

# oxfordshire

issue 13 | winter 2006/07



**STAY  
SAFE**

**Staying safe  
at home and  
on the roads**  
pages 6 & 7

**Staying safe  
while you're  
out and about**  
pages 10 & 11



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)



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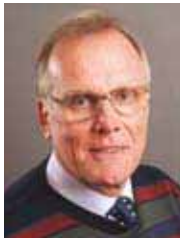
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# result!

Councillor Michael Waine tells us how our schools are getting better and better every year



The past year has seen real improvements in many of Oxfordshire's schools, with more pupils achieving better results at GCSE, A-level and in tests for 11 and 14-year-olds.

As the cabinet member for school improvement my job is to support and challenge each school in its quest to improve, promoting high standards of education in all Oxfordshire schools. Indeed, having worked in education for 37 years, my lifelong passion has been

seeking to achieve the best for children.

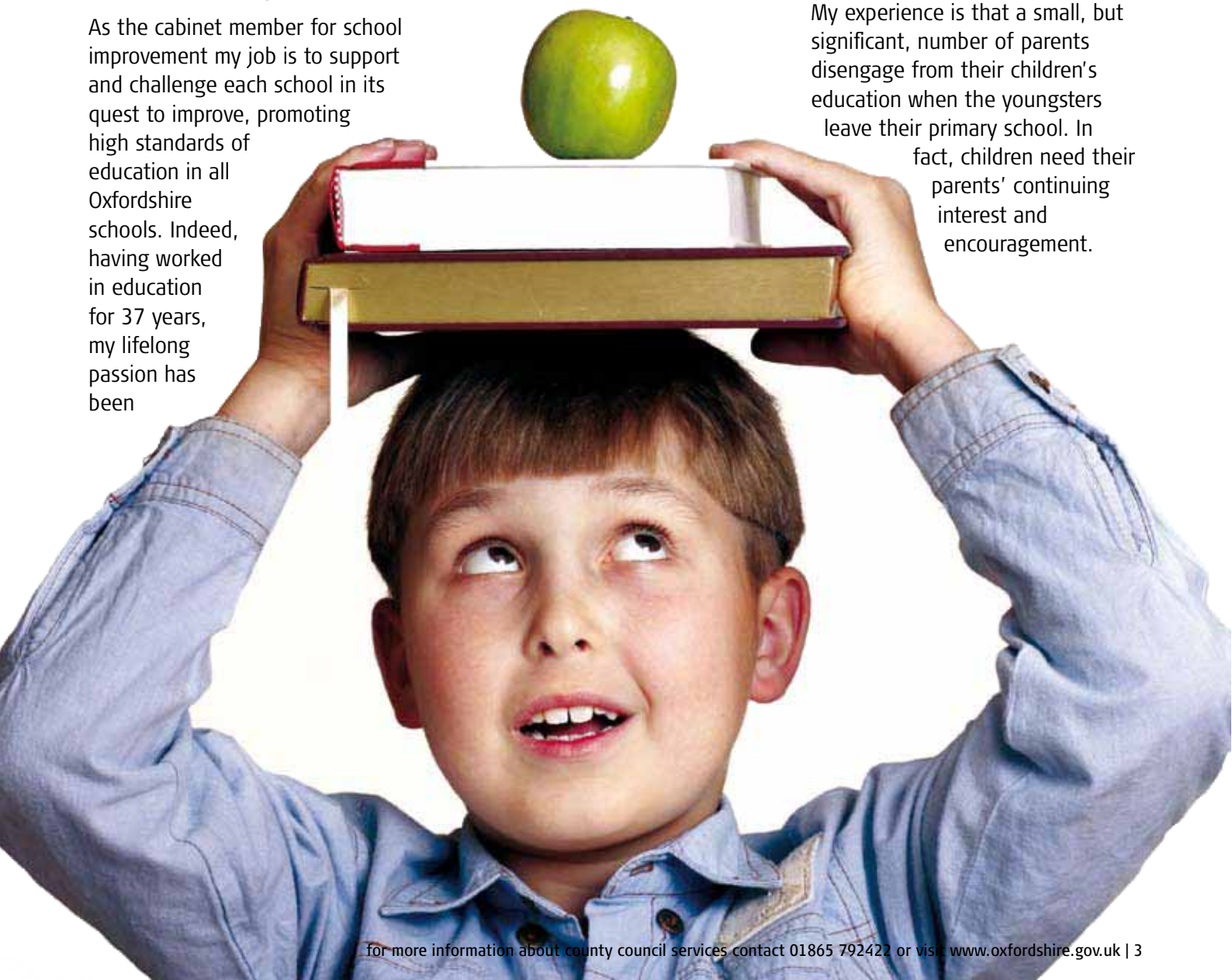
Over the course of the last year I have enjoyed meeting the headteachers of our schools and discussing with them the ways in which they are working to improve the quality of learning for children.

We need to involve the whole community in raising school standards and parents, in particular,

“Children need their parents' interest and encouragement right the way through school.”

have a major role to play in this. My experience is that a small, but significant, number of parents disengage from their children's education when the youngsters leave their primary school. In

fact, children need their parents' continuing interest and encouragement.





# excellent service!

**T**he latest Audit Commission assessment is expected to rank Oxfordshire County Council's performance highly.

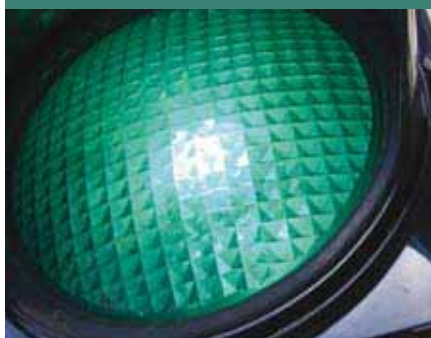
The council, already rated "Good" by the commission, has earned a number of additional stars recently.

