



A NEWSLETTER  
PRODUCED BY  
WANTAGE  
TOWN COUNCIL

# TOWN NEWS

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

“ I was delighted that, in May, my fellow Councillors asked me to continue serving as Mayor for another year. It is a great privilege to represent our town, and I look forward to the year ahead.



We have enjoyed some great events in town recently, particularly the St George’s Day celebration, which was blessed with wonderful weather. It was fantastic to see so many people taking part, and I am looking forward to many more successful events over the coming year.

In conversations with a number of residents recently, the suggestion that we should all be considerate towards one another has come up. What does that mean in practice? It could be something as simple as leaving enough room on pavements for pushchairs and mobility scooters to pass safely, or ensuring that disabled parking bays are left free for those who need them. If you have any other suggestions, please do let us know and we may be able to include some of them in a future edition of the Town E-Newsletter.

Another thing to look out for is the smart black minibus that will soon start to appear around town as preparations continue for our local bus services. Keep an eye on future editions of the E-Newsletter for more information.



I hope the coming year is a happy and safe one for you all.

-Cllr Dr Iain Cameron

SCAN ME  




**WANTAGE INTERNATIONAL FOOD & DRINK Festival**  
A WORLD OF FLAVOUR ON YOUR DOORSTEP

**FOOD, DRINK & MUSIC FROM AROUND THE WORLD**  
**SUNDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2026**  
**11AM - 3PM WANTAGE MARKET PLACE**

<p><b>PERFORMANCES FROM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford Samba Band</li> <li>Vale And White Horse Line Dancers</li> <li>Rose Hips Belly Dancing</li> <li>Rock Choir</li> <li>Vocalize Choir</li> <li>Hartbeats - West African Drumming</li> </ul>	 <p><b>HELEN BROWNINGS OBE</b> — TALK ON ORGANIC FARMING</p>	<p><b>FREE CHILDREN’S ENTERTAINMENT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Decorate your own cookies</li> <li> Decorate your own pizza</li> <li> Face painting &amp; crafts</li> <li> A world food trail passport</li> </ul>
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**WITH THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:**






## TOWN ELECTORATE MEETING

Thank you to everyone who attended the Town Electorate Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May.

The evening included updates from the Mayor, Cllr Iain Cameron, Cllr Jenny Hannaby, and Andy Sweeney from Oxfordshire County Council on the proposed Market Place Project and other local matters.

To keep up to date with meetings, community news and local projects like this, make sure to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and BlueSky by searching **@WantageTownCouncil**

and sign up to our e-newsletter so you’ll receive information straight to your inbox!

[www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk/e-newsletter](http://www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk/e-newsletter)





## ST GEORGES DAY CELEBRATIONS



At the end of April, we hosted our St George's Day celebration, and it proved to be a really enjoyable day for everyone!

We were joined by a range of local bands and choirs performing throughout the event, which added a fantastic soundtrack to the celebrations. Families also enjoyed taking part in the dragon hunt, which was a popular activity for younger visitors, and there were even a couple of friendly farm animals on site.

We even managed to persuade the Mayor of Wantage, Cllr Iain Cameron, to take a turn in the stocks!



We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who attended and supported the event, as well as to all our traders, sponsors, and volunteers, whose time and effort were instrumental in ensuring everything ran smoothly behind the scenes.

If you would like to keep up to date with what's coming up next, please sign up to our monthly e-newsletter, where you'll receive all of our latest event news and information straight to your inbox.



## SWEATBOX VISIT

Wantage Town Council recently visited Sweatbox Youth Centre in Wantage as part of our ongoing work to involve more young people in council matters and ensure their voices are heard.



With some (very popular) sweets, information and interactive activities, we had some fantastic conversations about what matters most to local young people and heard lots of thoughtful ideas about the community.

