



TOWN NEWS

A NEWSLETTER
PRODUCED BY
WANTAGE
TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor's Closing Message

2023 is upon us and has ushered in the new Carolean age; when a new monarch will adorn our currency and stamps.

The civic year ends in early May, with the Annual Council Meeting being held on Monday 15th May which commences with the election of the mayor.

Having proudly served 4 consecutive terms, (5 in total) I think that it is appropriate to let someone

else have the privilege of being your First Citizen.

However, one of my last duties will be on Saturday May 6th, when it is planned to close the Market Place, have large screens to watch the Coronation, with food and drink stalls, and bands throughout the afternoon

to mark His Majesty King Charles III's Coronation. All welcome. Look out for more information on the Council website and on the Community Facebook pages.

Jim Sibbald,
Councillor Major,
Town Mayor of Wantage



Wantage Hospital News

The live birth maternity service has reopened at Wantage Community Hospital which is great news for residents.

This follows the return of physiotherapy services and new pilot services introduced and the building of new primary care estate.

The Wantage Town Council Health Committee continue to push for

Wantage Hospital was originally opened on Thursday June 30 1927 by Her Highness Princess Helena Victoria, the third daughter of Queen Victoria.

consultation on the rehabilitation beds which are closed.

The NHS has offered to co-produce a workshop with the Health Committee on the future for the hospital. The committee includes councillors and other community leaders active on health including many who worked on the OX12 project.

Please contact the council if you are active in health matters locally and would like to attend.

Energy Hardship Fund

In December the Town Council allocated £10,000 to a fund for those Wantage residents suffering extreme hardship as a result of the spiralling cost of energy prices.

The scheme is being administered by **Vale Community Impact** (formerly the Independent Advice Centre) using clear criteria which they had already drawn up for other monies received.

Payments of up to a maximum of £200 per household are paid directly to the recipients energy company.

TOWN EVENTS

Saturday 15 April
(and every Saturday until Autumn)
Music in the Market Place between 10am and 3pm

Thursday 4 May
Local Elections

Saturday 6 May
Celebrations for The Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort
Market Place
10am-6pm

Sunday 14 May
Wantage Artisan Market
Market Place, 10am-3pm

Sunday 11 June
Wantage Artisan Market
Market Place, 10am-3pm

Love Wantage - Shop Local, Spend Local - Save Local!

Andrea Yates our busy Town Centre Manager suggests ways in which we can all keep our town centre thriving

No one wants to see our local shops closing. Businesses will only survive if we all spend money locally, whether they be independent or national. Please always try to use these shops before going elsewhere. As the saying goes 'use it or lose it'. Anyone walking around Wantage might ask 'why are there so many empty shops?' Alternatively, they might ask 'why can't there be a shoe shop or mens' outfitters and why are there so many food outlets in the town'. There are five main costs

to running a town centre business: rent, rates, staff, stock and utilities. A number of the main business types have lower costs than a typical retail shop; maybe because they get business rate relief, have volunteer staff or have little or no stock to carry. So, when they come to calculate how much rent they can afford it's usually a higher figure than other businesses and they can make a higher rent bid to the landlord. This type of shop also probably offers a product or service you can't buy

online. Therefore, people are coming into the town to spend their money in such places. One other factor is planning consent. Generally, if a property is proposed to change from one Use Class to another, planning permission is required from the District Council. Wantage Town Council has an advisory role but the final decision rests with the District Council. Empty units are often taken on by people who have a bright idea for a business. Two amazing new ventures opening recently, House of Flowers and About you Bridal are a beautiful addition to our Town Centre. Not all empty shops are available to let. Take the old M&Co building for an example. The building came under new ownership in 2020 right at the start of the pandemic. Since then, negotiations on this unit have been ongoing with a prospective tenant but there have been several issues regarding



A town with something for everyone!

Whether you're looking for somewhere to find gorgeous gifts, indulging in delicious food, or hunting for places to grab a drink with friends, you'll be spoilt for choice. Our fantastic selection of businesses will cater to your every need and welcome you back again and again.