County council leader Keith Mitchell said: "We promised we would not rest until our performance was judged to be "Excellent" and we will deliver on that."



Performance climbs higher and higher

## Many hands make light(s) work!



**Help us keep street lights and traffic lights working. Tell us if you see a problem.**

Please call us on 0800 317802 for streetlights (give lamp post number) or 01865 815775 for traffic lights.

You can also report the fault online at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/streetlighting](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/streetlighting) or by emailing [streetlighting@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:streetlighting@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## caught on the spot

The council is stamping down on trade waste being dumped or recycled as household waste, because the council tax payer foots the bill.

Please remember:

- Businesses must pay for their waste to be dealt with safely and they should keep records of Waste Transfer Notes for two years
- Businesses can be asked for these records any time and could be prosecuted or given on-the-spot fines of £300 if they are not produced

### For commercial waste disposal:

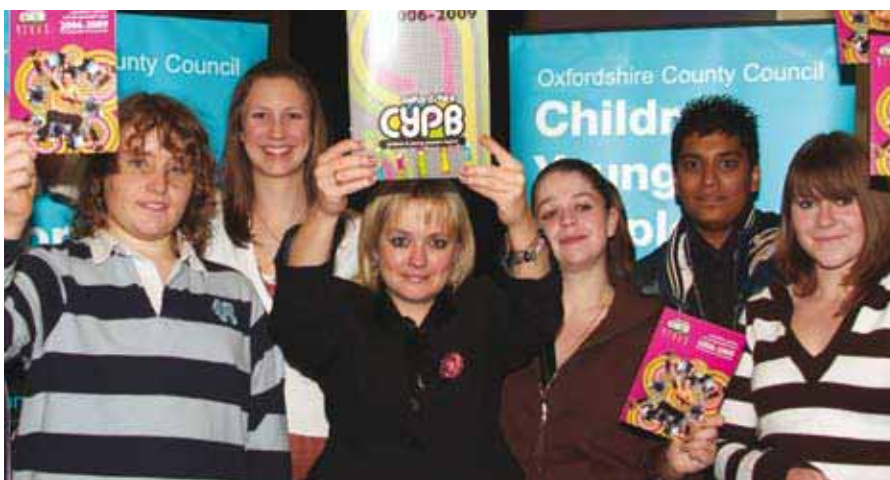
- call 01865 815959
- email [waste.management@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:waste.management@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/commercialwaste](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/commercialwaste)





## music and street art

The county council has invested £144,000 in a new youth centre in Wood Farm, Oxford. The centre will be home to activities and projects including web design, music and street art.



## the kids are in charge

Youngsters in Oxfordshire have broken new ground by helping to produce a new plan to improve the services that affect them. The Children and Young People's Plan sets out how the council proposes to make a difference to children's lives in all areas – including education, social services, health, and youth services. Call 01865 810560 for a copy.

### > social number



There is now a single telephone number and email address where you can find out more about adult social care services or ask for an assessment. Call 0845 050 7666 or email [access@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:access@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### > report race hate

If you become a victim of, or see, a racist incident, report it confidentially online at [www.reportracismoxon.com](http://www.reportracismoxon.com) or call 01865 791891.



### > tackle tricksters

If you run a club or service for elderly people and would like to see "Trickster in a Box", a powerful video to help prevent vulnerable people from becoming victims of bogus callers, call 01865 258518.







# STAY SAFE

Oxfordshire's '365 Alive' safety campaign aims to save 365 lives over the next 10 years. Here are some of their top tips...





FOR ROAD SAFETY  
INFORMATION CALL  
01865 810450

- 1 SLOW DOWN!** You drastically cut the risk to yourself and others by keeping to the speed limit.
- 2 STAY BACK!** Hitting the vehicle in front when they slow down or stop is the single most common type of accident.
- 3 BELT UP!** Not wearing a seatbelt is the easiest way to turn a minor incident into a tragedy – belt up in both the front and back and take particular care to secure young passengers properly.
- 4 WEAR A CYCLE HELMET!** Most cycle accidents are caused by the other vehicle involved and it's usually bigger than you are – so protect yourself.
- 5 AVOID DRINKING AND DRIVING.** Even at half the legal limit your accident risk is twice as high as before you had that drink.
- 6 DON'T USE MOBILE PHONES.** No phone call or text is that urgent – don't let them be your last words.
- 7 TAKE BREAKS ON LONG JOURNEYS ON MOTORWAYS.** Fatigue and inattention are particular hazards – always take a break and resist the temptation to 'keep going'.
- 8 CROSS ROADS CAREFULLY.** Choose the best place to cross and wait for good gaps. Involve children from a young age in making these decisions, so they pick up good habits.



