on housing needs
- how local authorities can work across boundaries
- making assessments easier and more transparent
- increasing planning fees where authorities are delivering new homes

We are generally supportive of the changes and you can read our response at <https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=d6d7c8d1e3&e=eda6ce4f57>

Details of the government's consultation can be found on their website.

### **How much of your area is built on?**

The BBC has created an interesting map that shows how much land in every council area of the country has been built on, and how it compares with the national averages.

You can access the map on the BBC website at; <https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=7da03130c1&e=eda6ce4f57>

### **New scheme offers a 'Safe Place' for vulnerable residents in Wallingford and Didcot**

A new support network is now available for vulnerable people visiting Wallingford and Didcot. Safe Places aims to provide a safe location for someone to go if they are feeling lost, worried or threatened.

Those premises taking part in the scheme are identified with a distinctive Safe Places logo in the window, for example local shops, community centres or cafes – this will be issued with the approval of local Thames Valley Police officers. A list of the locations signed up to the Safe Places scheme can be found at [southoxon.gov.uk/safeplaces](http://southoxon.gov.uk/safeplaces).

Under the Safe Places scheme people can request a special card to carry with them when out and about. This provides details of someone to contact if they are in need of help. Whether you have a Safe Places card or not, you can enter a participating location and ask for assistance. Staff have been trained and will be able to help keep you safe.

If you or someone you know wishes to request a Safe Places contact card, or you are a business interested in becoming a Safe Place, please email South Oxfordshire District Council's Community Safety Team via [communitysafety@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@southandvale.gov.uk) or call 01235 422593.

The Safe Places scheme in Wallingford and Didcot is supported by the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership, Oxfordshire Family Support Network and Age UK Oxfordshire.

Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie, Cabinet Member for Community Safety at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "The Safe Places scheme is particularly important for those with dementia, learning disabilities, mental health needs, and overseas visitors. Vulnerable people who may experience difficulties in public spaces now have that extra reassurance that support will be available should they need it in Wallingford and Didcot.

"If you, or a person you know, are someone who can feel vulnerable while out and about, please contact our community safety team for a Safe Place card. We'd also love to hear from any businesses in Wallingford or Didcot interested in becoming a Safe Place."

### **Protect yourself online**

The police estimate that one in ten adults in the UK fall victim to crime on the internet, that's why we are backing Thames Valley Police's campaign to encourage all residents to take action to protect themselves online - there is a lot of information that you could use to help keep yourself safe too!

Cyber crime is always evolving and can take many forms, but essentially it is where a computer is targeted or used to commit a crime. Identity fraud, cyberstalking, grooming, confidence scams, hacking are all examples of cyber or cyber-related crimes.

There are simple ways to reduce the risk of becoming a victim. For some useful information and advice visit the Thames Valley Police online safety page.

If you fall victim to a cyber crime or experience an attempted scam, you can report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or visit [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

**Work experience 2017**

Since January 2017 we have provided work experience for 39 students and young people to learn about how we work and gain some new valuable skills. Every single one of them said in their feedback that they enjoyed their placement and that they would recommend it.

The students and young people worked with teams right across the council as well as at Cornerstone and The Beacon.

We currently have opportunities for work experience for year ten students during term time for 2018 and, during February half term, other art workshop projects at Cornerstone, so if you know of any schools or young people who might benefit, or if you want more information on our work experience programme, contact Karen Tolley.

**Rail vision and consultation**

Strategic vision for our railways

The government is setting out a vision for the country's railways, which is likely to have an effect on our districts - you can read more about it here.

<https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=bd2cbe2854&e=eda6ce4f57>

**Great Western Railway consultation**

The Department for Transport is also setting out its proposals for improving train services on the Great Western rail network after the current franchise with GWR ends. They are running a consultation to help identify passengers most pressing priorities for improvements from 2020 onwards.

You can download the proposals here.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/n6ho0yozhaqv8i/great-western-rail-franchise-consultation-web.pdf?dl=0>

You can respond to the consultation here.

<https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=6b0a5a983b&e=eda6ce4f57>

You will need to submit your comments by 21 February next year.

**Hate crime - new guidance – A Reminder**

Please make yourself familiar with new guidance on dealing with hate crime. We all have a duty to take hate crime seriously and advise people of the reporting options available to them. Hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility towards a person's perceived:

- disability
- race or ethnicity
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- transgender identity

You can find out more about how to protect yourself and others on the Thames Valley Police website or contact the community safety team for more information on our guidance (communitysafety@southandvale.gov.uk)

<https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=155f92829e&e=eda6ce4f57>

**Changing Places toilet coming to the Orchard Centre, Didcot**

We have funded a new Changing Places toilet, which is being installed in the new Orchard Centre expansion.

The toilets are specially designed for people with learning and physical disabilities and they'll be ready in the new shopping centre for the grand opening in spring next year. The room will include a height adjustable changing bench, a hoist and plenty of space for up to two carers.