

COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORT

A new classroom is to be built at the school and will be called Phase 2, as Phase 1 was completed and paid for by school funds. OCC have agreed to fully fund the building element in the Phase 2 project. It will be a tight schedule to get this built by September 2009, but OCC officers and the Headteacher are committed to do their best. I will press OCC planning and Regulation Committee to pass these plans as soon as they are available to OCC officers.

As far as other plans for houses or whatever else speculators may believe is good for the future of the school, for the foreseeable future - the next five years or so - the school will be expanded as needed for the growth within the catchment area.

This should ensure that OCC stays true to its aspirations of sustainable transport options within the "Better Ways to School" strategy which encourages walking and cycling to school, and hopefully not driving miles to another school by car! Marcham is blessed with a growing young population, and deserves a growing school with the facilities needed for the future, I hope I can help deliver this worthwhile project for Marcham.

The plans for sand extraction at Upwood Park may come before the Planning and Regulation Committee at OCC on November 24th, unless they are delayed for reports from technical and ecological experts. As far as the proposed site entrance goes, I am concerned by the addition of up to 80 heavy lorries per day entering and leaving the A338 at the access opposite The Ride. The road is not, as some might suggest, straight, but it is a fast piece of de-restricted road at that point. Should this proposal by Hills Aggregates be approved, I will press OCC officers to insist on another entrance be used off the A420 instead, and failing that, speed limits be lowered on the A338 from the A420 down to Frilford.

With the economic situation across the financial world looking less than settled for the next few years, the financial settlement from central government to OCC may be less than generous again this year. Although this may turn out to be the case, I am pressing OCC to repeat the grant to causes and projects that support our military personnel and their families in this County.

Last year, OCC granted £100k to a fund that was distributed by Brigadier Miles Wade to the various establishments in Oxfordshire. £20k was allocated to the Community Centre at Dalton Barracks, and at Easter the Army kindly hosted an open day to celebrate the completed works. Hopefully, funds permitting, another grant for this section of our community, that are often overlooked and undervalued, can be awarded. With remembrance day approaching, this provides all of us with another opportunity to show our support to our servicemen and women and their families.

CLLR IAIN BROWN

Tel: 01235 751210 Email: iainbrownconservatives@yahoo.co.uk
Janus, Westcot Lane, Sparsholt, Wantage, Oxon OX12 9PZ.

ED VAIZEY WRITES...

I have had a busy start to the new parliamentary term. Despite the credit crunch - more of which later - there have been a number of debates on issues that fall within my portfolio.

The very first session in Parliament was culture questions, and I raised the issue of world heritage sites. We have 27 in this country, and amazingly 7 are threatened with blacklisting by the international cultural organisation, UNESCO, including Westminster itself. Westminster and the Tower of London are at risk from a series of tall buildings that are planned for London, which would wreck London's historic skyline. I am pushing the Government to turn down these applications and have a proper policy in place to protect world heritage sites.

We also debated digital switchover recently. This is a huge scheme to convert all our television signals to digital, so that by 2012 you will have to have a digital television or a freeview box to watch telly. The scheme won't be coming to our part of the

November 2008

world for a while, but it is important to get it right as it is already underway.

Finally we had a debate on the BBC licence fee. Every so often, an MP suggests it should be abolished, and this provides an opportunity to debate the whole BBC and have fun at its expense. As far as I am concerned, we need the BBC now more than ever, and provided the licence fee is kept at affordable levels, and the BBC does not overextend its remit, there is no reason why the BBC cannot continue in its present form.

Affordable is a word that is important these days. We are in the middle of the credit crunch, and a looming recession. I have already had constituents contact me concerning their savings in Icelandic banks, and am doing all I can to help. Our part of the world has a concentration of small hi-tech businesses, and I hope that their specialist nature means that they will be able to see through the recession as well as possible. I am always available to speak with or meet constituents facing difficulties.

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage (Con)

CALOR OXFORDSHIRE VILLAGE OF THE YEAR 2008

Marcham didn't quite make it to the national finals this year, but was presented with £100 in recognition of Care and Consideration for Village Residents for our Parishioner of the Year Award and Affordable Housing Development - see the certificate on the cover. Chris Ricketts and I went to collect this and the cheque at the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council AGM at Steeple Aston (last year's winner) in October.

For more details about the competition go to <http://www.calorvillageoftheyear.org/england/index.htm>

MERIEL LEWIS

If you'd like to see your writing in MADNews, contact the Editor on 01865 391725

The Cat

Aloof and superior is the cat
With a haughty and inscrutable
stare,
Sleek and sinuous, or fluffy and fat
She sleeps in the sun or in your
best chair.

She might condescend to sit on
your lap,
Contentedly purring, gentle and
warm,
Or curl up on the hearth to take a
nap -
A sleeping cat brings a feeling of
calm.

She'll play, if you like, with a
rubber mouse,
Or kill one maybe with her cruel claws,
And present it to you within the house,
And then fastidiously wash her paws.

Do you own a cat? You think that you do,
I'm afraid you will find the cat owns you!