VISIT  
[WWW.365ALIVE.CO.UK](http://WWW.365ALIVE.CO.UK)  
OR CALL 08000 325999

- 1 IF FIRE BREAKS OUT** get out, call the fire brigade and stay out.
- 2 NEVER LEAVE COOKING UNATTENDED.** If distracted or called away from the room, remove the pan from the heat or turn the heat off. The most common cause of fire in British homes is cooking-related.
- 3 PLAN YOUR ESCAPE ROUTE.** It takes minutes to prepare and could save your life.
- 4 TEST YOUR SMOKE ALARM WEEKLY.** It dramatically increases your chances of survival.
- 5 KEEP MATCHES AND LIGHTERS AWAY FROM CHILDREN.**
- 6 USE CANDLES SAFELY.** Ensure they're in a suitable holder and properly extinguished when you leave them.
- 7 DO NOT OVERLOAD ELECTRICAL SOCKETS.** One plug per socket should be the norm. The number one cause of domestic fires in Oxfordshire is related to electrical problems.
- 8 STUB OUT CIGARETTES PROPERLY** and check before going to bed.
- 9 NEVER USE PETROL OR PARAFFIN TO START A BARBECUE.** Use only recognised firelighters or starter fuel on COLD coals.
- 10 KEEP RUBBISH BINS AWAY FROM YOUR PROPERTY.**

# caring for our countryside

EVEN THROUGH THE COLDEST, WETTEST, WINTER MONTHS, THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S COUNTRYSIDE TEAM IS HARD AT WORK



**T**he county council's Countryside Team maintains Oxfordshire's paths, trees, gates and bridges to help people make the most of our glorious countryside.

The team works closely with farmers, volunteers and district councils to clear, conserve, improve and promote more than 2,500 miles of public rights of way and open access areas in the county. They cut back vegetation and clear overgrown paths, repair and install new bridges and gates, and work on drainage and surfacing projects.

Countryside Service Manager Keith Wheal said: "Oxfordshire's countryside is rightly famous for its diversity and beauty. It has everything – from the River Thames to the Cotswolds, and from Otmoor to the chalk downlands and beech woodlands in the south.

"Improving access to all this wonderful natural landscape is a great way for the county council to serve the community. Nearly nine out of ten Oxfordshire residents make use of their countryside. It is free to use, accessible and a great way to stay fit and healthy and have fun."

## More information on

- circular walks
- paths for all
- rights of way
- routes for riders
- rights and responsibilities
- access land

Go to [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/countryside) or call 01865 810226





# cutting costs



**£279,000**  
on property portfolio



**£150,000**  
on agency staff



**£400,000**  
on telecommunications

**P**roviding value for money is one of the things that Oxfordshire County Council has promised to deliver - and it can point to £14.5 million worth of efficiency savings over the past four years to prove it means what it says.

In 2005/06 the council saved more than £150,000 on agency staff and advertising, £279,000 on renegotiating the property portfolio contract and £400,000 on telecommunications bills.

Over the next eight years the council plans to save a gross amount of £27 million as the majority of human resources, finance and procurement work across the organisation is moved into a Shared Services Centre.

In addition, savings of £600,000 should be made each year as a result of improving home care support contracts.

And for the 2007/08 financial year a further £10 million in efficiency savings are planned from 112 savings projects.

Councillor Charles Shouler, the council's Cabinet Member for Finance said: "People expect us to be rigorous in the way we deal with finances. They don't want waste. They want value for money, as well as low taxes and real choice. We are delivering on that. Our resources are focused on the most important areas and we work hard to be flexible and pragmatic in our overall approach."

Last year's council tax rise was the lowest of any shire county in the South East and this year's is set to be even lower, at 4%, thanks to these savings.



# Building positive links with the community

Police in Oxfordshire are building positive links with the county's diverse communities with the help of dedicated Community and Diversity Officers (CADOs).

The role has evolved from the previous title of Community and Race Relations Officer to include the wide spectrum of diversity issues within the county. These officers and police staff help to deal with incidents motivated by intolerance of nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

It is their role to keep an overview of such incidents and help and advise their colleagues. They look at the impact an incident can have on the community and find ways to prevent issues escalating or further incidents occurring.

One of the ways they do this is by building strong links with

various communities and groups; for example, in places of worship, support organisations and other community places.

CADOs provide valuable links with communities and the police to ensure a flow of information so that people are aware of incidents that could raise community tensions. This also helps the police to work with community leaders to reduce those tensions or to ensure they do not arise in the first place. CADOs also liaise with victims of such incidents to provide help and support.



## SAFER NIGHTS OUT







**Police are working in partnership with other agencies to combat alcohol-related crime to make Oxfordshire safer for everyone to have a good night out.**

Nightsafe was set up in Oxford in 2004 and has brought licencees, local authorities, police, health service and the fire and rescue service together to tackle the issues associated with risky drinking.

Since then Nightsafe has been established in **Witney**, **Abingdon**

and **Banbury** and publicity campaigns to promote responsible drinking have been launched across the county.

Police target their patrols and those caught causing trouble could face an £80 fine for disorder. In **Oxford** a warning scheme is operating so that those participating in low-level antisocial behaviour will be warned and if they offend again the same night they are fined.

Initiatives under the Nightsafe banner include 'spikeys' – a stopper to put on bottles to help prevent drink spiking – and sniffer

dogs are being used to sniff out any illegal drug activity. Oxford Nightsafe launched Challenge 21 to combat underage drinking. If you do not look 21 you will not be served alcohol in central Oxford unless you have proper identification, such as a passport or driver's licence.

An educational package has been distributed to all schools in **West Oxfordshire** with a DVD entitled 'Wasted Nights' that warns of the consequences of binge drinking.

To find out more about Oxford Nightsafe go to [www.nightsafe-oxford.org.uk](http://www.nightsafe-oxford.org.uk)

# she's like my mum now



## Could you be a foster carer?

There is a shortage of foster carers nationally and locally and Oxfordshire's Fostering Service is currently looking for more foster carers who are able to welcome a child or young person into their home.

If you are interested in becoming either a short-term or long-term foster carer visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) or call 01865 375515 for an information pack, or call Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Officer Helen Oliver direct on 01865 816057 for an informal chat.

**Z**oe and Jo are uniquely placed to give just the right sort of advice and support to young people in care in Oxfordshire – because both grew up in care themselves.

