

WENDLEBURY VILLAGE NEWS

SUMMER 2008

Published by and for the residents of Wendlebury Oxfordshire Editor: Mike Broun

MORE ABOUT WESTON OTMOOR NEW TOWN

On 24th June, Tony Baldry, MP and Grant Shaps, MP and Shadow Housing Minister, visited Wendlebury Meads, together with members of the Weston Front, and BBOWT. This beautiful meadow, full of rare plants and butterflies is part of the land included in the proposal for a new town.

Villagers from Wendlebury joined others from around the country at a protest at the Houses of Parliament on 30th June. There was a great deal of press coverage, and Grant Shaps promised, that if his party win the next general election and the 'Eco Town' issue has not been decided, that the Conservatives will ensure that in areas where these towns are not wanted, they will not be built.

The Mistral Roadshow is continuing its PR rounds of villages around the area. It was interesting to see the lack of detail on their proposal. No 'eco' credentials were supplied and there were no promises of how the houses or infrastructure would be eco friendly. The particular worries for anyone living in Wendlebury must be the continued rat running and flooding. The Roadshow maps did not demonstrate that the developers have any plans to take either issue into consideration.

Their maps showed huge changes to the A32/A41/M40 junction, all pushing towards the village. The holding pond at the junction seemed to have been ignored, and the ponds on the Weston site were omitted as was the stream running from the site, under the M40 and towards Wendlebury.

Proposed road changes seem to encroach completely into Wendlebury and suggest that the road through the village will become the third lane of the A41. Footpaths will be obliterated as a park-and-ride facility for 6,000 cars is proposed together with a railway station just the other side of the M40 from the village. The new town will limit its residents' traffic movements. If there are too many traffic movements, barriers will be lowered to prevent people using their cars. Heaven knows what would happen to any resident who needed to get to hospital, or an important meeting, let alone go to work or do any shopping outside the town.

Whilst the official date for comments has passed, anyone who has not yet written to comment on the Parkridge plans, is assured that these comments will be noted.

We may not hear if Weston Otmoor is on the Government's list until October, at the earliest; but if you do not want to see this development go ahead, it is essential that we keep the campaign going.

We still need people to help. The Weston Front has been working on your behalf and the team have given up immense amounts of time and energy. We all have jobs, families and other things we need to do, and more help would be extremely valuable.

Funds are now low, and if you feel able to pledge money, however small a sum, it would be gratefully accepted.

It is essential to keep the issue alive, both in people's minds and in the press.

The next public meeting at Weston on the Green is on Wednesday 30 July at 6.30 in the Weston Village Hall. Please do come and hear the most recent developments. If you can't make it at 6.30 there is a second meeting at 8pm.

For the most up-to-date information, look at the Weston Front website: www.westonfront.com.

---Anna McDonagh

PLEDGES FOR WESTON OTMOOR

To date, I have only received ten pledges for money to help in the fight against Weston Otmoor. Judging by the strength of feeling against this development in the village and the fact that there are 180 households in Wendlebury, this is very disappointing.

Weston Front needs funds to pay for publicity, mailing shots, PR and many other items. (Fortunately the very effective posters are being paid for privately).

Please put your money where your heart is and deliver your pledges to 25 Rectory Close and they will be sent straight on to the Weston Front secretary.

Donations so far have varied from £20 to £100 – so you can see that any amount will be gratefully received.

---Diana Broun

WESTON OTMOOR AND WESTON FRONT

The deadline for the public to submit their comments on the Weston-Otmoor eco-town proposals was 30th June 2008. On that day supporters of Weston Front, the campaign group fighting the eco-town proposal, met up with other likeminded groups in Parliament Square. There was great media interest with all the main TV & Radio and Newspapers covering the story. It gave us excellent publicity – so thank you for the people of Wendlebury who came with us!

Weston Front also submitted their response to the proposals and we are grateful for those of you who contributed comments and also submitted their own responses direct to Government. You can read the Weston-Front response on the website – details below.

