

Carterton-Witney-Oxford rail campaign update - see inside

WEST OXFORDSHIRE OBSERVER

News and views for residents of Aston, Bampton, Burford, Carterton, Cassington, Charlbury, Clanfield, Eynsham, Finstock, Freeland, Hailey, Hanborough, Leafield, Minster Lovell, Standlake, Stanton Harcourt, Stonesfield, Tackley, The Bartons, Witney, Woodstock, the Wychwoods & area. Paid for and delivered by Lib Dem members and volunteers.



The local Lib Dem team gained five seats from the Conservatives in the local elections in May. The Tories lost control of the district council. Only the Lib Dems can beat the Conservatives right across West Oxfordshire.

CONSERVATIVE CHAOS AND INCOMPETENCE

“A typical family will still see their tax bill rise by £290 next year”

The Telegraph

“500,000 state pensioners to be ‘dragged’ into paying income tax”

EXPRESS

“Millions of households brace for more price hikes”

Mirror

“Chaos engulfs the Government”

The Telegraph

Yet again, people across West Oxfordshire are being let down by chaos and instability from Robert Courts MP and the Conservatives.

The Conservatives have trashed the British economy, pushed our local health services to the brink, and added hundreds of pounds to people's monthly mortgage payments.

At the same time as proposing massive tax cuts for the wealthiest, there was no help available for those struggling on lower incomes.

Now Conservative MPs have installed another out-of-touch Prime Minister with no plan to repair the damage and without giving the British people a say.

The Conservatives have shown time and time again that they don't understand the challenges local people face – whether it's paying their heating bills or waiting weeks to see a GP or dentist.

No wonder so many people are feeling let down by Robert Courts MP and the Conservatives.

Witney constituency neck and neck - see back page

COMMENT

Communities under threat

Our community is under pressure because of bad decisions by the Conservatives both locally and nationally.

Speculative development

At a local level, we now face the threat of developers getting their way on unsuitable and unplanned developments across our district.

This is a direct result of the Conservatives pushing through ridiculously high housing targets in the Local Plan.

Local residents will rightly be wondering whether there is any link between those decisions and the massive donations developers have made to Robert Courts MP and the local Conservative Party.

Robin Hood in Reverse

Many local residents are also facing the choice between heating and eating this winter.

The Conservatives have failed to do nearly enough to bring bills down and has fuelled higher inflation and rocketing interest rates.

They have given massive tax cuts to the richest while tax bills for most households will rise.

Thousands of local families are seeing their costs rise while their income is squeezed.

Lib Dems are helping

At least our local Lib Dem team are doing what they can to help.

The district council is promoting the help that is available to local people and supporting local organisations to provide as much help as possible.

Clean up our rivers



Clr Alaric Smith and Sir Ed Davey MP testing water quality in Bampton with WASP.

The West Oxfordshire Lib Dem team is putting pressure on Thames Water to do more to stop raw sewage being pumped into our local rivers and waterways.

A report by the Environment Agency shows that water quality is WORSE THAN EVER and recommending much tougher action against water company bosses.

The new Lib Dem-led District Council is calling on Thames Water to make improvements quickly and to be more transparent about how much sewage is being

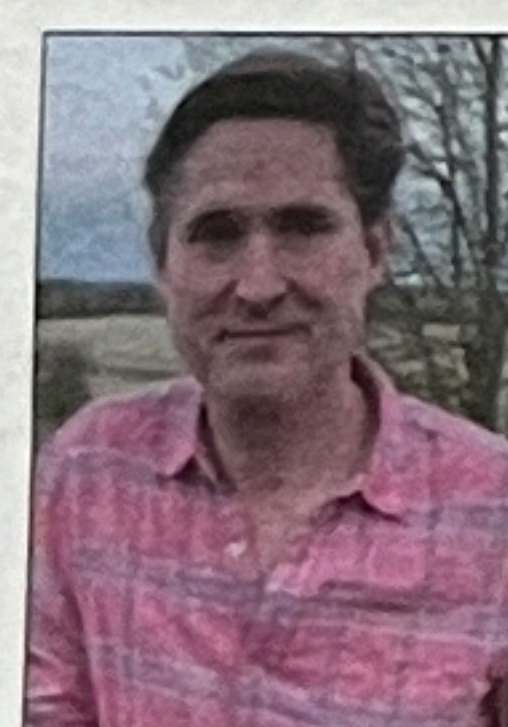
released into local rivers.

Witney's Conservative MP came under fire last year for voting against measures that would have made water companies clean up their act.

"The amount of sewage being pumped into local rivers is absolutely disgraceful," said Lib Dem councillor Alaric Smith.

"Robert Courts MP should be ashamed of himself for putting the profits of water companies ahead of clean rivers and our local environment."

Carterton-Witney-Oxford Trainline Update



Following approval from the Lib Dem led county council, a feasibility study into the train line is now underway.

"Residents across the district will benefit from a rail line linking Carterton, Eynsham, Witney and

Oxford. It will open the way for more high skilled, high wage jobs and create a much more reliable and sustainable transport network," said Lib Dem district councillor Charlie Maynard.