Now employed by the county council's Leaving Care Team, they recognise instinctively the types of doubts, fears and challenges that can confront a young person in care and they use their own skills and experience to help.

Nineteen-year-old Jo knows only too well that foster carers can make a huge difference to a child's life.

"I didn't meet my best foster carer until I was 17 but as soon as we

met we clicked – she's like my Mum now and I'm her third daughter. Foster carers allow children the stability they might not have had before – or that was once there but was then broken – and they help children to get it back."

A youngster may be placed on the fostering register because of family breakdown or loss and some will have experienced neglect and abuse.

Zoe, aged 20, explained: "When children come into care they may think they've had a normal life – even if they haven't really. For some it can take a very long time – and much care and support – to realise what a normal life is.

"Fostering can transform children's lives. If just one of the children someone fosters can go on to be happy and successful in life, then all that effort is worth it."



# good news!

Oxfordshire County Council is continuing to impress inspectors with the way it manages its finances and other resources, resulting in it being awarded an extra star by the Audit Commission.

This will now be fed into the council's overall performance rating which will be announced in February. Its current ranking is 'Good' and the council aims to become an 'Excellent' (or four star) authority as quickly as possible.

Council Leader Keith Mitchell said: "This news represents real progress for the county council. The structures that we have put in place have borne fruit. The people of Oxfordshire have

a right to expect that the council manages its finances properly and provides value for money. This ranking proves that we do.

"The news follows on from our recent positive grading from the Audit Commission in the areas of social care services for adults' and children's services. The trend is clear from these independent inspections. The county council is making huge strides."

## > firefighter award

Anne Waters, watch manager at **Deddington** fire station has been awarded the MBE for services to fire safety.



## other awards achieved in 2006



# Warming to the cause

A decade or two ago the phrases 'global warming', 'climate change' and 'carbon footprint' were almost unknown. That's all changed now...



## For more advice

- Measure your carbon footprint at [www.bestfootforward.com](http://www.bestfootforward.com)
- Thames Valley Energy Centre **0800 512012** offers information on reducing your energy use and cutting bills
- [www.carbontrust.co.uk](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk) offers businesses and secondary schools free support to reduce their energy use and cut carbon emissions
- The Oxfordshire Sustainable Business Partnership provides advice for businesses [www.oxsbp.org.uk](http://www.oxsbp.org.uk)
- [www.tvenergy.org](http://www.tvenergy.org) provides information on renewable energy

Today, against a backdrop of increasingly loud warnings from scientists and growing numbers of extreme 'weather events', there is widespread consensus that we must act now to reduce the environmental impact we are having on our planet.

In Oxfordshire alone, floods, heatwaves and drought have contributed to damage amounting to £16.4 million to the county's infrastructure in the last 10 years. And if, as predicted, weather-related incidents are going to become more frequent and severe, that bill is only going to rise.

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the main greenhouse gas responsible for climate change and we are all responsible for

emitting it through our activities at home, at work and when we travel.


The UK is the biggest energy waster in Europe. Households are throwing energy and money away by leaving appliances on standby, lights on in empty rooms, empty mobile phone chargers plugged in and by living in poorly insulated homes.

Leaving unnecessary items on standby costs each UK household an average of £37 a year!

All over Oxfordshire people and organisations are changing their habits to help tackle the problem – and cut down on needless expense.

Oxfordshire County Council is one of them. Supported by the Carbon Trust, it has committed itself to reducing its carbon footprint in an initiative called Future First.





## Six ways to reduce your carbon footprint

- 1 REDUCE YOUR USE OF ELECTRICITY
- 2 TURN DOWN YOUR HEATING BY 1 OR 2° C
- 3 TURN DOWN YOUR WATER HEATER SETTING BY 1 OR 2°C
- 4 USE WATER EFFICIENTLY
- 5 BUY LOCAL WHENEVER POSSIBLE
- 6 ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND EMPLOYER TOO

## Walking the talk...

### ...in schools

A growing number of schools across the county are adopting energy saving measures. For example, **Berinsfield** Primary School has recently introduced a micro wind turbine.



**NITA ROBERTSON** of the county council's Future First team

### ...in business

Increasing numbers of local businesses – large and small – are getting the carbon reduction

habit. Guides for Brides, a **Wantage**-based company, wrote



**ALISON HARGREAVES**  
of Guides for Brides

to 'Oxfordshire' in response to an article in our last edition, to tell us of the actions it is taking to reduce the impact of its activities on our environment. These include turning off power when possible, reducing packaging, recycling and planting trees. Director Alison Hargreaves

says: "We are not eco-warriors – just people who live and work in Oxfordshire who are using a common sense approach to this global problem."

### ...at the council

Oxfordshire County Council chairman Lesley Legge has fitted solar tubes to her roof to heat her hot water.



**LESLEY LEGGE**  
county council chairman

# Building communities together



“ Developer contributions are very important. Negotiations are often complex and detailed. However, we are persistent because

we know we must make sure infrastructure comes with developments.”

Councillor Roger Belson,  
Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet  
Member for Sustainable Development

New offices and homes are springing up all the time in Oxfordshire as the population grows and the economy goes from strength to strength.

But with most new developments comes the need for new infrastructure to support them – such as schools, roads, bus services and libraries.

Oxfordshire County Council has an impressive track record in working with the county's district councils and developers to ensure that developer contributions towards the infrastructure are secured before planning permission is given. In 2005/06 alone it secured more than £4 million of funding.

And the total secured for this year is more than double at £10 million. Some of this will go towards providing a new primary school in **Bicester** as well as other improvements to accommodate the impacts of development growth around Oxfordshire.





