

# Oxfordshire County Council Parish Briefing

## **ELECTION RESULTS**

The County Council election results are as follows:

Conservative	31
Labour	14
Liberal Democrat	13
Other	5

The Conservative Group was one short of a majority, but has maintained the alliance formed with two independents in the last administration and has thereby formed the ruling group again.

The new Cabinet comprises:

Leader of the Council	Ian Hudspeth
Deputy Leader of the Council	Judy Heathcoat
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Lawrie Stratford
Cabinet Member for Children & Family Services	Steve Harrod
Cabinet Member for Environment	Yvonne Constance
Cabinet Member for Finance	David Bartholomew
Cabinet Member for Local Communities	Mark Gray
Cabinet Member for Property, Cultural Services	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Cabinet Member for Public Health & Education	Hilary Hibbert-Biles

Parish councils will be particularly interested in the creation of the new Cabinet post 'Local Communities'. One of the key tasks for the portfolio holder is to re-energise the 'Oxfordshire Together' campaign that promotes closer working between OCC and parish councils.

## **PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION**

The Leader has stated that he intends to make 'Social Care' and 'Highways Infrastructure' key priorities for the new administration.

## **PURDAH**

Although the local elections have passed, the imminence of the General Election means that 'purdah' restrictions still apply to the council's publicity during the pre-election period i.e. up to the close of poll on Thursday 8 June. This means that although the elections are not 'OCC's', the restrictions apply all the same. During the purdah period, the council must comply with restrictions outlined in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986. In addition a 'Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity' published in 2011 makes clear that

particular care should be taken in periods of heightened sensitivity, such as in the run up to an election. The Act defines publicity as “any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public.” Generally, the Act says that we should “not publish any material which, in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.” The Code of Practice recommends that authorities should generally not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters and that publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published unless expressly authorised by statute. For this reason, the parish report is again brief this month.

## **UNITARY UPDATE**

For the reasons above, the County Council, Oxford City Council and the four District Councils have agreed not to promote their standpoint on the issue of Unitary Government for the period of purdah. In any case, the matter cannot be realistically progressed until a new Government is in place.

## **NEW WEBSITE TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF CRIME**

A new website to support victims of crime has been launched by the Police and Crimes Commissioner. Victims First ([www.victims-first.org.uk](http://www.victims-first.org.uk)) is a new online resource for victims of crime which has advice on what to do and how to get help. It includes information and advice for victims including signposting them to services to help them cope and recover from the impact of the crime. It also includes a section on the Victims Code explaining clearly what help victims can expect from the police and other criminal justice agencies if they report the crime. The focal point of the website is a directory which allows victims to find relevant support in their area. Members of the public are able to use the website to refer themselves directly to the PCCs own support services or find information and contact details for other organisations. This support is available regardless of whether or not the victim has reported the crime to the police.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Kind regards



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