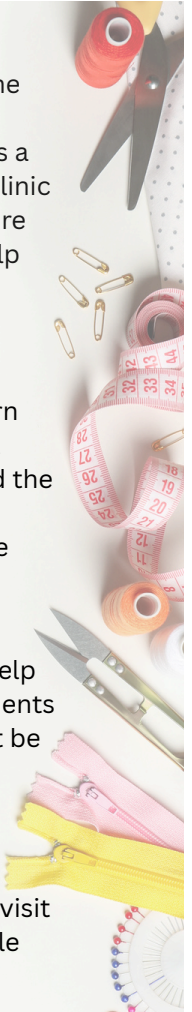
A big thank you to the Sweatbox team for welcoming us – we look forward to running more sessions like this in the future.

## THE STITCH CLINIC

A new monthly initiative at The Mix is helping residents give favourite clothing and textiles a new lease of life. The Stitch Clinic offers bookable sessions where skilled volunteer stitchers help with small repairs and simple alterations, inspired by the popular Repair Café model.

From missing buttons and torn seams to holes and worn soft toys, the clinic aims to extend the life of everyday items and encourage a more sustainable approach to clothing.

The service is free, although donations are welcomed to help cover materials and refreshments for volunteers. Sessions must be booked in advance, with a maximum of two items per person, and repairs focus on smaller jobs only. To book a future session, residents can visit The Mix or contact Sustainable Wantage.



## BREWS AND BOOKS CAFE TURNS ONE!

Brews and Books Café, run by the Wantage Literary Festival at The Beacon, has marked its first birthday in style.



Open Monday to Friday from 9.45am to 1.30pm and supported by a dedicated team of volunteers, the café has become a popular local spot over the past year. Its success has led Vale of White Horse District Council, which owns and manages The Beacon, and the Wantage Literary Festival to confirm that the café is here to stay.

**Brews and Books Café is open to all, not just those attending events at The Beacon, and continues to offer a welcoming space for residents to relax, read and connect.**





## ALFREDS WELL

This lovely wildlife haven, close to the centre of Wantage, has had a bit of a facelift!

Alfred's Well is a historic natural spring in Wantage, located beside Locks Lane near Letcombe Brook. The Well is thought to have taken its name from Alfred Hazell of the well known Hazell family, who owned the nearby Mead and cloth making works in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Well and surrounding area became a popular local landmark during the Victorian period and were later gifted to the town in 1921.

Earlier this year, the town council and partners organised the creation of pools in the brook to enhance the habitat and support biodiversity. Some invasive species have been removed, with bulbs and a stretch of hedging being planted. A newly installed seat allows visitors to relax and listen to songbirds, blackcap, song thrush and wren as well as the calming burble of the numerous springs.



The council is grateful for the hard work involved including the efforts of Wild Wantage and an enthusiastic group of students from Fitzwaryn School for hedge planting. Wild Wantage also advised on siting of several bird and bat boxes; these were provided by volunteers from the Market Garden.

Do come to visit this precious space, and help us to care for it, so everyone can enjoy the tranquillity in the future.

## RIVERFLY MONITORING ON THE LETCOMBE BROOK

Keep an eye out for the Letcombe Brook Project's new volunteer riverfly surveyors, who recently attended our training course to learn how to monitor river invertebrates.



Riverflies (or rather, their aquatic larvae) are excellent indicators of river health and we are delighted to have so many people helping us to keep track of their populations. Monitoring at key sites along the brook every month enables us to detect pollution, which we'll then report to the Environment Agency for investigation.



During the training, we were reminded of the threat posed to river invertebrates from pet 'spot-on' treatments for fleas and ticks. These powerful pesticides, particularly Fipronil and Imidacloprid, are now known to have a devastating impact on freshwater insects. They enter the water when pets swim, or after hand-washing or washing pet bedding. One drop of Fipronil is toxic enough to kill 30,000 bees.

These chemicals have been banned from use in agriculture, yet are still widely available for our pets. Please, if your pet receives spot-on treatment, ask your vet for an alternative.