# Keeping us moving



Oxfordshire has been given £62 million to improve travel in the county and tackle road and rail bottlenecks on the approaches to Oxford.

The money, which will be available from 2013, will be spent on various transport projects. It is hoped other funding sources could take the total transport improvement allocation up to around £88 million over the next 8-10 years. Councillor David Robertson, the county council's Cabinet Member for Transport, said: "Competition

across the South East for this money has been fierce so it's tremendous news that we have been successful. It means we can make transport improvement plans in the certain knowledge that we have a large sum of money coming our way to tackle some of Oxfordshire's worst transport problems."

## Some planned improvements



### A34

Installing an advanced traffic management system on the A34 through central Oxfordshire that links into Oxford's main roads.



### Oxford ring road

Junction improvements and bus priority measures on the links between the A34 and the Oxford ring road at **Wolvercote**, **Pear Tree**, **Cuttleslowe** and **Hinksey Hill**.



### Bicester

Enhancements to rail services between **Bicester** and **Oxford**, as well as improvements at **Oxford** station, that may include a new platform.

# great days, good pay

Stereotypes are hard to shift and many people think that social care is all about cleaning up after other people for very low pay. Well, they're wrong...

And now Oxfordshire County Council is backing a three-part scheme designed to sweep away the myths and introduce more young people to the realities of what can be a rewarding and fascinating career.

- A trained team of young social care workers, mostly aged 19-30, are acting as care ambassadors to promote social care as a career among young people in schools and colleges.
- Interested students are being invited to try a fortnight's work experience in social care.
- School-leavers with an aptitude for supporting people may apply for an apprenticeship if they are aged 16-18, whether or not they have qualifications.

The process takes 12-18 months and, through a combination of work and study, leads to an apprenticeship qualification that includes an NVQ in Social Care Level 2.

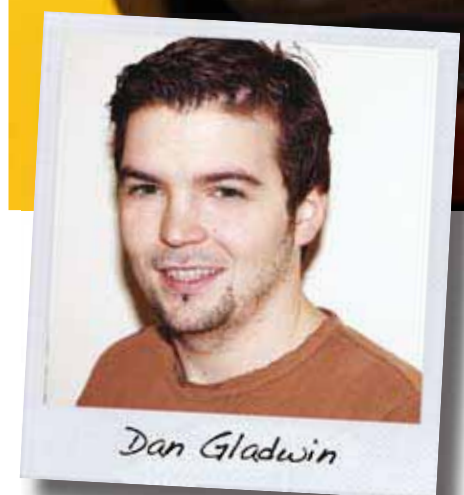


**Name:** Rebecca Stone

**Age:** 17

**Job:** Social Care Apprentice

“ It's a great bridge between leaving school and starting work. I get to help, support and encourage other people. I've met lots of wonderful people, learnt new skills, broadened my knowledge, overcome challenges and made new friends. On top of that I am fulfilling my aspirations. ”

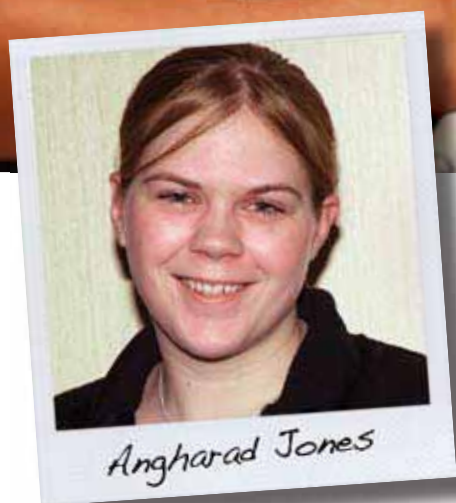


**Name:** Dan Gladwin

**Job:** Support Worker for adults with learning disabilities

“ It's a job that enables you to grow, develop your self-confidence and learn a lot of skills. You don't need qualifications, so it doesn't matter if you're not academic, but you get to go on a lot of useful courses. More young, dynamic people should try social care. ”





**Name:** Angharad Jones  
**Job:** Assistant Project Worker at a residential centre for disabled children

“ I always wanted to look after children. Every day is different. People don't realise how much satisfaction you get from seeing a child's face light up when you walk into the room. The money's good too - I get more than a lot of my friends. ”



**Name:** Sally Ruddle  
**Job:** Home Support Manager for adults

“ I love helping people and giving them as good a life as possible. You only have to do a very little to make a huge difference to someone's life. Social work also opens many doors for personal development. I now have management qualifications and have started a degree in social work. ”

### Social Care - a job for you?

Many social care workers start as care assistants with or without qualifications. Some progress into management or wider social work, while others branch out into related areas such as nursing, occupational therapy and special needs teaching. To find out more about a career in social care contact Helen Hannay on 01865 854447.

The apprenticeship scheme is currently fully subscribed. Any new apprenticeships will be publicised in the media and on the county council website: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

# Have you mastered the three Rs?

Reduce.Reuse.Recycle.  
It makes perfect economic and environmental sense.

In historical terms the "throwaway" society is a new phenomenon. Until comparatively recently empty bottles were returned to shops for a small deposit and people carried their own shopping bags. Things were used to their maximum potential.

Today the opportunities to recycle are greater than ever – and people are being encouraged to make full use of them. Adding to the global rubbish mountain is no longer an acceptable option, because landfill sites emit high levels of greenhouse gases.

So when you've finished with something - recycle it.  
Did you know recycling a drinks can uses just five per cent of the energy that it takes to make a new one?