So what happens now? Do we sit back and wait? The developers, (Parkridge Holdings) have started their publicity campaign in the form of a “road-show” visiting local towns and villages that might be affected by the development and attempting to gauge the public’s response to the proposal. They came to Wendlebury on the 30th June but it was a disappointing affair. There was a representative from Parkridge present and some people from the local PR company but who were unable to answer questions specific to the eco-town proposal. There was a questionnaire to complete, the questions were heavily weighted and of a similar to “when did you stop beating your wife?” – I know some people threw their copy away as a means of demonstrating their objection to the proposals. For those of you who have yet to comment please do so but make your objections very clear. If you don’t complete the questionnaire there is the danger that it will create the erroneous impression that there is little local objection to Weston Otmoor!

Here are our comments on some of the questions asked:

- **We need the “eco” town for the area to meet housing need, don’t we?**
No. There are already plans for 2,000 new homes in Bicester, 5,000 in SE Oxford, and 1,000 in Banbury. Kidlington has also asked for 1,300 new homes to deliver better shops and services. This is where houses should be built, not in the middle of green fields!
- **The “eco” town will mean a better A34/M40 junction and better transport links between Bicester and Oxford, won’t it?**
A better junction is already needed to relieve the overloaded A34/M40. Just to make matters worse, the plan is to have a 6,000 space car-park on the site for the Park & Ride. You don’t need to build a new town of 35,000 people to improve the Junction 9!!!
- **What about the new trains?**
Yes, they promise 10 trains/hour into Oxford,

- but who’ll choose to take a tram, then train, then bus rather than drive to work in SE Oxford’s business parks? Why live on a motorway junction if you can’t use your car? It’s not a viable solution!
- **What about the Green Belt?**
Over 25% of the site is on Green Belt. Although the plans say they won’t build houses on it, they don’t mention the 6,000 space car park, rail station and sidings, etc., which will be on Green Belt

An “eco” town at Weston Otmoor would be good for businesses in Bicester and Kidlington, wouldn’t it?

No. Bicester already struggles to attract new businesses – over 70% of the workforce work outside of Bicester. Kidlington suffers from under-investment. Adding shops and offices in a new location will duplicate existing services and mean that Bicester and Kidlington stagnate. It will put in jeopardy plans to improve both existing centres and a blocked A34 will only add to delivery costs.

Please check the Weston Front website at www.westonfront.com for more information. Or send an email to info@westonfront.com

Once again – thank you for your continued support.

---Bob Hessian – for Weston Front

FROM THE CPRE OXFORDSHIRE BULLETIN. SPRING 2008

The Weston proposal appears to have nothing to recommend it. It is certainly large, covering over 2,000 acres alongside the M40 and athwart the A34. It would contain 15-20,000 dwellings – a new town for 45,000 people considerably larger than Bicester three miles to the north. The Birmingham based developer, Parkridge Holdings, promises to create, in addition, a regular train service to Milton Keynes.

When announcing the site on 4 April 2008, Ms Carolyn Flint said that it was brown-field, it transpires that only 16% could be said to be “previously developed” made up by the MOD’s grass air strip, which is used for parachute training; Parkridge has yet to take an option on this portion of the site. The rest is all green fields of a profoundly rural character bordered by traditional villages. Ms Flint also omitted to mention that 25% of the site lies within the Oxford Green Belt, having advised earlier that “no ecotowns will be built on the Green Belt”. Worse still, the site includes patches of ancient woodland and the Wildlife Trust’s (BBOWT) nature reserve at Woodside’s Meadow, a site of

national importance for its species-rich wet grassland. This makes the eco label wear particularly thin.

Other areas of concern:

It is situated on one of the most congested parts of Oxfordshire's road network. Even if, by the application of various incentive and disincentives, 50% of the households do not use cars, matching the very best examples on the Continent, there is likely to be a minimum of 15-20,000 new car trips per day (assuming one outward and one return trip) unleashing on an already hopelessly congested road system.

Bicester and Kidlington are both struggling to meet infrastructure requirements following rapid expansion.

Dropping a new town of this size between them, will drain already stretched resources. There are perfectly adequate plans at County and District level to accommodate a great deal of new building 30% of which is targeted to be "affordable".

