



Charlbury Town Council News

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(NB this is a new, and permanent, email address.)
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<https://charlbury-tc.gov.uk/> (NB this our new website address.)

Grass cutting

Grass cutting has been a hot topic recently. The responsibilities are complex, with different areas cut by the County Council, West Oxon District Council, Housing Associations, the Town Council and private residents. The Town Council is switching towards more nature-friendly mowing patterns to encourage wildflowers and insects, but this doesn't mean not mowing at all. You can read our agreed mowing policy here: <https://charlbury-tc.gov.uk/land-and-nature-team/>.

The County Council has stopped mowing some of the grassed areas which it owns and which it used to mow – for example at Five Ways – and the Town Council is working to resolve this situation.

At Ticknell Piece Road, where West Oxon District Council has had responsibility for mowing, an agreed cut in March/April did not take place, so the grass grew longer. This has led to discussion with residents on how grass areas there could be managed, reflecting all views. There are other areas such as the Green, where ownership of grassed areas, and responsibility for their mowing, is unclear. Nevertheless, following complaints about mowing there, we are going to meet residents to investigate what mowing can be arranged.

Royal Visit

Town Cllr James Styring welcomed the Countess of Wessex during her visit to the town on 17th May, on behalf of the Town Council and the people of Charlbury. The royal visit was organised by the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Marjorie Glasgow, to mark the contributions made to the local community by volunteers during the pandemic.

E-bike

The Town Council has been promoting e-bikes as an alternative to cars for local journeys. Evidence suggests that people buying electric bikes tend to use them more and more over time, as they discover how useful and enjoyable they are to ride, and the Town Council's e-bike is designed to act as a taster for people thinking of going electric and we now have an e-bike you can borrow if you live or work in Charlbury. If you fancy borrowing the e-bike for up to two weeks (free of charge) then please fill in the contact form at <https://charlbury->

tc.gov.uk/borrow-the-council-e-bike/. Bookings are now being taken for the September and into the autumn.

Street Fair 17th September

The council will have stalls at this year's Street Fair. Please come and say hello, meet some of your councillors and tell us what you'd like to see us do for – or with – you. There'll also be information about an upcoming consultation into traffic improvements for the town.

Grants for the Financial Year 2023–24

Each year the Town Council makes grants to local organisations for the benefit of the community. If your organisation may need a grant for the financial year 2023–24, you can complete an application form at <https://charlbury-tc.gov.uk/apply-for-a-grant/> or ask the Town Clerk for a hard copy. Applications, along with supporting documents, must be received by midday on 31st October 2022. Late applications cannot be considered. The Clerk can advise on what can, and cannot, be grant-aided under the Local Government Act.

The Bell

We know people are concerned about the Bell, which has now been empty for some eighteen months. Its owners, Greene King, say they are in the process of finding new tenants and we believe that some refurbishment work is planned. To protect the pub's future, the Town Council has had the Bell listed as an 'Asset of Community Value' (ACV), meaning that if were put on the market, the local community would be able to put together a bid to buy the premises to keep it in use as a pub. An ACV would also give some protection in planning terms.

Teaching Ukrainians in Charlbury

Town Councillors Claire Wilding and James Styring are running a programme to teach English to local Ukrainian refugees. We currently run seven classes in Charlbury and three over in Icomb, near Stow-on-the-Wold. We teach around 20 students with a team of 14 volunteer teachers. One of the biggest needs of Ukrainians when they arrive in the UK is to improve their English so they can access health services, do things like open a bank account, go shopping and find a job. Our students' English has improved quickly since we started this programme in May. We are very grateful to Charlbury Baptist Church for allowing us free and very frequent access to their wonderful church hall at the top of Dyers Hill and also to Charlbury Refugee Action Group (CRAG) for helping us get started and providing us with hundreds of pounds worth of teaching materials for use with our students.

Traffic Survey

Almost a year ago a team of 30 volunteers collected traffic data at different times of the day, over two sessions a couple of weeks apart (in term time and during the summer holidays) to gauge the volumes and directions of traffic that is passing through Charlbury every day. Richard Fairhurst has processed the many thousands of data points that we collected and has produced a report which you can read at <https://charlbury-tc.gov.uk/journeys-team/>.

The data showed that the majority of vehicles driving were travelling from Witney to Enstone and back again in the afternoon, but the flow is heavy all day. Traffic flow to and from Spelsbury (in other words, Chipping Norton to Witney) is the second largest flow and there's also significant flow towards Woodstock in the mornings and back again in the afternoons, which is traffic mainly originating in Charlbury. As would be expected, town centre traffic levels are lower than on the Slade. Consistently through the day, 10% of turns

at Five Ways are into the town centre via Park Street or Hixet Wood; and 15%–20% of turns at the Enstone Road crossroads are into the town centre via Enstone Road. The one-way system serves to funnel traffic through Market Street and about 80% of Market Street traffic then leaves Charlbury via Dyers Hill: however, much to our surprise, the great majority does not turn into the station. At the bottom of Nine Acres Lane, meanwhile, the major movement is from Thames Street onto Nine Acres Lane. This is mostly traffic originating from Dyers Hill. This suggests a significant flow from the Burford area to the Enstone and Woodstock roads. The data is being used to inform Charlbury's 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan' which is currently under development. You can read the full report at at <https://charlbury-tc.gov.uk/journeys-team/>.

Graffiti

The Town Council has purchased a graffiti removal kit so that we can tackle the graffiti that has sprung up around town.

Accessibility

We have worked with the Thomas Gifford Trust to create an accessible entrance to the Playing Close to help residents with wheelchairs, walking frames and pushchairs. We are working on other improvements to make our green spaces more accessible.