## For inspiration

[www.whatyoucando.co.uk](http://www.whatyoucando.co.uk)  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste)  
[www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com)  
[www.wastewatch.org.uk](http://www.wastewatch.org.uk)  
[www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk)



## top tips...

- 1 Compost your kitchen and garden waste at home.** Compost bins can be bought at a reduced rate by phoning 0845 0770757.
- 2 Use your local recycling schemes.** Most people can now recycle glass, tins, plastics, cardboard and paper from the doorstep. And recycling centres and many supermarkets take shoes, clothes and a whole lot more. Visit [recyclenow.com](http://recyclenow.com)
- 3 When you're de-cluttering your house, why not attend a Swapshop or donate your things to a charity shop or jumble sale?** To find out where you nearest Swapshop is contact 01865 815871







## Coming soon to a recycling bin near you



In the next 18 months an exciting new recycling campaign will unfold across Oxfordshire.

Keep your eyes peeled for your local recycling officers out and about at special events. Look on your doormat for information about your kerbside collection scheme. Watch out for more bus and taxi adverts that show you how easy it is to recycle. Talk to recycling advisers at your local waste recycling centre. Join in our special Recycle Month, packed full of events and competitions, in June. And, if you are a new resident, we will have information just for you!

Oxfordshire's councils will be working together to increase recycling across Oxfordshire and show residents how easy it is to recycle. The campaign, funded by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), is the result of a successful bid by the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership for government money.

If you want to find out more visit our website [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste)

or email [hannah.moser@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.moser@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or [www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk)

#### 4 Use reusable shopping bags.

The average shopping bag is only used for 20 minutes before it is thrown away. For a free reusable bag and waste reduction pack call Oxfordshire County Council on 08450 50 45 50.



Join us and...

 **recycle**  
for Oxfordshire

# Roadworks! Argh?

**R**oadworks is a word that strikes dismay into most hearts. However, the people who work to keep Oxfordshire's road network running would argue that the words 'gridlock', 'blackspot' and 'pothole' are equally unappealing – and you can't hope to tackle these evils without maintaining a vigorous annual programme of roadwork schemes across the county.



And with traffic on our roads predicted to soar still higher, the pressure for road improvements will not diminish, but grow.

Steve Howell, Oxfordshire's transport head, said: "I'm the man to blame for all the roadworks. But I would feel far more guilty if I wasn't trying to respond to the challenges.



"The facts are pretty simple. If we don't repair roads they wear out. Layouts need changing to manage increasing amounts of traffic. Parts of the network are accident blackspots and need improving. I could go on...

"I don't have a magic wand to clear Oxfordshire of its road problems once and for all, any more than my colleagues in other parts of the country do. We just hope people will try to understand the many pressures that arise.

"There is seldom a road scheme that meets with everyone's approval, because people have conflicting needs and expectations but we do our utmost to provide the best solution."

For online information about roadworks across Oxfordshire visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/roadworks](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/roadworks)

## Recent major works...

- The **Headington** roundabout
- The **Oxford** Eastern Bypass barrier
- A40 **Oxford** Northern Bypass - eastbound and westbound
- **Banbury** Bretch Hill Premium Bus Route
- **Banbury** Daventry Road/Middleton Road traffic signals
- A420 **Shrivenham** Bypass maintenance
- Transport strategies in **Oxford**, **Abingdon** and **Henley** town centres



There are many people who will tell you with feeling that trying to get on to the housing ladder is like a game of snakes and ladders – with far more snakes than ladders!

Those who live in places like Oxfordshire are particularly likely to think this – and who can blame them when they read in the newspapers that the average property price in this county is more than £250,000?

So is there anything they can do to give themselves a leg up into the world of property ownership?

Dawn Pettis is Oxfordshire County Council's Economic Development and Housing Programme Manager.

"Part of the problem is that people set off with negative thoughts because they are told so often that prices are

# More snakes than housing ladders?



high. However, Oxfordshire has a significant number of very expensive houses that artificially inflate the house price 'average'.

"There are, in fact, many good, lower-priced houses to be found. People should not give up looking because it's not a lost cause. This is particularly the case if people want to buy a flat. They are coming on the market all the time and they are often more affordable.

"Having said that there is no question that buying a new house can be very difficult, particularly in the current climate of booming property prices and we sympathise with people's concerns. But our message is don't give up! There may be more possibilities out there than you think."

## help for key workers

Catalyst Housing Association has two schemes aimed at key workers, such as nurses, firefighters, teachers etc or people who are identified as being in housing need because they are on a housing register.

**Open Market Home Buy:** you can get a loan of up to £50,000 to help you purchase a home.

**New build home buy:** you can buy a new house built by a housing association on a shared ownership basis.

**For more information call 0845 6017729 or visit [www.homebuy.org.uk](http://www.homebuy.org.uk)**

# Ten Questions

We talk to **Sheila Kitzinger**, famous for her books on childbirth



## Born?

Taunton, Somerset

## Family?

One brother, David, who was younger than me and went on to become editor of Panorama. My mother, Clare, had been a midwife, and my father, Alec, was a tailor who sold tweed from Scotland, where his family was based. He had a lot of common sense and was a stabilising influence in our lives.

## Earliest memories?

I have early memories of going on marches with my mother, who was a pacifist and a feminist. They were protests against war – this was before the second Great War.

## Home life?

A lot of very well known people came to stay or to eat, particularly politicians and people in the peace

movement. We also had people from overseas. Zoe Oldenburg was a White Russian novelist who had fled when the Communists took over. She shared my bedroom and told me stories.

## School?

My mother founded one of the first birth control clinics in the country. I remember going from school to the clinic and seeing women coming out rather furtively with little parcels in brown paper.

