



TOWN NEWS

A NEWSLETTER
PRODUCED BY
WANTAGE
TOWN COUNCIL

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF WANTAGE TOWN NEWS

**Jim Sibbald, Councillor Major,
Town Mayor of Wantage**



Since March when the first COVID-19 restrictions in the UK came into force, our community has pulled together to support the vulnerable, those shielding, and those who just need a bit of help. Whether this has been through groups such as the Wantage and Surrounding Area Coronavirus Support Group or A Helping Hand, Grove and Wantage Area, through individuals making or selling face coverings, or our neighbours chipping in to assist, Wantage and the surrounding area should be proud of the community support and purpose that they have shown. On behalf of the Town Council, I wish to express thanks to all who have maintained such a great community spirit and made Wantage as safe as can be.

We are not through it yet and we will need to maintain our wellbeing, our sense of togetherness, and continue to provide assistance to each other. Our local businesses need to be supported if they are to survive and you, the citizens of Wantage, need to feel secure while supporting them. Please keep following the government guidelines and help prevent the spread of this virus so that we continue to be safe.

Introducing your Town Centre Manager



Andrea Yates regularly meets traders at Wantage Market

Anyone recently visiting Wantage Town Centre might have seen the new Town Centre Manager, Andrea Yates, busy talking to market traders, shopkeepers and their customers, and getting feedback.

Andrea very much sees her job as identifying ways of maintaining and improving the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre.

Social media is very important in her job, using Facebook for both Wantage Markets and Love Wantage in providing regularly updated information. This includes weekly postings about the market stalls which are expected. Love Wantage also has a website www.lovewantage.com

Andrea started her job in March, just as the lockdown began, making her task far more difficult with social distancing rules and finding out what might be allowed, especially

with regard to market operations. Local markets became very popular during the early days of lockdown and have continued to flourish.

Andrea comes with a wealth of experience that includes working in the District Council Planning Dept, a spell locally at Metal Box, experience as a PA with a Housing Association where her claim to fame was liaising with Clarence House to organise a scheme opening, meeting Prince Charles and offering him a cup of tea!

"I was born and bred in Wantage and come from a large local family. My Mum was one of 6 and my Dad one of 7 so I have a lot of Aunties, Uncles and too many cousins and second cousins to count!"

As a busy mum with two children Lily, 14, and Albie 12, Andrea has very limited free time outside her new job but whenever possible indulges her love for Retro fashion and dancing, being quite an expert with her husband on Lindy-Hop.

How would Andrea like to see the Town Centre in the future? "Although I would love to see Wantage as vibrant as it was in the past, we are living in difficult times. The local businesses need our support more than ever now, so it would be lovely to see you all out and about and enjoying local life".

If you see Andrea around the town, please come and say 'Hello' (with appropriate social distancing of course!). She'd love to hear your views.



Which Council does what?

Sometimes it is confusing to work out which of the three councils in our community does what. Hopefully this page will help clarify who is the correct person to contact if you need help or advice.

WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council consists of 16 elected local individuals who are all unpaid volunteers. They do not have a responsibility for the tasks of the other councils but they offer advice on a local basis and have input into the decisions that affect the local community.

The role of the Town Council is largely to ensure that the area is maintained and improved to enable the residents to enjoy living in this wonderful Town.

The Town Council is responsible for:

- Allotments
- Annual events, e.g. Mayor's Carols and other ad hoc events
- Chain Hill Cemetery
- The Statue and market area in Market Place
- Bus Shelters and Street Furniture
- Fairs
- Christmas lights and floral displays
- Keeping residents Informed including managing the Notice boards
- Grants to local organisations
- Markets (including Farmers' markets and continental markets)
- Planning Applications (only recommendations but not the final decision which is made at District and County level)

Your Town Councillors are:

Iain Cameron, Andy Crawford, Oli Curley, Angela Dunford, Amos Duveen, Tony Gilhorne, James Goodman, Jenny Hannaby, Erik Johnson, Alistair Menzies, Jean Nunn-Price MBE, Patrick O'Leary, Ifor Sheldon, Jim Sibbald, Chris Walters and Caroline Wills-Wright

For further information on the Town Council and the various committees including agendas, minutes of all meetings and contact details see: www.wantagetowncouncil.gov.uk

VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Councillors are split between two wards that currently make up Wantage and part of Grove; **Wantage Charlton** and **Wantage and Grove Brook**.