**Wantage Town Council was pleased to support the Letcombe Brook Project with a grant during the past year. This funding has helped support volunteer conservation work, community engagement activities, educational sessions with local schools and improved ecological monitoring along the brook. The project continues to play an important role in protecting and enhancing this valuable local chalk stream for both wildlife and residents.**

## ONE GOOD TURN

Boston House Business Centre recently launched "One Good Turn", a scheme offering up to six months of rent-free office space for a local community project. Follow Boston House on Facebook or LinkedIn for future opportunities.

## KINGSGROVE CENTRE

A ceremonial ground-breaking has marked the start of work on the new Kingsgrove Community Centre, funded through developer contributions.



*Photo credit: Howard Hill*

Our MP, Olly Glover, attended alongside Deputy Town Mayor Dr Chris Walters and District Councillor Andy Crawford.

This new facility will comprise a large auditorium with a capacity of 350, several smaller rooms available for hire, a community café, as well as a hot-desking work area.

Due to open in 2027, this significant new facility will be run by a charitable trust and will provide much-needed community amenities for the town.



### CORRECTION

The previous newsletter incorrectly listed the year as 2025; this should have read 2026. We apologise for any confusion.

### OXFORDSHIRE CRISIS SUPPORT

If you live in Oxfordshire and are struggling to afford home heating oil costs, the Oxfordshire Crisis Support Scheme may be able to help.

Please contact the Crisis Support Team using the details below or scan the QR code for more info:



Phone: 01865 804171  
Email: [RSSOxfordshire@necsws.com](mailto:RSSOxfordshire@necsws.com)

Website:  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/help-rising-living-costs/residents-support-scheme](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/help-rising-living-costs/residents-support-scheme)

If you are not eligible for support through the scheme, you can still get advice from Better Housing Better Health. They offer free support including home warmth and wellbeing assessments, advice on fuel grants, and energy-saving tips.

### LOVE WANTAGE

Love Wantage is your guide to the best local shops, cafés, restaurants, pubs, and things to do.

Scan the QR code to discover more!

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[www.lovewantage.uk](http://www.lovewantage.uk)



### WANTAGE SUMMER ARTS FESTIVAL

The Wantage Summer Arts Festival 2026 will celebrate its 30th anniversary this summer with two weeks of music, art, theatre, history and community events across the town.

Running from Sunday 28 June to Saturday 11 July 2026, the volunteer-led festival will feature one of its most varied programmes yet, including concerts, exhibitions, walking tours, family activities and community events for all ages.

Highlights include a special “Concert for Graham” in memory of pianist and organist Graham Blyth, alongside a series of guided heritage walks exploring the town’s hidden history, and a “Street Scenes” photography competition run with the Dolphin Gallery.

Family and youth activities will also feature, including cycling events and drama workshops in Betjeman Park, with a range of opportunities for residents of all ages to get involved.

Festival organiser James Royston Mitchell said: “Reaching our 30th anniversary is a wonderful milestone. This year’s programme celebrates everything that makes Wantage special – its creativity, history, talent and community spirit.”

The volunteer-run festival continues to offer a mix of free and affordable events, with further programme details and booking information to be announced soon.

For further information: Email: [jamesmitchellonevoice@sky.com](mailto:jamesmitchellonevoice@sky.com)

### STAY CONNECTED!

Ever feel like you don’t know what’s going on in town?

Make sure you stay connected with everything happening in Wantage by following us on social media and signing up to our monthly e-newsletter.

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and BlueSky for the latest news, event updates and useful information. Simply search @WantageTownCouncil to find and follow us.



Our monthly e-newsletter brings all the key updates straight to your inbox, making it an easy and convenient way to stay informed. Signing up takes just a few seconds, and once registered you’ll receive regular updates on news, events and community information without having to search for them.

[www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk/e-newsletter](http://www.wantagecouncil.gov.uk/e-newsletter)



### YOUR FEEDBACK WELCOMED

We hope that you have enjoyed the articles in the Wantage Town Council Newsletter.

Feedback and suggestions are welcome to:

[communications@wantagecouncil.gov.uk](mailto:communications@wantagecouncil.gov.uk)



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