



# TOWN NEWS

A NEWSLETTER  
PRODUCED BY  
WANTAGE  
TOWN COUNCIL

## Message from the Mayor



Welcome to the newsletter for September. It's been a very warm summer up to now and we have had some lovely events in town. I hope you enjoyed the food festival.

Firstly, I want to pay tribute to Alan Sykes and his commitment to our community and the Wantage Silver Band for so many years. His memorial concert was in June and he will be greatly missed. We have been very lucky to have the performances by the band in the Western End, they are wonderful events with a great atmosphere.

On 9th July, I was invited to the Gala Opening of the Wantage Keystone Mental Health & Wellbeing Hub. We are delighted to have this NHS facility on our doorstep on Limborough Road, a great location in town that can easily be accessed. The Hub strives to improve care and support for people experiencing serious and enduring mental health conditions. Together with the ongoing projects for the hospital we are delighted to have NHS commitment in Wantage.

I hope the weather remains kind and we get enough rain to enable a bountiful harvest to keep our farmers happy.

**Angela Dunford**



### HARWELL STONE D-DAY COMMEMORATION

The Deputy-Mayor Councillor Iain Cameron was honoured to attend the Harwell Stone D-Day Commemoration on 8 June and to lay a wreath on behalf of Wantage. He was accompanied by the excellent Mayor's cadets and the picture shows cadet Sophie Richens with Councillor Cameron at the Harwell Stone. The inscription on the Harwell Stone states:

*'This stone marks the end of the runway from which aircraft of No 38 Group Royal Air Force took off on the night of 5th June 1944 with troops of the 6th Airborne Division who were the first British soldiers to land in Normandy in the main assault for the liberation of Europe.'*

The 70th anniversary of the placing of the Stone falls next year. Councillor Cameron said "I was humbled to have with me the France and Germany Star which was awarded to Captain Geoffrey Hickes who landed in Normandy on 13th June 1944. He had married a Wantage girl in the Parish Church in 1942. His son, Peter, was christened in the Church in 1944 and he kindly donated his father's medals to the Vale and Downland Museum from whom I borrowed the medal."

## TOWN EVENTS

### Alfred Fest

*A small celebration of the town's past*  
Saturday 26 October 11am-2pm  
Wantage Market Place West

### Christmas Artisan Fair & Market

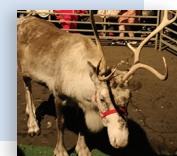
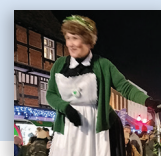
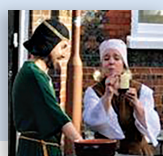
*Christmas gift ideas and music*  
Sunday 1 December 10am-3pm  
Wantage Market Place

### The Mayor's Carols

*Join us for the Mayor's Carols – all welcome*  
Wednesday 4 December 7pm-8.30pm  
Ss Peter & Paul, Wantage

### Dickensian Evening

*The town's big Christmas event!*  
Friday 6 December 4pm-9pm  
Wantage Market Place





# Parkinsons.me

## a Garden for the Community

planted with sedum and a vegetable patch, the produce of which can be shared. There is a wonderful, grassed area that Justine enjoys lying on and it was very tempting for the Mayor but she will save that for another day. They discussed how important the space was for people with Parkinson's particularly the table tennis area and the Mayor found the trip very inspiring.

On Saturday mornings a lovely group of people meet to do all the jobs in the garden that need doing. The Mayor was given a tour by the head gardener and met the founder. At 11 o'clock the Mayor was given the privilege of ringing the bell to gather the team around the table for coffee and cake from the local bakery. The Mayor was keen to find out what motivated this group of people to come and help out in the garden. What was so wonderful was that all the volunteers were willing to do anything and everything that was required, mentioning that the atmosphere was so inclusive that they always felt whatever they did was appreciated.

The charity work with the GP surgery to offer a gardening on prescription course, with the next one being in

September. They would love to do more as it makes a huge difference to people's lives but need the volunteers. One volunteer helps at The Market Garden in Charlton as well, which is linked with Sustainable Wantage, where a variety of activities are available. There are ladies that drive over from Abingdon to the garden once a month, one of whom enjoyed sitting with the team chatting after working and then taking home the produce and the other is happy to do whatever needs to be done. It is very common for the volunteers to help with other charities, such as one volunteer helping at the Donkey sanctuary, who said there weren't enough hours a day once you retired. They love it when children come over to the garden and help out.

The cubs came over to build an area for solitary bees and there are lots of resources to make bug hotels, there are few vacancies in the ones already in place.

If you want tranquillity then why not visit, sit on one of the benches and enjoy the beautiful views.

**See website: Parkinsons.me Supporting you and your family**

On 3rd August the Mayor was collected by Justine, who is in charge of the marketing and communications for the Parkinsons.me charity and they drove to the Community Garden in West Lockinge. The Mayor had cycled and walked past many times and it looked so enticing but she was never sure if she could enter. Well, you can, so next time you walk past, go in and take a stroll around, it is so beautiful and peaceful. All are welcome.