The whole River Cherwell catchment is already considered by the Environment Agency to be in a state of "serious water stress". Having to provide the water needs of 15,000 additional households underlines concerns over not exceeding environmental limits. At the same time much of the site in winter is liable to flood, and surrounding farmers are deeply worried that this will be exacerbated by the new development. At a time of rising worries over food security, removing a large tract of agricultural land seems unnecessarily perverse.

Given the choice, why would anyone want to bring up their family cheek by jowl with the M40 motorway and the heavily congested and polluted A34?

It is not surprising, therefore, that there is overwhelming opposition to the scheme.

---Bruce Tremayne CPRE Oxfordshire
(for more refer www.cpreoxon.org.uk)

CHERWELL COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED ECO-TOWN AT WESTON-ON-THE- GREEN

The County Council has agreed its response to the Government on the proposals for an eco-town at Weston-on-the-Green as follows:

On the information available, the County Council would object strongly to the inclusion of the eco-town proposal in the final list of eco-town locations, in particular on the grounds that

- (a) The proposal is contrary to the policies in the South East Plan, which has been

- (b) approved by the South East Regional Assembly, has been confirmed by the Independent Panel which conducted the examination in public of the plan and is before the Minister for her approval.
- (c) The proposal would have a significantly detrimental impact on the implementation of planned development of Bicester and the promotion of Bicester as a major employment location in North Central Oxfordshire.
- (d) The Council is unconvinced about the deliverability of the major infrastructure package that underpins the eco-town proposal.
- (e) There is a lack of clarity about the overall eco credentials of the Weston-on-the-Green proposal.

It is still unclear if Cherwell District Council will be allowed by the Government to determine any application if Weston-on-the-Green is included in the final list or whether this proposal will be steam-rolled through the process by the Government. The County Council's response must be considered in all circumstances and hopefully will contribute to the rejection of any application.

---Charles Shouler, County Councillor

FLOODING

The Parish Council has been trying very hard to get the various agencies involved to act on the flooding problems in the village. A recent report from the Environment Agency has highlighted this issue in Wendlebury.

One of the major problems that the Parish Council faces is that flooding is an issue that is covered by various departments (the Environment Agency, Thames Water and the Highways Dept.) We have been in touch with all these groups and will keep contacting them to try and get a joint meeting so that we can try and get something more done.

---Anna McDonagh

SECURITY ALERT

There have been several incidents recently where fuel tanks have been emptied and large quantities of fuel stolen; it is advisable to secure any tanks with a good padlock. On one occasion the offenders gained

access to a tank by walking across several fields and they would appear to go to great lengths to get fuel. Also the theft of lead from roofs is still an ongoing problem, especially from church roofs. Offenders have been disturbed at locations during the day and several churches in particular have been subject to several thefts, the offenders returning a week or so later to remove more lead.

Finally the rural areas have also seen an increase in theft of quad bikes and horse riding equipment including trailers.

If you see anything suspicious then please report it immediately on either the emergency number 999 (if you believe that an offence is taking place at the time) or the general number 0845 8505505.

We will continue to alert both members of Farm watch and Neighbourhood watch using the ringmaster message system.

Remember you as a resident are more likely to know what is out of the ordinary in your area than anyone else.

There have been arrests made and prosecutions pending in relation to lead thefts but there are several teams out there committing these offences and we need your support to help catch those responsible.

---WPC Caroline Brown,
Neighbourhood Specialist Officer, Bicester Rural sector.

Submitted to the newsletter by Neighbourhood Watch service in Wendlebury. If you are new and you wish to receive neighbourhood watch messages: please contact janeburrett@googlemail.com or landline 01869 325876

---Jane Burrett

WENDLEBURY WI NEWS

In June we had a talk on "Silk from Cocoon to Scarf". We learnt the process of making silk and the various grade of silk you can get. We had many samples to look at and a chance to do some weaving on a loom. In June we also visited Belfair Chocolates in Banbury where they make Belgium Chocolates by hand. Again we had a very interesting talk on how chocolate is produced and plenty of different chocolates to taste. We also discovered that our favourite chocolates – Cadbury, Bourneville etc. are not real chocolate. Belfair have a shop in Banbury where they sell their delicious chocolates and also make chocolates for special occasions. We ended the evening with a buffet at the Red Cow.

