
Supporting communities in rural Oxfordshire since 1920

www.oxonrcc.org.uk

ORCC's Mission Statement

**To enable rural communities across Oxfordshire to be more socially,
economically and environmentally sustainable.**

CONTENTS

ORCC NEWS

ORCC Trading Ltd oil buying scheme
Community Shops Handbook updated
Low Carbon Communities
A History of the Best Kept Village Competition in Oxfordshire
New Village Business Groups for home workers
Community Led Planning news
Proposals for reductions in local authority service provision (including library and youth services)

FUNDING and GENERAL NEWS AND EVENTS

TOE2 - supporting Oxfordshire's environment
OPFA Community Development Officer

Keeping up to date with ORCC News

The ORCC News Bulletin is sent to you every two months - to let you know about our recent work, future events, funding and general information. For daily news updates visit the ORCC website at www.oxonrcc.org.uk

Note to Village newsletter editors - we hope you will include ORCC news in your publications, so please see www.oxonrcc.org.uk if this Bulletin does not coincide with your own production deadlines.

You are welcome to reproduce any of the information included and ORCC requests that you acknowledge the source of the material.

Do we have your email address? ORCC can send this newsletter to you electronically.

To unsubscribe or change your details, email orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk

Let us know your views – ORCC would like to receive readers' comments and feedback on this newsletter.

To make a complaint about any of our services, please ask for a copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedure. Large print and alternative formats available on request.

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

Registered office: Jericho Farm, Worton, Witney, OX29 4SZ

T: 01865 883488. F: 01865 883191. W: www.oxonrcc.org.uk

Registered in England as a company limited by guarantee (no.2461552) and as a charity (no.900560)

ORCC NEWS

ORCC Trading Limited oil buying scheme

Nowadays, charities are being expected to stand on their own feet and not rely on government funds to finance the services they provide, so ORCC's board has been looking at how to generate income in ways that are ethical and 'fit' with our organisation's aims.

ORCC has now launched a new county-wide bulk oil-buying scheme, which will be delivered through our new trading arm: ORCC Trading Limited.

The bulk oil-buying scheme is aimed at bringing communities together to make the most of joint buying power so that great savings can be made and passed on to customers.

We want the scheme to be rooted in communities - because that's the way that ORCC works - and are looking for local volunteers who will act as 'go-betweens' for us. Their job will be to tell us each month how much oil the people in their village want to order, and then telling people when the oil will arrive and how much it will cost. 'We've made it as simple as possible because we know people are busy' said ORCC's Chief Executive Linda Watson, 'Local co-ordinators are going to be vital to the success of the scheme and our priority at the moment is to recruit and build up a network of volunteers in interested communities. Co-ordinators won't have to do the negotiating with the oil suppliers and won't have to deal with any money, so we don't expect this to take much time.'

ORCC believes that finding a way to keep fuel costs as low as possible is particularly important in rural areas, where many households don't have mains gas. Research commissioned by our national RCC network has shown that in Oxfordshire more than half the people who live in fuel poverty (i.e. with fuel costs that are more than 10% of their income) live in rural areas. This is out of proportion to the number of people who actually *live* in rural areas (37.7%). We don't think that's right.

The scheme will also help to reduce the carbon footprint of the actual delivery system. Every time a tanker comes out to make a delivery, it's using a lot of fuel - a full tanker may only get about 8 miles per gallon! So if deliveries are organised so that one tanker can reach as *many* customers in as *small* an area as possible, fuel consumption is reduced.

ORCC will also benefit as an organisation, as income from the buying scheme membership fees will help to support our work.

Full details of how the scheme works are set out in two leaflets - one for local community co-ordinators, and one for members of the scheme. [Local co-ordinators' leaflet](#) and [Members' leaflet](#). Additional categories of membership are available for village halls and local businesses.

Interested in knowing how to set up a Community Shop in your village?

ORCC has recently updated its handbook guiding you through the process of setting up a community shop from identifying local need through to the launch event. It is available to download free from the ORCC website www.oxonrcc.org.uk
Jane Barker, Village Shops Development Worker jane.barker@oxonrcc.org.uk

Low Carbon Communities Update

Carbon Reduction Competition

ORCC and Climate-X-Change are pleased that six community groups have taken up the **Big Carbon Challenge**, sponsored by Cottsway Housing Association and supported by Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council.