## Birthday parties?

It must have been my eighth birthday – there was a lot of unemployment. My mother picked up the whole queue outside the job centre, including street musicians, and brought them all back to play at my birthday party. We sat around eating jelly and ice-cream.

## Favourite books?

Little Women and Jo's Boys, by Louisa May Alcott. Jo was a hero of mine.

## Religion?

My family were Unitarians and I became a lay preacher in my teens. I thought of training for the Unitarian ministry. Either that or acting – or, as it turned out, psychology or social anthropology.

## Saturday job?

Nothing paid, but I did voluntary work in the local hospital, working on the men's surgical wards.

## Biggest influence?

My mother's influence was very strong. She was really keen on women finding out about their sexual health and fertility. She was also immensely independent. During the Second World War she used to invite a group of German musicians from the nearby prisoner of war camp. I think some people probably despised her, while others respected her but thought it was dangerous. I've probably inherited a lot of her character.



# Wind in the willows!



## Win a family ticket to the Wind in the Willows Exhibition at the River and Rowing Museum.

Answer these questions and send them to the Editor, Oxfordshire Magazine, County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND or email [magazine@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:magazine@oxfordshire.gov.uk) by 2 March. The winning entry will be picked by council Chairman Lesley Legge.

The River & Rowing Museum in **Henley-on-Thames** has three main themes represented by major permanent galleries: the non-tidal River Thames, the international sport of rowing and the town of **Henley-on-Thames**. It also now has a wonderful permanent exhibition that recreates the characters in *The Wind in the Willows*.

## last issue's answers



(from left to right)

- 1 Winston Churchill
- 2 Philip Pulman
- 3 Agatha Christie
- 4 Emma Watson
- 5 Lord Nuffield
- 6 Pam Ayres
- 7 William Morris
- 8 Mathew Pinsent
- 9 Charles I

Congratulations to Mrs Madeleine Pinney from **Stonesfield** who won the competition and went to see *Mother Goose* at The Theatre **Chipping Norton**. She is pictured here receiving her prize from Council Chairman Lesley Legge.



- 1 What was Mole doing when he decided to explore the wide world?  
.....
- 2 Where is Badger's house located?  
.....
- 3 Why was Mr Toad sent to prison?  
.....
- 4 When Mr Toad escaped from prison, what did he disguise himself as?  
.....
- 5 Which animals take over Toad Hall while Mr Toad is away?  
.....
- 6 Which school did Kenneth Grahame go to?  
.....
- 7 Where in Oxford is Kenneth Grahame buried?  
.....
- 8 The Wind in the Willows is a permanent attraction at which Oxfordshire museum?  
.....

Your name: .....

Address and telephone: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

# my favourite walk

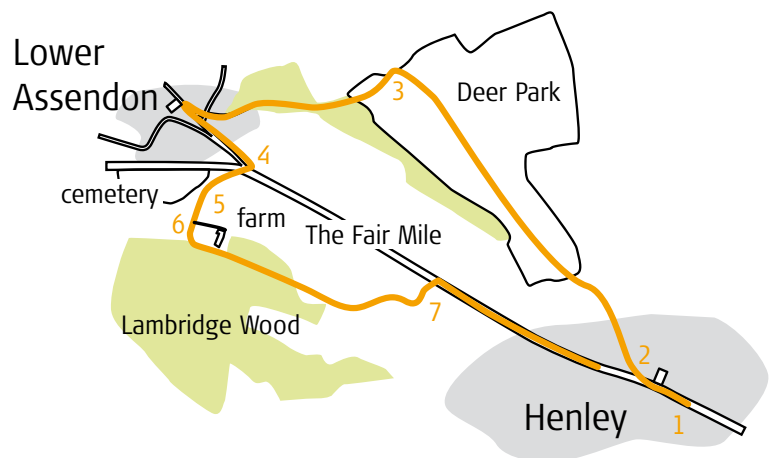


**PAUL HARRIS, THE COUNTY ACCESS OFFICER, SHARES ONE OF HIS FAVOURITE WALKS - A GREAT WAY TO ENJOY THE CHILTERN HILLS**



## The route

- 1** From Henley, follow the signs for **Marlow/ Nettlebed** and walk along the Fair Mile (A4130) to the Old White Horse pub.
- 2** Just after the pub, turn right and follow the enclosed path up the hill, then keep on for about one mile through the deer park and farmland to a kissing gate by a lane.
- 3** At the kissing gate turn left and follow the bridleway through the woodland and then on to a track down to **Lower Assendon**.
- 4** Head towards the main road and, crossing carefully, head for the bridleway opposite.
- 5** Walk up to the top of the steep hill, past the cemetery and farm track.
- 6** Turn left where white arrows are painted on the tree and follow the bridleway through the woods down to the bottom of the hill to the road below.
- 7** Turn left to get to the A4130/Fair Mile and then turn right to follow the road back to **Henley**



## Walk facts

**Distance:** 3.7 miles (6km) **Time:** About two hours

**Terrain:** Sometimes steep and slippery

**Public Transport:** Thames Travel 01491 874216 or [www.busbook.co.uk](http://www.busbook.co.uk)

This is walk number 4 of 13 in the "Walks around Henley" book, price £3.25 + postage. Call 01865 810226, or visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/walksandrides](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/walksandrides)

**Do you have a favourite Oxfordshire countryside walk that you would like the rest of us to know about?** If so, write to us using no more than 300 words and post to: My Favourite Walk, Communications and Marketing Unit, Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND.