The District Council is responsible for amongst other things:

- Car Parks owned by the District Council
- The Beacon
- Manor Road Memorial Park
- Environmental Services, e.g. noise, pest control, bin collection
- Community Advice and Support
- Council Tax and Government Benefits
- House Planning and Services

Your District Councillors are:

Andy Crawford Charlton Ward
Patrick O'Leary Charlton Ward
Amos Duveen Wantage and Grove Brook
Jenny Hannaby Wantage and Grove Brook

For further information on your District Councillors, please visit www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The County Council is responsible for most of the large scale projects affecting the Town, some of which include:

- Education and schools
- Highways including clearance of overhanging branches etc, gritting and potholes.
- Public Transport
- Social Services
- Libraries, Museums and the Arts

Your County Councillors are Jenny Hannaby and Jane Hanna OBE.

For further information on the County Council and your County Councillors, and their responsibilities, please visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/your-county-councillor

CLIMATE CHANGE NEWS

The Climate Emergency Sub-committee was formed in recognition of the global climate emergency and to see what could be done locally to address the issues facing the planet.



There are several ways in which people can become involved:

- 1 Considering what we can do to reduce dependence on plastic and recycle more.
- 2 Considering what we can do to reduce our energy consumption.

- 3 Contribute to the creation of our action plan covering council activities. Our focus is also to make Wantage safe for pedestrians and cyclists and promote the cycle paths around the town.

- 4 Get involved in a project.

We welcome public involvement and have a budget to fund local projects. We are currently funding 4 projects with Sustainable Wantage. These include the purchase of an electric bike to aid with deliveries for the community fridge, identifying recycling opportunities and mapping the biodiversity within Wantage. We will support the planting of more trees and other native plants to enhance local habitats.

Look out for the meetings on the Town Council website and join us.

Message from the Museum

We are delighted to have reopened to the public and to welcome visitors back to the Vale and Downland Museum and Café. The Museum has been buzzing throughout the past few months, with children enjoying our Summer Discovery Sessions and visitors making the most of the fine weather with our outdoor café seating and delicious homemade cakes! As we enter the Autumn, we have new daily opening hours 9.30am-3.45pm, as well as being open on a Sunday 1.30pm-4pm.

After having so much fun during the summer, we are continuing our weekly Step into the Story sessions for pre-schoolers at 10am each Wednesday, and are busily preparing for a programme of activities for children in the October Half Term break. Do pop in and visit us to find out more and to indulge in some coffee and cake!

Greeting Cards and postcards with photography by Anne Pagett can be purchased at the Museum.



Photo by courtesy of Anne Pagett

Town Council News

Due to Covid-19, The Beacon has been closed since 17 March and the Town Council has only limited access to its offices. All office staff have been working from home. The Town Council is holding all its meetings online.

Members of the Press and Public are welcome to observe meetings. Agendas for meetings are posted on the Town Council's website www.wantagetowncouncil.gov.uk. Access to meetings can be achieved through <https://wantagetowncouncil.gov.uk>. Minutes of meetings are available on the council's website.

Communication with the Town Council is best achieved by email to clerk@wantagetowncouncil.gov.uk or alternatively letters can be posted or delivered to The Beacon address.

The ten notice boards installed around the town are still available to promote local events and activities. Posters can be displayed free on the boards – please deliver ten A5 portrait size copies to