Cropredy, Hailey, Shrivenham, East Hendred, Eynsham and Charlbury will compete to drive down the carbon emissions of their competition group. Entrants will be trained in the *Carbon Conversations* method of low-carbon living and will soon be undertaking climate action activities in their communities. Keep an eye out for what might be happening! The ORCC website will also post details of upcoming events.

The competition will run from January until May, with the winners announced in June. Prizes from a £1,500 fund include those for the group with the biggest collective carbon reduction and the group that demonstrates the most effective community climate action strategy.

Want to take action to tackle climate change but don't know where to start?

ORCC can help! If you would like to take action to help drive down greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change contact Tom McCulloch, Community Development Worker (Climate Change) for advice on setting up a group in your community.

Email tom.mcculloch@oxonrcc.org.uk or tel. 01865 883488.

A History of the Best Kept Village Competition in Oxfordshire

ORCC has just published a limited edition history of the Competition in Oxfordshire. Copies will be sent to parish councils who were regular participants and to volunteer BKV judges.

If you would like a copy, please send your request with an addressed A5 (23cm x 16cm) envelope stamped with 40p postage to ORCC, Jericho Farm, Worton, Witney OX29 4SZ.

Better together – new Village Business Groups for home workers

Local business owners and home workers have been finding out who else works from home like them in their community and getting together to see how they can help each other do better. Supported by the ORCC Business and Community Links Worker, Catharine Arakelian, three new business groups in villages had their first meetings at Wendlebury, Chilton, nr Didcot and Brill in December.

Home business people in ten other Oxfordshire villages are hoping to get together with like-minded people in 2011. We would like to hear from others locally who want to join them for an initial meeting. The ten villages are Bampton, Kingston Blount, Brightwell Baldwin, Baulking, South Newington, Long Wittenham, Blewbury, Wheatley, Letcombe Regis and Deddington.

The ORCC home worker project aims to put people who work from home in touch with each other for mutual support wherever they live in Oxfordshire.

Wendlebury contact: (acting organiser) Julian Cordy 07788 568281

Chilton organiser: Fiona Edlington 01235 863331

Brill organisers: Barbara Osborne 07831222197 Barbara@barretts-selfstorage.co.uk or Miranda Salmon 01844 238003 Miranda@mirandasalmon.co.uk

For details of how to contact the other group organisers or for more information about the project tel. Catharine at ORCC 01865 883488 catharine.arakelian@oxonrcc.org.uk

Community Led Planning News

A Refreshing Community Plan

Duns Tew have recently completed their Community Led Plan refresh, five years after they created their original plan.

Charles McBean, the Plan Chair, explains why doing a refresh is so important.

'A village plan, even something as simple as our Update, focuses the mind on what we would like to see done (or sometimes not done) in order to improve the day to day life of our village as well as strengthen a sense of community. It also gives the Parish Council something to work towards that has been endorsed by the village.'

We recommend a complete refresh should be undertaken every 5 years.

A Community Led Plan is a living, working document that should reflect the changes in your community. Maybe you have completed all the original projects and want to tackle new areas. Perhaps there are topic areas that you did not consider first time round like broadband, green issues or the needs of young people that you would like to explore. Maybe there are actions still outstanding that require new impetus to take them forward. Finally the new government drive to devolve power down to the local level could result in greater participation in local democracy.

Doing your refresh is a good way to bring your community together to make sure you know what the needs of your parish are and what you are prepared to do to make it happen.

Raising awareness - the Radley way

Radley Community Led Plan Team have been tireless in their dedication to reach out to everyone in the village over the past year. An amazing amount of effort has gone into raising awareness about the plan and how important it is that everyone gets involved with shaping the future of the village. All this work has been really important for the design of their questionnaire which is due to go out early in 2011.

Radley came up with a great way to raise awareness of the village economy by arranging community visits. Other achievements have included:

- Creating a [Parish Planning Blog](#) to keep the Community aware of the team's activities
- Having a consultation stall at The Good Friday Walk and Village Fete
- Asking for ideas to improve the village at the School Christmas Bazaar and the Village Christmas Bazaar
- Conducting a series of mini-surveys to ascertain key issues in the community
- Fund raising to attract sufficient money to allow the project to proceed

The team have also been working closely with Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Radley Parish Council and a great number of societies and organisations in the village to identify possible solutions to issues identified in their consultations. 'Engaging the Community is a difficult but vital part of the Community Led Planning process', explains Kayla Tomlinson, Chair of the Radley Plan Team. 'Consultation is the key as we feel that will give a clear idea on how the community sees the village developing and changing over the next 15 years'.