"The local Lib Dem team have been campaigning for the rail line to be reopened for years and this is a big step in the right direction!"

Serious concern over lack of dentist appointments

The number of people who've seen an NHS dentist in Oxfordshire has plummeted in recent years, shocking new figures uncovered by the Liberal Democrats have revealed.

Only 4 in 10 adults were able to secure an appointment with an NHS dentist in the past two years. This is down from 5 in 10 who saw an NHS dentist in the two years up to 2018.

The stark figures were compiled by the House of Commons Library following a request by the Liberal Democrats.

It comes as distressing polling has found that one in five (21%) adults unable to see a dentist have carried out DIY

dentistry in a desperate attempt to relieve their pain.

The Liberal Democrats are calling on the Government to set out an NHS winter rescue plan, to provide urgent help to those living in dental agony.

"Far too many people in Oxfordshire are struggling to see an NHS dentist and get the affordable dental healthcare they need," said local Lib Dem campaigner Tim Sumner.

"It's great to see that the Lib Dems are urging the Government to fund an NHS winter rescue package to improve access to NHS dental appointments and to speed up treatment for those who need it."

Under threat from Tory housing plan

West Oxfordshire is now under increased threat from speculative developments because of the sky high housing targets the Conservatives put into the Local Plan.

A Planning Inspector has said that the district has failed to demonstrate that it has identified enough sites for housing to be built on in the next few years.

That makes it easier for developers to get their way on planning applications.

"The Conservatives refused to listen when we warned them that their housing targets were unrealistic," said Eynsham councillor Dan Levy.

"Our district now faces the threat of speculative development because Tory councillors were so determined to push through unrealistic housing targets."

The new Lib Dem leadership of the council are working hard to sort out the mess left by the Tories.

They have asked council planning officers to do everything they can to move already planned sites forward.

They have also started work on the district's next Local Plan where they will push for realistic and sustainable housing targets.



Hailey resident Paul Marsh and Councillor Lidia Arciszewska at the Witney North development site.

Bampton & Clanfield Planning FOCUS

LATEST NEWS: Is speculative development on the way?
BACKGROUND: Why is there so much development?
FUTURE: We need more realistic housing targets.

Is West Oxfordshire under threat from speculative development?

How can things be improved?

During the local elections in May, local Lib Dem campaigners warned that the Conservatives' sky high housing targets had led to the threat of speculative development looming over West Oxfordshire.

Delivering for YOU



It was all change at West Oxfordshire District Council in May. The Lib Dem team gained five seats from the Conservatives and are now leading the district council.

The council have agreed to invest £750,000 in projects that will make a real difference to the lives of residents across West Oxfordshire.

"Funding will be available to help residents who are impacted by the Cost of Living Crisis and business support for local towns and villages to soften the blow from the Tory economic downturn," said new Council Leader councillor Andy Graham.

"There will also be support for community based schemes that help to protect our local environment."



Safer Streets

The new Lib Dem led County Council is already delivering on one of its key pledges.

With growing concerns about the speed and level of traffic in local towns and villages, the roll-out of 20 mph zones is moving quickly.

There have been hundreds of collisions on local roads over the last few years, some very serious including fatalities.

Aston, Bampton, The Bartons, Bladon, Brize Norton, Cassington, Clanfield, Charlbury, Combe, Fowler, Upper Milton, Standlake and Witney Town are in the first tranche of places to benefit from the new scheme, thanks to swift action by local Parish Councils and Lib Dem County councillors.

"We've had numerous requests from residents for safer speed limits," said councillor Dave Jackson.

"It used to be a long process but the new County Council administration has made the process much quicker."

According to the published timetable, final decisions and implementation will take place between October and January.

LIB DEMS WIN IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE



The local Lib Dems win big in West Oxfordshire. They gained five seats from the Tories and are now leading West Oxfordshire District Council, working with the Greens and Labour.

The Lib Dems were the big winners across the county in the local elections in May, gaining ten seats from the Conservatives.

Here in West Oxfordshire they made five gains and ended Conservative control of the council. This included overturning large Tory majorities in Bampton and Clanfield, Burford and Freeland and Hanborough.

In Cherwell District they made four gains from the Conservatives.

They also gained one seat in the Vale of White Horse.

“The Tories are losing ground across Oxfordshire!” said Cllr Carl Rylett.

POLL PUTS WITNEY TOO CLOSE TO CALL!

CON
41%

LIB
DEM
37%

YouGov MRP poll of Conservative v. Lib Dem marginal seats

June 2022

LAB
13%

GRN
5%

The Liberal Democrats are within 4% of the Tories according to leading pollsters YouGov.

In a poll of Conservative v. Liberal Democrat marginal constituencies, they found that the Lib Dems are the clear challengers here in Witney constituency.

“Support for the Lib Dems is growing fast here,” said Lib Dem group leader on Oxfordshire County Council Liz Leffman.

