

# Woodley HERALD



## Welcome to Woodley Herald!

In this edition we have included a freepost questionnaire for you to give us your views on Woodley, the council's services and your town. Please do respond and tell us what you like about your town and what could be improved.

The Woodley Community Partnership is working on a Town Plan for Woodley which will influence future planning policy. It has sponsored a **£50** prize draw for questionnaire respondents. You've got to be in it to win it! Remember, your opinion counts and your participation will help to shape the Town Plan.

## Police get an office base in Woodley again

Woodley Town Council is pleased to announce the completion of a formal agreement with Thames Valley Police for a dedicated office at the Oakwood Centre for the neighbourhood police team to use as a base. The agreement includes a commitment from the police to hold surgeries and provide neighbourhood police officers and two police community support officers (recruitment permitting) in the town.

As soon as the necessary police equipment is installed, the local police and the PCSOs will be using the office as a base during their shifts. Although it will not operate as a police station, it will result in the police being in the town longer during their shifts and increase the already beneficial liaison on local matters between the police and the Town Council.

Residents will be able to leave information or messages, in confidence, for police officers and the PCSOs at the Council office reception. Visit us at the Oakwood Centre or call 0118 969 0356 during office hours for more information.



*Town Mayor Cllr Tony Mattingley welcomes PCSO Irene McKenzie to Woodley*

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## February 2007

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## French market

Twice a year a little bit of Woodley goes all continental when the French market comes to town. The next dates for your diaries are March 9, 10 and 11 when the air will be filled with the smell of fresh bread, garlic and fromage!



## Classic car show

On Easter Saturday (April 7) there will be a classic car show in Woodley town centre. Lots of classic cars to see and you may be lucky enough to be able to sit behind the wheel of one or two beauties!

These events and the many others that take place throughout the year in the town centre are organised by the Town Centre Manager.

## Goodbye Gillian

Over the last nine years, Gillian Kaye has run the annual Winter Extravaganza, developed the thriving monthly farmers' market and arranged dozens of "Sunny Saturday" events, car boot sales, concerts, and French markets. She has introduced hanging baskets and new street furniture to help improve the town centre, and has liaised with residents, traders and the press to promote Woodley. Gillian will be leaving her post at the end of March and the Town Council would like to say a big thank you for all her hard work for our town.

## Police Community Support Officer

PCSO Irene McKenzie is Woodley's first police community support officer. We caught up with Irene to ask what her role involves and how she is getting to know Woodley.

Irene is originally from Stenhousemuir but has lived in the Wokingham area for 21 years. After holding a variety of part time jobs whilst bringing up her two children, Irene went in to a customer service role working for an airline company at Heathrow airport. Since mid January she has become a familiar face in Woodley carrying out her PCSO duties.

### What made you decide to become a PCSO?

I wanted to carry on working with the public, but not from behind a desk! The role of PCSO means I spend a lot of time outside, I work closely with the community and there is a lot of variety.

### What exactly does the role of PCSO involve?

My day to day activities are largely up to me – I spend a lot of time out and about, visiting community groups and schools and acting as a visible police presence in the town. My remit is to work within the community and act as a support for the police. People can come and talk to me about any issues when they see me around the town and I am doing educational work on safety and first aid in the schools. I can issue parking fines and fixed penalty notices for antisocial behaviour, criminal damage and litter dropping. I am mostly on foot and hopefully seeing me out and about will help make Woodley residents feel safer.

### Can you talk us through a typical day?

Well one of the things that appealed to me about this role is that no two days are the same!

I start off by checking in at Loddon Valley police station but soon I will be based at the Oakwood Centre. Once I've done any admin, I walk in to Woodley and start my patrols. I patrol on foot and look at any issues that are causing concern. These may be parking complaints and congestion around schools, concerns in the shopping centre, or antisocial behaviour. I make house calls and visit community centres too.