ORCC can help and support you to create a plan for your village, or advise on how to refresh your existing plan. Contact Anton or Jo, Community Development Officers, on 01865 883488 or email jo.ord@oxonrcc.org.uk; anton.nath@oxonrcc.org.uk

Don't wait, do it now!

Proposals for reductions in local authority service provision (including library and youth services)

You will be aware that the County Council has announced proposals to reorganise the delivery of the library service and youth service, which will involve the closure of some local branches/centres. The Council is inviting local communities affected by the proposals to start considering how they might be able to take on the provision of local services proposed for closure in a way that is financially sustainable and responsive to local need.

The proposals are as yet in outline stage. What is clear, however, is that savings will have to be made and decisions on the level of those savings will be made by the end of February. The detailed thinking on exactly how service delivery changes will be organised will continue to be developed after that.

ORCC will wish to support communities who are considering whether they can take on the delivery of threatened local services and we are trying to keep in touch with policy developments within the County Council. We will be doing this in partnership with other members of the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance (OSCA). It will be important to facilitate discussions between local communities and the statutory service providers and ORCC will want to help, if needed.

In the case of the library service proposals there will be a public consultation process in early February and more detailed information about what the reorganised library service would look like will be made available by the County Council in readiness for that. The consultation process will provide an opportunity for communities to discuss ways of supporting service delivery through local self-help initiatives.

If your community is interested in keeping in touch with developments, let us know by phone or by emailing: orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk. You may also be concerned about another aspect of local authority service delivery change not mentioned above and, if so, we would be pleased to be informed.

GENERAL NEWS AND EVENTS

TOE2 - Supporting Oxfordshire's Environment

TOE2 is an exciting new venture being developed through the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) to drive the strategic direction of community environmental initiatives in Oxfordshire. TOE2 will provide support and funding for communities wishing to deliver real improvements to biodiversity, the sustainable use of renewable resources and access to the countryside and green spaces.

TOE2 will aim to

- Promote and improve the **biodiversity** of Oxfordshire's wildlife habitats
- Encourage and develop the **sustainable use of renewable resources**
- Increase **access** to the local countryside and green spaces

TOE2 will have a clear set of funding guidelines which will be closely matched to current strategic priorities in these three areas in Oxfordshire, whilst supporting the delivery of projects at the community level.

TOE2 will work with a variety of funders, including the Landfill Communities Fund, to make funds available to environmental projects in communities across Oxfordshire. We plan to be up and running in early 2011. For further information please contact Fiona Danks on 01865 883488 or Fiona.danks@oxonrcc.org.uk

Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association introducing Nicole O'Donnell

I have just taken over from Roger Davis as Community Development Officer, following his retirement at the end of 2010, and now look forward to working with you all to help you to achieve your projects.

Playgrounds and playing fields remain vital to the healthy and happy life of a community and its young people. OPFA is here to offer guidance and support, and we will be focusing in the coming months in particular on helping you to navigate through the challenges and get the best value for whatever money you have available.

I have spent the last three years undertaking the voluntary role of Chairperson of my local pre-school, and so have a good understanding of working to help the community, and the rewards and frustrations that this can entail! Prior to that, I worked as a Project Manager for an international market research company.

I hope that both experiences will help me in undertaking the role of Community Development Officer. With two small children, I have also spent a lot of time visiting playgrounds and playing fields, and seen first hand the impact of the work that the OPFA undertakes.

Nicole O'Donnell tel. 01865 883488 or email OPFA@oxonrcc.org.uk

Activities for Young People

Oxfordshire County Council, along with the district councils, has a web site www.activitiesoxfordshire.info giving details of many activities available in the county ranging from sports to arts and volunteering to youth clubs. The site allows people to use various filters to find what would suit them and how they can get there by public transport.

OxTAIL Oxfordshire Travel Advice Line

A free journey planning and advice service has been launched for older people and those with a higher level of support needs. The service is available on 01865 323738 or email oxtail@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Big Lottery update

In early December the Big Lottery Fund opened a £75m community buildings grants programme for voluntary organisations and parish and town councils in England. Not-for-profit groups will be able to apply for sums of between £100,000 and £500,000 each from the BLF's Reaching Communities programme.

