

Bulletin 15 County Councillor Andy Graham Reports on the work happening in the Woodstock Division-November

I cannot believe that 6 months has now passed since I was elected, and I have learnt so much from the 10 parishes I represent and the excellent community initiatives that have been going on some for many years. So, thank you for helping me to facilitate and get the extra help needed.

Here's a break down of what is happening across the division and some of the work I have been doing starting with one of the smallest parishes, Kiddington.

Kiddington

Work on the small stretch of the A44 to improve safety by highlighting the speed reduction on existing signs will begin shortly. The speed from 50mph to 40 mph is often ignored and makes crossing the A44 from the bus stop to the village pretty scary. This will help to alert drivers to their responsibilities and may be enforced with mobile police enforcement.

An accident with a young horse rider and a speeding van through the village (who did not stop) happened in the last 2 weeks. Residents with highways officers met on site and as a result are drawing up the reducing 30 mph to 20 mph scheme.

In addition, we are investigating the flooding solutions for that part of the village which has been happening for years and an engineer is due out in December.

Bladon

Pleased that the work of 30mph to 20 mph scheme has been endorsed by the parish council and that officers are preparing the draft scheme for consideration.

Woodstock

Car parking scheme/solution has been presented to the town council and agreed in principle and will be ready to go to public consultation shortly. West Oxfordshire District Council met with me and OCC officers and have agreed to go to public consultation too and I have met with Blenheim who positively responded.

A timeline, financial costings, issues of enforcement and the public consultation process is being finalised so that we get the best solution for Woodstock residents, businesses and visitors. A massive thanks to OCC officers who have visually prepared the plans and the residents who have emailed together with the work of Woodstock Traffic Advisory Group for their valuable contributions.

The 30 mph to 20 mph scheme will be done building on the pedestrian safety work completed for the A44 and this is currently being costed.

The revised plans for the Banbury Road development have just been submitted and residents and interested groups who I had the pleasure of meeting recently such as Sustainable Old Woodstock are encouraging everyone to make your views known. So go to West Oxfordshire District Council website, planning applications and type in Banbury Road and the documents can be viewed as soon as possible.(I will be making my comments public shortly.

Whilst this is a West Oxfordshire Planning decision the County is consulted on issues related to highways, schooling and infrastructure matters and I will be making my comments known shortly.

The issues of the bridge at the Black Prince and essential repairs is now being scheduled to take place and some remedial work has been carried out.

The issue of a new upgraded health centre is being moved forward having raised it at a HOSC meeting this week and with senior officers at OCC where it has been agreed to fund a feasibility study in partnership with WODC and Blenheim to look at the options for Hensington Road. A further meeting is scheduled with Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and key stakeholders next month.

A central location is a priority. (Cllrs Cooper and Poskitt have and continued to work on this) and the need for a more permanent solution for the library is being examined and I have written to the Cabinet Member Neil Fawcett responsible for libraries and heritage to ask that this is prioritised.

Stonesfield

The Stonesfield Parish Council with the partnership support of the SAFER group and OCC officers had the 30 mph to 20 mph scheme approved a few weeks ago and I believe the scheme is now going to be implemented within the next few months. A real partnership in action and I was pleased to play my small part in supporting what most of the village had been working on for sometime. Congratulations to making our villages safer!

Both Cllr Parkinson and I have been giving some considerable attention to the development in the Farley Lane/Davis Close area ensuring planning conditions are being met and enforced. We have met with residents and we are expecting this to be more effectively actioned.

Building in our villages has to be planned carefully to meet the needs of a growing community with appropriate sized dwellings giving also due attention to the AONB.

Combe

Reducing Speed Scheme is now almost finalised and costed and I expect subject to this being agreed by the parish to be scheduled for implementation in the new year.

A resident who has much experience in archaeological digs believes there is evidence of remains of a Roman settlement. He plans to have some work to determine this and I will be using some of my priority fund to support the costs of some excavation work subject to funding from other sources being found. This could be significant and deserves support.

Wootton

Although there is no reducing speed scheme in the village, this will be addressed at the January meeting of the parish council when a decision may be taken. Residents may wish to contact me or parish councillors to make their views known.

Regarding the public footpath closure: The site has been re-inspected by the specialist contractor, and they have outlined a minimum of 3 actions which need to be carried out before the bridleway re-opened. One of these action points is to install a 57m section of fencing alongside the bridleway.

We are aware of the implications of this bridleway remaining closed and are aiming to have it reopened next month.

Tackley

Work regarding flooding mitigation continues with meetings with highways continuing with the parish council and landowners. Next site meeting, I will be attending to agree actions: 30th November. Some work on the retention basin and the clearing of gully's have already been carried out.

The Bartons

Happy to report that I have secured the funding of Section 106 money to contribute to the reducing speed scheme 30mph to 20 mph. This will significantly support a more permanent solution to the speeding traffic along this busy road and give priority to safety and particularly the impact it has had on so many residents.

This is a priority and officers have been working with the speed watch group and the parish council in drawing up the scheme. Awaiting costs before deciding how best to implement within a reasonable time frame. Another example of community engagement with an enormous voluntary effort. I will be officially endorsing my support for this excellent community work.

The work done in clearing the river Dorn has been a herculean communal effort and I have escalated the requests for OCC this week to clearing the silt, soil and growing vegetation in Mill Lane either side of The Dorn to complete this important work.

The Homes to Schools policy is being reviewed and a deep dive into the issues will be undertaken and is currently being programmed as it affects many children and parents in the village particularly those who are put in the difficult position of losing their free schools entitlements because of not choosing their closest school as first preference. There are also mapping/route issues and having sufficient capacity to get children to school. Once dates have been set for this, I will be calling on residents who have contacted me to verify the issues so we can make some headway in finding a solution.

Sandford St Martin

Finally, we are reaching a conclusion to the flooding mitigation measures needed in the centre of the village where flooding has been taking place and we are expecting the final works to be undertaken in January/February 2022. Thanks again to the landowners partnering up to make this happen and the officers at OCC who I brought into solving this problem. It will make a significant difference to the lives of people who have been affected by this in the past.

Cllr Andy Graham- Proud to be Working in Partnership with our communities.