

ED VAIZEY WRITES...

The summer is now over and the usual hurly burly is resuming, though I spent most of August at my desk, so the pace of life has not changed very much. I'm learning how to balance my ministerial responsibilities with those to you in the constituency. There are one or two decisions from central government which can cause concern locally. When this happens, my priority is still to represent my constituents, and do the best that I can for them. For example, the future refurbishment of Grove pre-school has been put in doubt because of funding decisions. It is still my responsibility to my constituents to make representations as best I can to central government, which is what I have done.



I hope that one of my responsibilities - the roll out of broadband - will have a positive impact locally. In fact I spoke recently at a conference in Oxfordshire organised to discuss the roll out of superfast broadband, and I hope that Oxfordshire will benefit from the increasing focus on ensuring that we get broadband out to as many areas as possible as quickly as possible. (I have also been to conferences in Herefordshire and Cumbria on this subject in case people think I am giving Oxfordshire special treatment.) On this topic, I was delighted to launch Wallingford's wi-fi, which is a brilliant idea, relatively cost-effective, and which I think will be a major attraction for the town.

Housing developments remain a concern, and I continue to meet with local developers and local people to express my own concerns and hear those of others. On a related matter, the opening of a new Tesco in Faringdon is also raising concerns about the effect it could have on shops in the town. The desire for local communities to have a strong say in how their area develops remains as strong as ever, and it is something we should respect and support.

The reservoir issue is reaching a conclusion. The independent enquiry is due to report quite soon, and it will then be up to the Government to decide whether to allow it to go ahead or not. I think campaigners have done a brilliant job in showing that there are real viable alternatives to the scheme. I also continue to take an interest in plans to build a waste treatment centre in Sutton Courtenay, which remain controversial.

Recent local issues that I have got involved in include the opening of a new library in Thame, very welcome as I am responsible for libraries in Government. I also attended the summer reading challenge in Didcot, which is a national scheme to encourage our kids to read. I was delighted to attend the refurbishment of Steventon pre-school and the annual Grove parish council drinks, as well as the re-opening of the Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary, which I was closely involved with through its troubles last year. I also went to the opening of the new village shop in Brightwell, which is run by the community - very Big Society! (It was opened by a Guardian journalist, which made it even more ecumenical.)

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage and Didcot (Con)

MP'S SURGERY WITH ED VAIZEY

5.30-7.00pm, unless stated otherwise

1 Oct	Wallingford , Town Hall
8 Oct	Faringdon , Corn Exchange
22 Oct	Wantage , Civic Hall
5 Nov	Didcot , King Alfred Drive, Community Centre
19 Nov	Wallingford , Town Hall
10 Dec	Wantage , Civic Hall
Contact Ed Vaizey by	
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E-mail	vaizeye@parliament.uk
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Tel	0207 219 6350

DO YOU CARE FOR SOMEONE WHO IS ILL, DISABLED, FRAIL OR HAS AN ADDICTION?

Caring responsibilities can be emotionally draining and physically demanding. Would you like to meet people who are also caring for someone? Have a cuppa, chat to others and find out what services are available to you?

- We can help you set up a meeting to find other carers in your area and find out what you want
- We can help with the initial funding for setting up carer support groups
- We are looking for ex carers who are happy to pass on their knowledge to people in similar situations

We want to know, how we can help you,

Please contact me:

Brian Conroy, Community Development Team
West Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse, Tel 01993-704007
e-mail brian.conroy@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Got something to say?

Be a part of Oxfordshire Voice

NHS Oxfordshire is calling on people in the county who have something to say about their community to become part of Oxfordshire Voice. Have you ever commented on a story on a newspaper or radio website? Do you want the opportunity to regularly comment where it can make a real difference to your area? If you answered yes to these questions then you might be interested in Oxfordshire Voice.

Oxfordshire Voice is a citizen's panel made up of Oxfordshire residents who have volunteered to give up some of their time to answer four questionnaires a year created in partnership between NHS Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire County Council.

The panel is carefully recruited to be representative of the population of Oxfordshire but there are some areas where we need to recruit more people these include:

- people, particularly men, aged 16 to 34
- people in full time work
- people from Black and other minority ethnic groups living in Oxfordshire.

You can have your say online or by post - whichever you prefer. You could be invited to take part in other activities like online discussion forums or group discussions if this is something you are interested in.

Previous topics the panel have answered questions on include: where people think the council and NHS should save money and what the priorities should be, alcohol and drinking patterns, whether the police and other public services are successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour and people's experiences of local health services and transport issues.

What the panel says is used by the Council and NHS to help develop services and change the way things are done. For example, one set of results asked for more support for pregnant women as a result NHS Oxfordshire developed a service for new mums just out of hospital with their babies, to provide breastfeeding support. Feedback about transport issues has been used in the council's transport plan.

So, if you want to be part of Oxfordshire Voice and tell us what you think and make a real difference to your county - all you need to do is complete a short survey you can access it online at: <http://bit.ly/9hxa3c> or you can fill in a paper version. To request a paper copy please call Annika Howard, at NHS Oxfordshire, on 01865 334643.