A BLF spokeswoman said funding would be available for "all types of multi-purpose buildings used by communities, including memorial halls, community centres and village halls".

Each project should have a total value of no more than £750,000. The new funding stream has been designed with a view to transforming current buildings into community buildings that can offer a wide range of activities benefiting a broad group of citizens.

Big Lottery has decided to target the funding to specific areas which will be balanced between rural and urban areas to ensure a fair mix. Looking at their map there are some small areas identified in Oxfordshire.

An online support checker will enable you to assess your project's eligibility at a glance, before submitting an outline proposal, by visiting www.biglotteryfund.org.uk click on Reaching Communities Fund. Applications will be assessed on a monthly rolling basis.

Good Night Out

Good Night Out, a revised rural touring scheme, will be re-launched in February with the first shows taking to the stage in Autumn 2011.

It is managed under contract by The Theatre Chipping Norton on behalf of the Oxfordshire Arts Partnership - a partnership of all the local authorities in Oxfordshire.

The scheme is aimed at helping Oxfordshire villages bring live performance into the heart of their community. Your village hall might want to consider becoming one of their Promoters bringing some of the best professional entertainment for your family, friends and neighbours to enjoy. As one of their Promoters you can select a programme menu of shows available, manage the local publicity and sell the tickets. Many of the shows offered will be subsidised by the participating councils - Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire; there will be memorable theatre, folk, jazz and blues, classical music, comedy, family and children's shows to choose from. *Good Night Out* will provide help in terms of posters, leaflets, a website, marketing advice and training and PR support.

If you are interested in more information please contact Tei Williams on 01869 337940
ruraltouring@chippingnortontheatre.com

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Oxfordshire Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is the primary plan for the Fire and Rescue Service. It provides details of the strategic direction for future fire and rescue provision in the county during the next two years.

The strategy is aimed at saving lives by identifying, assessing, reducing and controlling the risks to our community from fire and other emergencies by providing a planning process that ensures the right resources are in the right place at the right time.

The plan can be viewed by following this link [IRMP](#) or tel. 08000 325999 to request a copy.

Broadband and mobile coverage in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire County Council has embarked on a project to make sure everyone in Oxfordshire has broadband and mobile coverage. About one third of the county has very poor or no coverage at all. These are mainly rural areas where the market has failed to deliver adequate broadband.

Cllr David Robertson, Deputy Leader of the Council, is championing the broadband project and has assembled a team to take the work forward, including making a bid for funding from the government's new Broadband Delivery UK initiative.

You can find out more about the project on the County Council's website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/broadband including:

- The current situation
- The plan
- Why full broadband coverage is important
- Broadband, new building and planning.

If you would like to get involved or could help in any way then please contact Dawn Pettis tel. 01865 816082, or email: dawn.pettis@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Does the thought of your next heating bill leave you cold?

As the price of fuel increases, energy bills can become unmanageable. To help combat this, a free phone helpline has been set up to advise residents in Oxfordshire how to cut their fuel bills.

The service is offered by the United Sustainable Energy Agency in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, the five district councils, and the Primary Care Trust. Anyone who is struggling with their fuel bills can call **0800 107 00 44** for free, impartial advice on:

- Improving the efficiency of your property through cavity wall and loft insulation including the grants available
- Local authority grants
- Switching energy suppliers to find the best deal
- Social tariffs provided by the energy companies for vulnerable customers
- Advice on fuel debt
- Home Improvement Agencies who undertake minor repairs for vulnerable home owners
- Improving your energy efficiency to cut your energy bills

United Sustainable Energy Agency is a not for profit company providing services to the Public Sector, Business, and individuals to help them reduce carbon, adapt to climate change and tackle fuel poverty.

Foster carers needed

Foster carers combine a love and desire to help children with a passion and dedication to providing the best possible care.

Could you foster?

We need short term and long term foster carers as well as carers who can just help out for weekends and school holidays for children of all ages from babies to teenagers.

Foster carers receive a comprehensive training and support package along with financial support. We need a diverse range of people with different skills and qualities to come forward so that more children are placed in the right home, first time.

Log on to www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/fostering to find out more details or call 0800 7837524.