### How are you finding working in Woodley?

Well for one thing, I didn't realise how big Woodley is. I love the green spaces and being able to walk through Woodford Park, and I am really getting a feel for Woodley as a strong community. People stop to talk to me all the time and tell me about concerns that they might not wish to bother the police with. It is a friendly town with a good spirit.

### So how can people contact you?

People can stop me whenever they see me out and about. I work a shift pattern so it is not just office hours. Also, anyone can leave a message at the Town Council offices at the Oakwood Centre for me, either in person or by calling 0118 969 0356. From April we will have our own police office within the Oakwood Centre too.

*Thank you Irene. On behalf of Woodley, Town Mayor Cllr Tony Mattingley is delighted to welcome you to our town.*

Thames Valley Police will be holding a Recruitment Roadshow for PCSOs on Thursday 15th March at the Holiday Inn, Basingstoke Road, Reading. Call 0845 600 0925 for more details.

# Happy birthday Oakwood Centre



As you know the idea for the Oakwood Centre came from the Carnival Committee and groups within the community who saw the need for a modern facility for the town. The Town Council's presence enabled this project to become a reality and we worked in partnership with other groups during the project. The result of all that work was the Oakwood Centre – which was opened to the public in February 2004.

We are pleased to report that bookings are becoming established. There were 612 bookings in the first year rising to 970 in 2006. Two-thirds of these bookings are for community and social events or services/events open to the public. The centre is home to many regular hirers including Woodley based social clubs, the National Blood Donors, the True Food Co-op food fair twice a month, WeightWatchers and of course Woodley Theatre.

There have now been over 60 theatre productions at the Oakwood Centre including 20 shows by Woodley Theatre which are always well attended. Woodley Theatre's recent production of Christmas Cat and the Pudding Pirates received rave reviews ([www.woodleytheatre.org](http://www.woodleytheatre.org)).

Events to look forward to in the coming months include Woodley Festival of Music and Arts, a glorious event held over three weekends in March showcasing local young talent, and of course the Carnival in June (organised by Woodley Carnival Committee).

The function rooms continue to be popular for social events and the Oakwood has now hosted 47 wedding ceremonies and receptions. We are also licensed for naming, commitment ceremonies (civil partnerships) and renewal of vows.

The idea behind the building was to create a 21st century amenity which would be used for as many hours as possible by all sectors of the community. Daytime business bookings subsidise evening and weekend social and community use. The high standard of accommodation attracts local and national business and also benefits community groups. Local businesses are increasingly making use of the fully serviced high class meeting rooms and using our superb catering.

The town council is pleased to see another increase in hire income at the Oakwood Centre. From a zero base three years ago, total income in 2007/8 is estimated to be £125,000 with a net cost to the council of £43,000. Our business plan sees the income increasing year on year - with steady strong growth already being seen.

If you haven't yet visited the centre do pop in to look around. There is a café open during the week and details of forthcoming theatre productions can be found on the back page of this newsletter and our website. You can contact the centre manager with your comments and suggestions via e-mail: [admin@woodley.gov.uk](mailto:admin@woodley.gov.uk) or the website [www.oakwoodcentre.org.uk](http://www.oakwoodcentre.org.uk)

## Dates of forthcoming Council meetings 2007

### Plans Committee

27 March, 24 April, 22 May

### Leisure Services Committee

20 March

### Community Services Committee

3 April

### Strategy and Resources Committee

17 April

Full Council meetings are scheduled for 1 May and 15 May – at the beginning of each Council meeting we hold a Town Forum at which residents can ask questions or make statements about the Council's services/policies or any issues that affect the town.

**The Town Electors Meeting is on 13 March 2007. This is the annual parish meeting rather than a council meeting and is another opportunity for you to raise any issues you have about your town.**

All meetings start at 8.00pm and are held at the Oakwood Centre.

## True Food Co-op

The True Food Co-op offers a huge range of organic wholefoods, fresh fruit and vegetables and eco-friendly household products at near wholesale prices. They are at the Oakwood Centre on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 5pm – 9pm.



