**REPORT TO FARINGDON DIVISION (Buckland, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gainfield, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth, Lt Coxwell) JANUARY 2018**

**FROM CLLR Judith Heathcoat**

**GENERAL OCC REPORT AND FARINGDON DIVISION**

**COUNCIL PROPOSES FUTURE BUDGET FROM A RESILIENT POSITION**

OCC is planning to set a new budget having made difficult choices in previous years to manage a combination of squeezed budgets and the fact that more people need council services. Since 2010 the council has managed reductions in finances available at the same time as rises in demand for services – especially in children’s social care and adult social care. At the same time the council has in recent years been involving communities ever more in services for their locality – ranging from support for older people and those with learning disabilities to library volunteers. The net result is that the council’s finances are in a resilient position looking ahead to the 2018/19 financial year and planning for years up to 2022. The council has used its agreed vision for the future – supporting thriving people, a thriving economy and thriving communities – as the basis on which proposals have been made for the 2018/19 financial year and the plan for the three financial years which follow. Although proposed budget changes are not as extensive as in many previous years since 2010, like any organisation the council still has rising financial pressures that need to be matched by new savings so that a balanced budget can be proposed. At the time of writing, plans are based on a Council Tax rise of 4.99% (1.99% referendum limit plus 3% social care precept). However, in December, Central Government announced councils could add an additional 1%, should they so choose. This is currently under consideration. The Budget is to be approved by Cabinet, then Full Council on February 13th. The Budget consultation can be found here: https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Budget\_1819/consultationHome

**CRIMINALS TARGET PUBS AND CLUBS TO PEDDLE ILLEGAL TOBACCO**

I have mentioned at various Parish Council meetings that Trading Standards who sit within my Cabinet Portfolio are warning licensees and pub-goers to be on-the-look-out for criminals selling smuggled and counterfeit cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco. I have undertaken television interviews to highlight this illegal trading. The call for vigilance follows recent research revealing that nearly half (43%) of illegal tobacco customers use pubs and clubs as their main source of supply. Cheap illegal tobacco is attractive to some smokers because it is often sold at half the price of the legal equivalent but its availability helps children to start smoking, brings communities into contact with organised criminals and undermines legitimate local businesses. In October figures released showed illegal tobacco made up 15% of all cigarettes and 28% of hand-rolling tobacco smoked in the UK. Taxpayers lost around £2.5 billion from the illicit trade in 2016-17. This money, could be used to fund over 50,000 new NHS nurses for a year. Anyone with information relating to illegal tobacco being bought or sold, can report this to Trading Standards by anonymously via the Illegal Tobacco Hotline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 0300 999 6 999 or online at http://www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk/

**1 MILLION TONNES OF RUBBISH TRANSFORMED INTO ENERGY AT ARDLEY PLANT**

OCC and its partner Viridor have marked the one millionth tonne of residual waste received at Ardley during December. The Ardley plant converts waste into electricity, rather than burying it in landfill. It produces enough energy to power 38,000 homes and can export up to 27MW per hour of electricity to the grid.

**SNOW GUIDE**

December saw substantial snowfall across the county. OCC has produced a useful guide for snow clearance and a copy is attached to this report.

December has, as always been a busy month at County Hall and, also of course within the Faringdon Division. I held my Divisional Surgery on 2nd December in the Faringdon Library and my next surgery this New Year will be on Saturday, 3rd February from 1000-1130hrs. There have been Christmas Fayres raising funds for local communities across the Division and I tried to attend most. I have undertaken 3 TV interviews to raise awareness to stop “**CRIMINALS TARGETTING PUBS AND CLUBS TO PEDDLE ILLEGAL TOBACCO”.** I have met officers in Faringdon to “walk the town” and to undertake a “RECCE” on the state of the pavements around the market centre which was also discussed at the Faringdon Traffic Advisory Committee Meeting which I chair. I have during the last 6 weeks visited fire stations in the county to meet with Fire Fighters and their “Watches” to listen to concerns they may have and to discuss present work programmes and reviews that are taking place – the most important being the recent recruitment campaign for firefighter recruitment. My workload at County Hall has as always been diverse ranging from briefings on the County’s Equality Policy and the Chairing of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee which is split into two parts, Part I where the tri-service control room is the main subject of discussion and at part II the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and Deputy Police Constable are invited to be present – this is where discussion takes place on the Collaboration work currently being undertaken between the fire services of Oxfordshire/Berkshire and Buckinghamshire with Thames Valley Police with regard to the Police and Crime Act.

This last 12-months have been challenging but, I have enjoyed these challenges and it seems incredible that I have now been Deputy Leader since May 2017. I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and I hope that 2018 is a good year for everyone! I look forward to meeting you at my surgery on 3rd February in the Faringdon Library, but of course you can reach me by email on Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk or on 01367 241468. I will of course come to your house to meet with you if you wish.

Once again, a Happy New Year!

Judith Heathcoat

C/Cllr Faringdon Division

Deputy Leader – Oxfordshire County Council

January 2018

**SPECIFIC REPORT FOR [INSERT PARISH NAME]**