# what's on in early 2007

## The Oxfordshire Record Office, Cowley

**MARCH: 'Women in Black'** by Oxford Women for Peace & Justice. Free exhibition.

Record Office opens 9am to 5pm Wednesday to Saturday most weeks. Closed Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. **Call 01865 398200.**

## The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury

**10 MARCH: 19th Banbury Blues Festival.** Intimate line-up for the afternoon festival; evening boasts some of the best UK performers and notable visitors from overseas. Prices vary.

**3-21 APRIL: Designs for Life exhibition.** Foyer Gallery and display cabinet. Unique science/art project showing pieces of textile art inspired by biomedical images such as viruses and cells.

**7 APRIL: UK Guns N' Roses (tribute band).** £10 in advance/£12 on the door, standing event. **Call 01295 252050.**

## Cogges Manor Farm Museum, Witney

**Call 01993 772602.**

## Oxfordshire Studies, Central Library, Westgate Centre Oxford

Find out more about your local and family history. Printed and electronic

resources and important collections of maps, photos and oral history tapes. Opening hours: Monday, Friday and Saturday 9am to 5pm; Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 7pm; Wednesday and Sunday closed. **Call 01865 815749.**

## Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock

**UNTIL 25 FEBRUARY: The Witney Blanket Story.** Exhibition of photographs, memorabilia and blankets.

**12-16 FEBRUARY: Children's half-term activities.** Free family drop-ins; Kids' Club activities for 8-12-year-olds **Call 01993 814115.**

**7 MARCH: Nature Photography, Oxfordshire and Beyond.** Lecture by Mike Amphlett, 7.30pm. Friends of Oxfordshire Museum free; visitors £2.

**UNTIL 25 MARCH: Living Waterways.** Family-friendly interactive exploration of life on canals and waterways. **Call 01993 814103.**

## Music Service

**9 MARCH: Muir Mathieson Young Soloists' Competition.** 7.30pm, Bayards Hill School, Oxford. Free concert. Final year students play a movement from a concerto.

**23 MARCH: Rock and Pop Festival** Local bands at the Centre for Music.

7pm: Bayards Hill School, Oxford. Tickets in advance or on door.

**24 MARCH: World Music Workshop.** Introduction to music from Africa, Brazil and the Caribbean. No experience needed. Workshop followed by short informal concert at 5pm. Adults and children aged 7+. Booking essential. £12. 2pm to 6pm: Bayards Hill School, Oxford.

**Contact Jo Hammond for details and booking forms. Call 01865 740006 or email jo.hammond@oxfordshire.gov.uk**

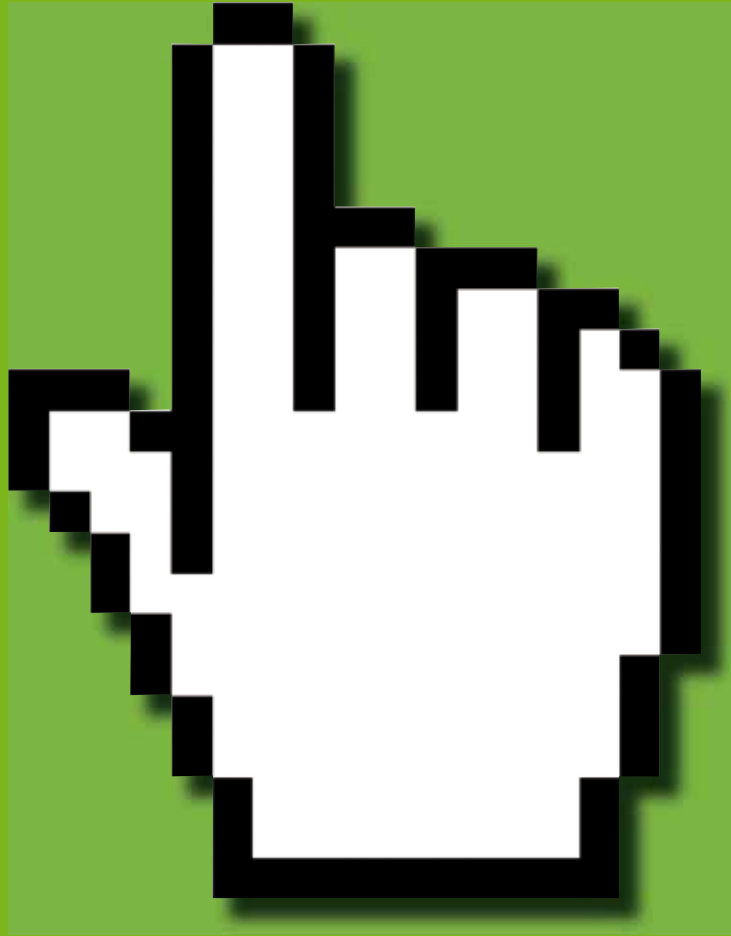
## Unlocked – Oxford Castle

**22 MARCH:**

**The Wesleys in Oxford.** How John and Charles Wesley's visits to Oxford Prison influenced their vision of Christianity. Lecture by Peter Forsaith of The Wesley Centre. £5. 2.30pm to 4pm.

**17 APRIL: Punished with the Knife – the dissection of criminals in the 18th century.** Simon Chaplin, Senior Curator at the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, shares some fascinating insights into the world of anatomy, medicine and crime in the Age of Enlightenment. £5. 6pm to 7.30pm.

**Call 01865 260668 or visit [www.oxfordcastleunlocked.co.uk](http://www.oxfordcastleunlocked.co.uk)**



# the website for oxfordshire

check bus times...check roadworks...find  
evening courses...find recycling centres...  
plan your wedding...renew your library  
books...report graffiti...report broken  
streetlights...find historical photographs...

**[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)**