On the first Saturday of every month anyone can help out in the garden, so why not give it a go. The garden is divided into several areas including a sensory garden, the new dry bed, which the Mayor loves as it was



## Wantage Eastern Link Road becomes King Alfred Way

**The Wantage Eastern Link Road (WELR) was completed in**

**September with an official opening in a small ceremony on 26th of September 2024 to formally name the road King Alfred Way.**

The long-awaited new road plays a vital role in an improved transport network around Wantage and supports the infrastructure of the new Kingsgrove Community. It will help decrease congestion on rural roads, reduce traffic through

Wantage Town Centre and improve air quality in the town. It links the new roundabout on the A417 to the east of the town with that on the A338 at Mably Way to the north, providing quicker routes for residents and visitors to the area.

King Alfred Way is the result of agreements between the Vale of White Horse District Council (as the planning authority), St Modwen and Oxfordshire County Council with strong support from The Town Council and Councillors representing Wantage.

Sustainable travel is supported by the three-metre-wide cycle-footway across the whole length of the road around the development and the road will be available for bus companies to use as they develop their services around Wantage.

The naming of the road pays tribute to King Alfred the Great, who was born in Wantage in 849, and whose name is reflected in the name Kingsgrove. King Alfred is celebrated for securing peace with the Vikings and for his visionary reforms in education and the reconstruction of Wessex and Beyond.



## Let's Paint Wantage Green!

**The Great Big Green Week is the UK's biggest ever celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. It takes place on 7th to 15th June 2025 and we want Wantage to take part**

If you are a community group, bus driver, sport club, artist, place of worship, library, local business – or just someone who cares about climate change – you can apply for Wantage Town Council Funding to host a Great Big Green Week event.

We want to see all kinds of events from clothes or book swaps to skill swaps in allotments or upcycling workshops, to knowledge swaps on discussion panels or wildlife reserves. Anything that celebrates local activity and raises the profile of climate change.

You can apply for up to £250 to run your event by completing a form on the Town Council website. Visit [www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk](http://www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk), go to the 'Council Information' tab and click on 'Grants and Donations to Local Community Groups'. Scroll down to 'The Great Big Green Week' to download the form. Paper copies available from the Beacon.

The deadline for application is midday on Monday 10th February 2025. Events must take place between 7th to 15th June 2025. If you want more information about Great Big Green Week or how to run an event visit <https://greatbiggreenweek.com/>

## Success for Wantage Ringers



On Saturday 15th June a team of bellringers from Wantage took part in the Old North Berkshire Branch 6-bell striking competition, held at Radley.

Eight teams took part, including a youth team. This is the highest number of teams in recent history, and an encouraging sign of the health of ringing in the county.

The Wantage team managed to gain first place, with 240 changes of Grandsire Doubles. They will now move forward to represent the Branch at the Guild 6-bell striking competition in October.

Many thanks to the Radley ringers for hosting us on the day and keeping everyone well supplied with tea, cake and sandwiches.

If you are interested in taking up bellringing, please contact via email [administrator@wantageparish.com](mailto:administrator@wantageparish.com), who will then forward the message. Weekly practices are held on Tuesdays from 7:30 pm until 9:00pm.



## WANTAGE COMMUNITY MINIBUS UPDATE

Firstly, thank you to those who were able to attend the meetings run by the Council during July.

For those who missed the meetings the following items were covered:

- Funding from the Kingsgrove development and Oxfordshire County Council Transport will enable purchase of a disability-friendly 16-seater minibus.
- The service will link the estates to the East and West of Wantage with the Town Centre and Heath Centre.
- The bus will likely operate to a 2 hourly timetable, will run 3-4 services a day and run on specified days e.g. Wednesday to Friday.
- County Council older persons bus passes will be accepted on the bus.

Following these meetings the Council Working Group is considering possible routes through the town and plans to present these for comment on a stall at Wantage Market during September/October. Details of such events will be posted on the Council notice boards and website.

Finally, we hope to recruit volunteer drivers whose licences allow them to drive such a minibus. If you are interested, please contact the Deputy Mayor Councillor Iain Cameron at [iain.cameron@wantagecouncil.gov.uk](mailto:iain.cameron@wantagecouncil.gov.uk)

**AGED 40-74? YOU COULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR A FREE...**

**NHS HEALTH CHECK**

Helping you prevent

- diabetes
- heart disease
- kidney disease
- stroke & dementia

It only takes 30 to 45 minutes

Get clarity, screens for the most important health markers

Expert personalised advice & support

**Health Checks OXFORDSHIRE**

**0800 122 3790**

[www.healthchecks.oxfordshire.org](http://www.healthchecks.oxfordshire.org)

Our expert health advisors will provide advice and support tailored to your results and lifestyle to **improve your health and reduce your risk of developing preventable diseases.**

Commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council



## DON'T PUT IT OFF!

**Our FREE NHS Health Checks service is targeted at Oxfordshire residents aged 40-74, who don't have a diagnosis of one of the conditions we are looking to prevent: diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, stroke & dementia.**

Appointments can be booked online and are taken at one of our community hubs – we have lots of these around Oxfordshire, so there's something local to everyone.

The checks take 30 minutes and include measuring the client's height, weight, waist, BMI, blood pressure, blood sugar & cholesterol.



**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.**

**WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL**



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

**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

01865 792422  
 www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/contact-council  
 (for individual departments)  
 To report street related problems:  
 fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk

**Vale of White Horse**  
 District Council

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@wantage.towncouncil.gov.uk

**Deputy Town Clerk**  
 Email: deputyclerk@wantage.towncouncil.gov.uk

**Town Centre Manager**  
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