

ED VAIZEY WRITES...

As some of you may know I was appointed Shadow Culture spokesman for the Conservatives towards the end of last year. This means that, in addition to my constituency duties, I speak for the Conservatives on a huge range of issues. These include the BBC, broadcasting in general, digital switchover, museums and galleries, libraries, music, theatre and film.

One of the reasons I love representing Wantage & Didcot is that so much that happens locally is relevant to the national debate, be it science or business or many other issues. The arts are no different. We have a thriving arts scene, and this year, 2007, when we celebrate Oxfordshire's millennium, the arts will be to the fore. Faringdon and Wantage both have hugely successful art festivals; Wantage and Wallingford have great museums; Wallingford has two great music festivals; Didcot will be getting its very own arts centre and cinema shortly. We have many local artists and highly successful brass bands and choirs. I have only scratched the surface here, which just goes to show how much is going on.

It is not all rosy of course - the closure of the Wantage cinema is a reminder that cultural resources are always under threat. I would be very happy to hear from anyone who has something to say about the arts or broadcasting, and how they think Government policy can develop.

Up to date news can be found at www.vaizey.com from which you can also go to my blog.

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage (Con)

see page 5 for contact details and surgery dates.

Criminal Damage Marcham Area since 1/4/6

As the Sergeant responsible for the Rural Abingdon Neighbourhood Team which covers Marcham and District, I review the criminal damage reports made to Thames Valley Police on a weekly basis. The purpose of this is to ensure every victim of criminal damage is contacted by a member of the Team, either the Beat Officer, Paul Reece, or our Police Community Support Officer, Nicky Beltran. Some residents may also have seen me conducting door to door enquiries after a spate of damage caused to cars in the village in July.

A lot of the damage is mindless, undirected vandalism which serves to upset the victims, cause an unexpected financial hardship and lowers the tone of the village in general. It makes people feel less safe within their community which is not something we can allow to continue. I would like to wave a magic wand and increase police presence dramatically but we live in the real world ... with a full Team I can direct my resources to areas of need but Sod's Law states that when we are looking in one area, the hooligans are active in another.

Examples of the damage caused, mostly to parked vehicles include

- *Cars being scratched in various parts of Marcham*
- *Wing mirrors being knocked off parked vehicles*
- *Dents in the roof or body panels from kicks, or people running over the vehicle.*

To help me and my Team reduce the amount of damage being caused within your Community I would like to remind you that you can contact us via the telephone number below, or directly on the email address which follows. We would like to hear about anyone you have seen, or know has caused any such damage in the village. We would still need to secure evidence if we wish to convict those responsible but you may be able to give us some direction on who to watch.

All information will be treated with the strictest confidence, however, please remember the **Crimestoppers** number is also available: **0800 555 111**. This is a confidential service run as a charity which ensures confidentiality if this is seen as a hurdle to communicating with the Police. Please remember to use the Enquiry Line to report any crimes or incidents that need police

If you represent a local group, let us know your point of view

attendance as soon as possible.

I look forward to hearing from you, one way or another....

PS 862 DARREN PRICE

Thames Valley Police

Marcham and District Beat Officer: PC 5193 Paul Reece

Police Community Support Officer: Nicky Beltran

Enquiry Line: 08458 505 505 (voicemail available)

Email: ruralabingdon@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP – NAG

At the recent meeting of NAG7, Malcolm Denton was elected as Chair of the group and Meriel Lewis as the Note-taker.

You can contact NAG by email to ruralabingdon@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk which is monitored by the police members of NAG or to editor@madnews.co.uk, or you can contact Malcolm on 01865 391497.

MERIEL LEWIS



Packhorse Lane Action Group for Safety NEWS UPDATE

Dear Readers

We do hope you had a very good Christmas and all the best for 2007.

PLAGS hopes that this might be the year that we hear some good news from the OCC Highways about what can be done regarding the dangerous bends and cross-roads on the A415, at the centre of our village.

You may or may not be aware that Try Homes' planning permission for the Timber Yard area was turned down by the Vale in November 06. Doubtless Try Homes will resubmit plans or challenge the decision but our focus is not to oppose them. The Vale and OCC Highways will now have more time to assess and hopefully discuss with Try Homes, how the purchase of a very narrow strip of this land might help widen some of the road between the bends. We are hoping this will allow a single pavement (on the north edge of the A415) to be built from the Baptist Church to the Pub. Then only the most westerly bend and cross-roads would need to have traffic lights controlling the flow and allowing pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to safely navigate both these dangerous areas and improving safety for North Street and Mill Road.

We know people will be concerned about the possible long lines of stationary vehicles caused by the traffic lights but we hope that they would work efficiently unlike the recent ones in operation at the end of November (at the junction with Howard Cornish Rd) these were obviously malfunctioning on a regular basis!! We believe that this would mean that vehicles would no longer get wedged, damage property and other vehicles (and people!) and allow rescue services reassurance that they will at least get through.

Thank you to all who have completed and returned our questionnaire and for their support and encouragement. With more houses due to be built to the south of Marcham and possible more within the village itself the bends and cross-roads need to be made safer.

Our aim has always been to try and protect all types of users and secure a safer option for the bends and cross-roads. We are always grateful for the continuing support and hard work done by Jane Hanna (DC), Iain Brown (CC) and Steve Howell (OCC Highways).

SALLY TIMBERLAKE

On behalf of PLAGS