This year Woodley Carnival will be on 9 June. If your club, society or business would like a stall at the carnival, e-mail [carnivalstalls@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:carnivalstalls@yahoo.co.uk). For any other enquiries contact Kathleen Henderson on 0118 969 1195.

# Forthcoming shows at the Oakwood Theatre

20-24 February

**The Sea - by Edward Bond**  
(Woodley Theatre, 0118 969 0827)

11-14 April

**Honk**  
- by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe  
(Woodley Youth Theatre  
0118 969 0827)

21-22 April

**Movie Nights**  
(CloudGlider, 0118 969 0356)

28 April

**Jazz Concert**  
(Woodley Theatre, 0118 969 0827)

15-19 May

**Accidental Death of an Anarchist**  
- by Dario Fo  
(Woodley Theatre, 0118 969 0827)

3-7 July

**Funny about Love - by Terence Frisby**  
(Woodley Theatre, 0118 969 0827)

21 July

**Jazz Concert**  
(Woodley Theatre, 0118 969 0827)

## Did you know...?

Woodley and Sandford Parish Council came into being in 1894. Prior to that, Woodley was one of the liberties of the Parish of Sonning. The parish council became known as Woodley Town Council in 1974 following further legislation.

The population of Woodley in 1850 was 856 (including children). By 1961 it was 11,000 and by 1971 it was 24,055. It is now over 26,500.

## Supermarket sweep-up

Are you tired of seeing abandoned trolleys around your town? It is a recurring problem in Woodley and trolleys are often left abandoned in parks, car parks, and outside people's homes.

There are a few things that Woodley residents who take pride in their town can do to help this situation.

1. If you have to "borrow" a trolley to take your shopping home, please return it.
2. If you see an abandoned trolley when walking to the town centre, please bring it with you and return it to the nearest trolley bay.
3. If you are unable to return a trolley that you have seen "abandoned", call Waitrose on 969 0438 or Iceland on 969 0042 to report it.



"Keep Woodley Clean" is holding a Spring Clean on Saturday 31 March from 10am. To take part call the Town Council on 0118 969 0356 (groups and clubs welcome).

## Do you have a special occasion to celebrate?

Whether it's a wedding, christening, anniversary or birthday we have the biggest selection of venues in Woodley!

- **The Oakwood Centre** can cater for an intimate family meal or a banquet for 180! Full inhouse catering service available. We are also licensed for civil weddings. Contact the centre manager on 0118 969 0356 for more details.
- **Coronation Hall** is well known to many Woodley residents and is available to hire for self catered functions and parties. Contact 0118 969 0356 for details.
- **Chapel Hall** on Loddon Bridge Road is available for smaller functions but we regret no loud music or discos are allowed due to proximity to neighbours. Contact 0118 969 0356 for details.
- **The Function Room** at Woodford Park Leisure Centre is a great venue for self catered parties. You can take advantage of having a bar service from the Inn on the Park served directly into your function. For details call 0118 921 6969.
- **Woodford Park Leisure Centre** (tel: 0118 921 6969) and **Bulmershe Leisure Centre** (tel: 0118 926 8733) are pleased to offer a selection of themed children's birthday parties. Call for details.

**Don't forget we offer special rates for Woodley residents holding social functions. Woodley based clubs and societies with regular bookings may also receive a special rate.**

## Website

Woodley Town Council's website address is [www.woodley.gov.uk](http://www.woodley.gov.uk). The website was updated and relaunched in July 2005 and if you haven't visited yet it is well worth a look. As well as information about the Town Council there is information about local events and clubs and other newsworthy items!

If you have a story you would like to share or you would like us to feature details of your Woodley based club or fundraising activities we would be pleased to hear from you. E-mail the webmaster at [projects@woodley.gov.uk](mailto:projects@woodley.gov.uk)