Scan the QR Code to see the businesses in Wantage

- 1 Market Place
- 2 Arbery Arcade
- 3 Wallingford Street
- 4 Newbury Street
- 5 Church Street
- 6 Mill Street
- 7 Grove Street
- 8 Limborough Road
- 9 Post Office Vaults

Love Wantage is an initiative coordinated by the Wantage Town Centre Manager to promote the Town Centre and what's on offer for residents and visitors. It is supported by the local Wantage & District Chamber of Commerce, Vale of White Horse District Council and Wantage Town Council

the shop, ask the shop to order it for you and pay in the shop. That way, the shop gets the record of the sale rather than the online sales. Often you can get free delivery to your home too! If you have ordered something online and need to return it, take it to the post office/courier rather than taking it back to the shop. Taking it back to the shop contributes to the shop's deficit. Wantage may not have everything you need but it does have something for everyone!

Scan the QR code on the attached map to see the list of local businesses in the town centre and surrounding streets

#shoplocal
#supportlocalbusinesses
#spendlocal
#enjoylocal

building works which have delayed handover. These issues are being dealt with by the managing agent, owner of the building and

the tenant's agent, and new builders are now on site. Other empty units are under offer and negotiations are taking place.

So, what can we do to keep our current businesses from closing? By spending our money in local shops, whether they are

independent traders or national brands. Always try looking for products locally first. If you see something you like online but not in



Old Stables Community Hub and Down to Earth Café

A new community hub 'The Old Stables', launched in December 2022, features a community café using a food surplus called 'Down to Earth', a community garden, co-working space, office and craft studios formed by community engagement and managed by Make Space, Oxford.

The Down to Earth Café will hold regular community cooking events, weekly chop and chat sessions, training, creative cooking classes with children, and catering.

It will be using surplus food and everyday ingredients to provide delicious, healthy and affordable dishes in an environmentally sustainable way and aims to include the whole community.

If you are interested in getting involved, the building is still available for more people to join as a business, community group, co-working members, and even as a core member of the team.

Both the Community Hub and café are situated in the Old Stables, Stirlings Close (formerly the Day Centre) and just a short walk from the Waitrose car park.

For further information contact alex@makespaceoxford.org

The Old Stables

Originally the stable block of Stirlings House in Wallingford Street. Stirlings House was built in 1752 by William Stirling and demolished circa 1963 when the Stirlings Care Home was built.

The Down to Earth Café

Open 10am to 3pm
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays for lunches, cakes and drinks.





Ukrainian Cake Bar comes to Wantage



Two Ukrainian refugees have opened a new cake shop and bakery in Wantage specialising in popular cakes from their country.

Alyona Tarasova, 42, and Lara Tysiachna, 47, moved to the UK from Kyiv last year with their young children due to the Russian invasion which started in February 2022.

The two women, who have been friends for about 17

years, decided to move to Wantage together so they could help each other with the children.

The shop, also serving delicious coffee and other drinks is in Grove Street opposite Ledbury's Electrical.

TWINNING IN WANTAGE AND GROVE

A great way to make new friends!

The Wantage and Grove Twinning group welcomes new members to participate in exchange visits with our twin towns in Mably, France and Seesen in Germany.

Groups visit on a biennial basis staying with host families locally and in the respective countries.

Our German friends are visiting Wantage in June with an enjoyable programme of visits and events planned.

Other members are visiting Mably in July.

For further information, please contact the secretary:
greta.thornbory@btconnect.com Tel: 07778 518027



Giving the town a refresh!

Young trees have recently been planted in the Town Centre.

On the Victoria Cross Forecourt there are now two *Acer palmatum sango kaku* (coral bark maple) and at the eastern end of the Market Place (near the Post Office Vaults) is a *Betula albo-sinensis fascination* (Chinese red birch).

New benches have also been installed by the Town Council at Manor Road Park.



Wantage Town Council works alongside Oxfordshire County Council and Vale of White Horse District Council. We hope you'll also find these contact details useful.



01235 763459
clerk@wantagecouncil.gov.uk
www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk



01865 792422
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/contact-council
(for individual departments)



01235 422422
enquiries@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

YOUR FEEDBACK WELCOMED

We hope that you have enjoyed the articles in the Wantage Town Council Newsletters. Feedback and suggestions are welcome to:

The Town Clerk
Tel: 01235 763459
Email: clerk@wantagecouncil.gov.uk

Other useful contacts:
Andrea Yates, Town Centre Manager
Email: andrea.yates@wantagecouncil.gov.uk
Sheryl Sanders, Deputy Town Clerk
Email: deputyclerk@wantagecouncil.gov.uk

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The Beacon, Portway, Wantage OX12 9BX
www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk

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