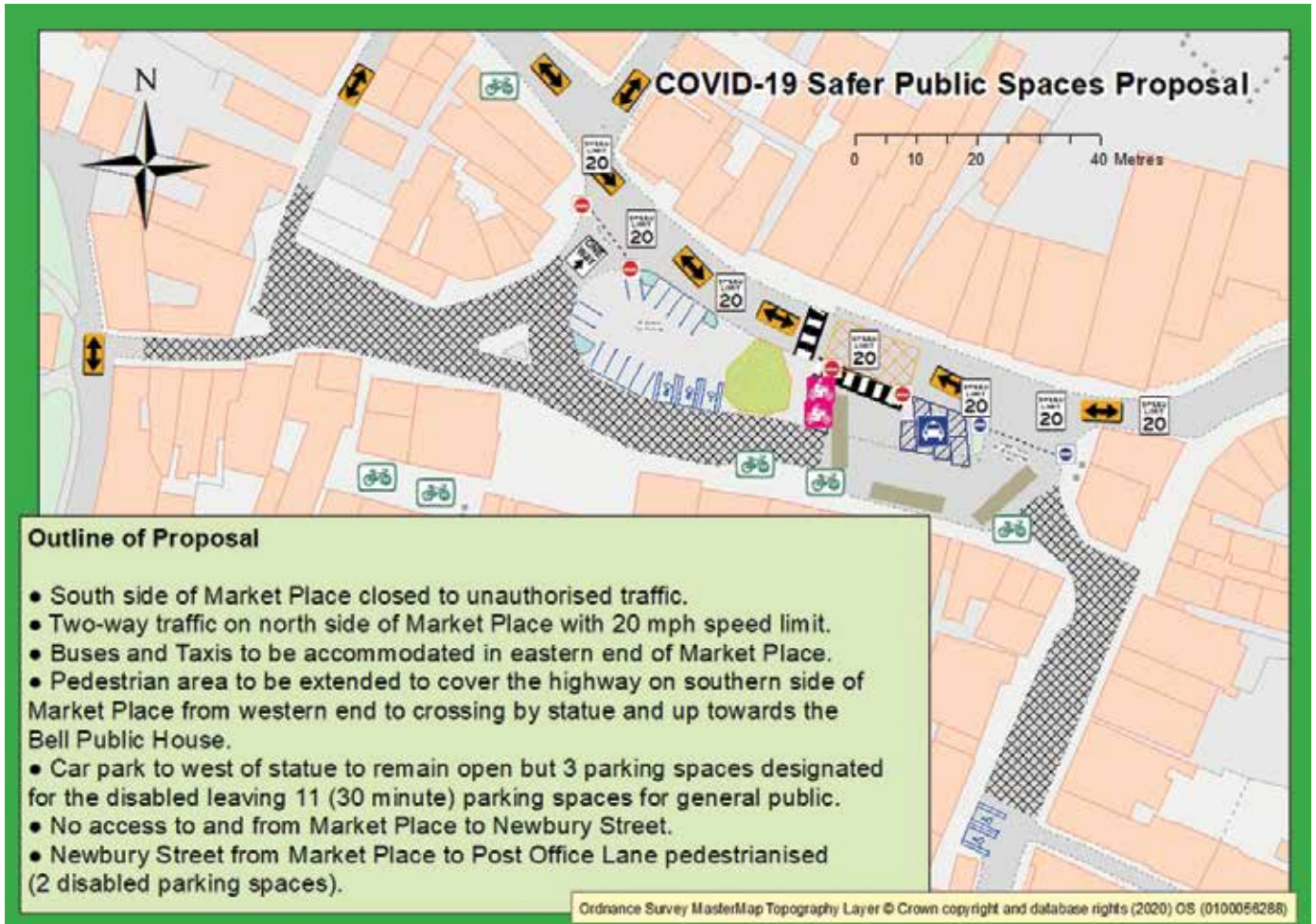
The Beacon post box.

The Town Council provides grants to support local groups. Amongst recipients are:

- Sweatbox
- Wantage and Grove Children's Centres
- The Letcombe Brook Project
- Wantage Independent Advice Centre
- Vale & Downland Museum

If you are part of a community group and would like to apply for a grant, you can find an application form on the council's website or email clerk@wantagetowncouncil.gov.uk

It looks like most of the traditional events leading up to Christmas will have to be cancelled. Where possible alternative online events will be organised. I am pleased to advise that the Christmas trees and decorations in the town centre will proceed the same as in previous years. The trees will be arriving on Sunday 22 November. Don't say too early. It takes time to sort out and install the lighting around the town.



Let us have your views...

Considering COVID-19 Safer Public Spaces, Market Place Pedestrianisation and Survey **WP Falkenau, Town Clerk**

SAFER PUBLIC SPACES

In order to facilitate better social distanced areas within Market Place and to encourage a safer environment for visiting businesses, Wantage Town Council, following the Government's guidance for 'COVID-19 Safer Public Spaces Urban Centres and Green Spaces' introduced the pedestrianisation of the Western End of Market Place on Saturday 4th July as an emergency measure. This is now a temporary implementation for 18 months during COVID19.

TEMPORARY PEDESTRIANISATION PLAN

Wantage Town Council has created a plan (above) to improve on social distanced areas within Market Place as a whole, to make the area safer for the public to visit and to engage with local businesses. The plan, which is much more complex than just closing the Western End involves bus services, highways, disabled parking, other parking and taxi availability. The plan was submitted to Oxfordshire County Council asking for

comment and guidance. Having received comment from OCC we have made the plan public.

SURVEY

A consultation survey which can be accessed online at www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk is being undertaken about the closure of the Western End and is also asking opinion about further temporary pedestrianisation. Your input on the survey will assist the Town Council on whether we seek to implement the full plan

or just stay with the Western End for now. The survey will run until the 31st October.

Recognising that not everyone has access to the internet, provision has been made for paper copies of the survey questionnaire to be made available at the Vale and Downland Museum in Church Street. Please visit there to collect them.



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Wantage Town Council

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