By the time this goes to press we should have had a talk - "Send a Cow –Livestock for Life" There is no meeting in August but in September we will have a talk on "Harp Music (and Objects) from Paraguay"

A full list of our programme can be found on the Wendlebury Web site. Visitors or new members always welcome.

---June Pearce

CHURCH NEWS: PETER ROBERTS

Wendlebury Church was full for the funeral in June of Peter Roberts, former Churchwarden, with friends from his teaching days in Oxford and Chesterton (Audley House) as well as the village here.

The very moving address was given by his long-term friend Willie Pryor who also conducted the service.

Readings were given by his brother Michael and by Stephen Pryor, who inherited the Parish Magazine editorship from him.

The flowers were arranged by Churchwarden Beryl Orme and Betty Tinkler.

EVERGREENS

The Evergreens comprise about 80 local people who meet monthly here in Wendlebury when they are not enjoying river and canal trips and various other activities.

For more information contact Betty on 241957 or me.

---Stephen Pryor (360003).

CHANGE OF BOOKINGS AND KEY COLLECTION

Kerry Wilce has resumed being the Bookings officer for Wendlebury Village Hall. All users (regular and otherwise) need to collect the keys from him at 25 St Giles Close, OX25 2PZ. For those of you who have not collected keys from Kerry before, as you enter Wendlebury from the Bicester end of the village, St Giles Close is on the right hand side just past the post box. Kerry's house is almost directly opposite you as you enter the close, i.e. in the middle of the T! Kerry can be contacted on 01869 245738.

Please return the keys after you have finished with the Hall. If you are leaving money to pay for your booking, please put it through the letterbox – do not leave it in the porch!

When Kerry is away we will make alternative arrangements for you to pick up the keys. However, in the event of any problems, back-up keys are held by David Jones at Orchard House, Main Road (01869 242514). As a last resort, Betty Tinkler at 8 St Giles Close also has a key.

---Jack Smellie

NEWS FROM CHESTERTON C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

We are now into the sixth and final term of the school year, life in school is always busy and the next few weeks will be no exception! We will be welcoming our new pupils for the first time and the older children are visiting their new schools and looking forward to moving onto the next stage of their education.

This year we held an International Week (23rd-27th June) when we celebrated the rich experiences and origins of our families at Chesterton School. Parents and others associated with our school overwhelmed us with generous offers of help, food and objects from around the world.

I recently presented Mrs Sylvia Kelly with a certificate for a teaching award nomination that was made on her behalf. As Mrs Kelly is not a teacher, the award could not go any further. However I would like to congratulate her on behalf of the staff and children in school. Mrs Kelly asked me to say:

"I would like to say a big thank you to the person or persons who nominated me for a Teaching Award. Although I didn't get through to the final I feel very proud and privileged to have been nominated. I was presented with a certificate which is now framed and hung on the wall at home!"

Our Summer Dancing & School Association Summer Fayre took place on Friday 4th July. This is always a popular fund raising event for the school. Thank you for your support.

---Carolyn Taylor, Headteacher

SOCIAL DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 4th October: Skittles Evening in the Village Hall

Saturday 1st November Children's Halloween

Saturday 15th November: Annual Quiz

--Dave Jones

WENDLEBURY VILLAGE Parish Council

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The next WESTON FRONT meeting will take place at the Weston-on-the-Green Village Hall on Wednesday 30 July.

The first meeting will be at 6.30pm for surrounding villages and the second meeting will be at 8pm for Weston. You are welcome to join the later meeting if it is more convenient.

Please do attend. The Weston Front needs your full support.

This newsletter is the official publication of the Wendlebury Parish Council. Copies are delivered to each resident and also sent by email to those on the internet. This newsletter can also be found on the Wendlebury website:
www.wendlebury.org.uk.

Articles for future newsletters should be emailed to the editor.

The views expressed in articles are those of its authors and not necessarily those of the Council. Material submitted for the newsletter may have to be edited. This is unavoidable and we hope that authors will understand.

---Mike Broun, Editor
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