“We closed the gap on the Conservatives last time, made further gains in the County and District Council elections, and have taken several seats off the Tories in local by-elections.”

LIB DEM COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

The Cost of Living Crisis is having a huge impact on everyday life as the prices of essentials are rising.

Your local Lib Dem team understand that many residents across West Oxfordshire are struggling to make ends meet.

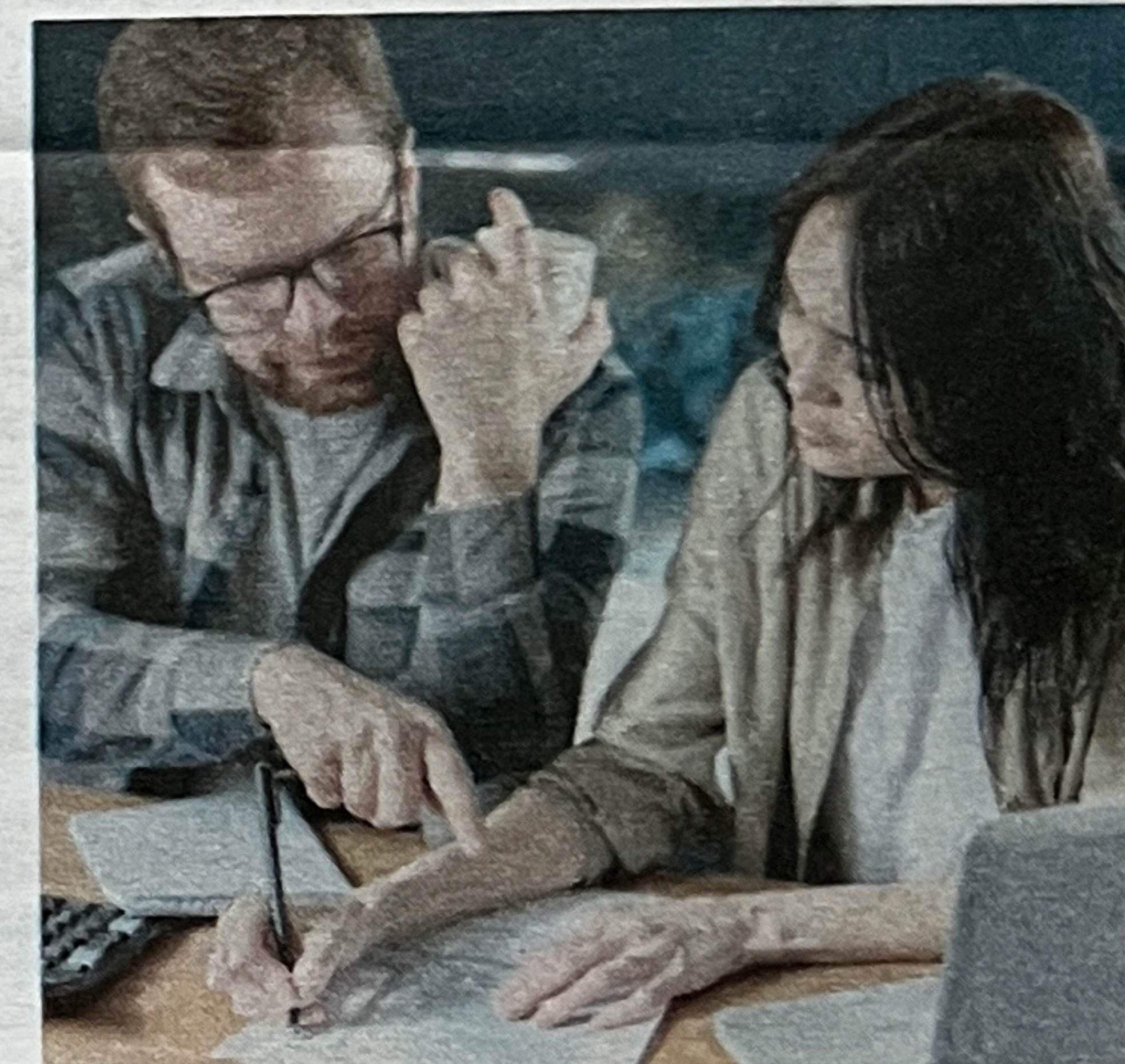
There is lots of help available from your local councils, should you need support in these challenging times.

Visit the link below to see what’s available and use the free benefits calculator to find out what you could be entitled to.

There is help with childcare costs, discretionary housing payments, council tax support and help if you’re struggling to pay for food or energy.

Many people aren’t aware that they can claim this support, so please do take the time to check and let others know that they may be eligible for help.

www.westoxon.gov.uk/news-items/help-if-you-re-struggling-with-living-costs/



Join the growing Lib Dem team

Local Lib Dem activity is organised by a growing team of volunteers.

If you can help in any way please let us know how you can help here:

www.oxonlibdems.uk/volunteer

Or you can support our campaigning by joining the party. Find out more and sign up here:

www.libdems.org.uk/join-local

West Oxfordshire Lib Dems: Working for YOU