

**Newsletter
January
2023**

OLD WINDSOR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

**OLD WINDSOR
OWRA
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**



**Old Windsor Ward
Borough Councillors**

**Lynne Jones
Neil Knowles**



Committee Message

From the OWRA Chair – Jane Dawson

2022 has been a very challenging year for everyone - as it draws to a close the OWRA committee would like to give residents an update on some of the important issues in our Ward and remind everyone about the role of our Ward Councillors and all they do for the Ward.

OWRA exists to serve the whole community and aims to ensure that Old Windsor Ward continues to be a great place to live, work and raise families. OWRA's goals are improving local facilities and services, protecting quality of life and the environment in and around Old Windsor, and ensuring value for money for residents through increased financial transparency and stability at RBWM. Our Ward Councillors Lynne and Neil are committed to being the 'voices' of Old Windsor Ward within the Borough, and they work tirelessly to represent the interests and concerns of residents and to exert influence wherever they can on local government for the benefit of all residents.

The OWRA committee is a small core group of residents who work hard to deliver the objectives of the Association and are ably supported by OWRA members during the elections and at events throughout the year. The OWRA committee offers a very warm welcome to any residents who would like to be more involved, whether as a committee member attending 4 meetings per year and contributing your views, or simply by helping us with newsletter/leaflet deliveries in your road. We really can't do this without you - you and your views are important to OWRA and especially to Lynne and Neil. If you would like to be more involved please get in contact with us

Air Pollution

Air pollution is a big issue across the Borough and particularly along the A308 where high volumes of traffic exacerbate the problems. RBWM meets minimum standards with regard to air quality – OWRA doesn't think this is good enough and would like RBWM to extend monitoring schemes to measure health-damaging particulates. You may not know that OWPC is monitoring air quality levels at pollution hot spots in the Parish completely independently from RBWM.

The data collected is being analysed by experts at Kent University and OWPC has data for a significant period of time showing a clear pattern of deteriorating air quality.

Lynne and Neil are doing all that they can, with other councillors, to raise the priority of improving air quality in line with the Borough's Environment and Climate Strategy to have cleaner air and a greener urban environment.

Find us on

**Facebook - Old Windsor Residents Association
Website - Owra.org.uk - Twitter - [@OldWindsorRA](https://twitter.com/OldWindsorRA)**

The Boltons

Both Ward Councillors are focused on problems specific to the Boltons – as well as more general issues such as planning, highway maintenance and trees. Waste disposal has been a bit of an issue recently. During the lockdown Lynne and Neil spent a lot of time sorting out the access to Bourne Avenue for waste disposal trucks. Sadly the Borough's new waste collection contract didn't specify trucks of the correct small size. Our Ward Councillors made every effort to engage with council officers and residents to come up with an interim solution e.g. residents helping out by moving their bins onto Bolton Road, and eventually the required smaller trucks were provided. Neil commented that the residents of Bourne Avenue have patience 'in spades' and both he and Lynne thank everyone for their fortitude in adversity.

Parking in the Boltons is another perennial issue and Lynne and Neil have been very hands on, trying to improve the St Leonards Road/Bolton Road junction, supporting the parking enforcement presence, and ensuring that residents views and concerns on parking zones are taken into consideration. The independent consultation that Neil and Lynne organised has been fed into the Council and residents should receive the final options consultation from RBWM very soon.

Many Boltons residents are rightly concerned about visitor parking and our Ward Councillors put pressure on RBWM to take over the Trevelyan School private car park, off St Leonard's road. Officers have created a public, low cost, pay and display car park, retaining the school drop off function, plus giving free parking to Boltons residents and visitors permit holders. This is going ahead and eventually the car park will be renamed the Boltons car park!

Road safety is another important issue in the Boltons. Last year a resident raised a petition about the safety of school children and residents crossing St Leonards Road near Trevelyan School. Councillor Jones presented the petition to council (23rd November 2021) on behalf of the petitioner Ms Jo Silk and fully backed the petition. Currently there is a Zebra crossing, but this is not always safe as motorists fail to give way to pedestrians on the crossing. There are many possible reasons for this but it has been recognised that the best way to ensure safety for pedestrians using the crossing and help to manage traffic flow is to replace the existing Zebra crossing with a set of traffic lights. Lynne and Neil are hopeful that this will be in place in the first quarter of 2023.



Old Windsor

There have been cases of flooding in Meadow Way during times of very heavy rain and our Ward Councillors continue to press the Borough for drain clearance during the autumn period when leaf fall is at a peak.

Following on from a couple of traffic incidents on the Albert Road Lynne and Neil met with highway engineers to consider actions to improve safety on the gyratory. Returning the gyratory system to a roundabout was discussed but would need expert 'modelling' to fully understand the impact on traffic flow. Unfortunately, the Borough does not currently have the money to do this. One small improvement has been possible - by extending the lane markings further up the Albert Road traffic is being moved into the correct lanes before entering the gyratory. Let's hope this helps!

Telecom masts have also been an issue. OWRA and our Ward Councillors support the masts 'in principle' but feel strongly about where they are sited. Unfortunately, permission was granted by default to a mast on Walpole Road/Straight Road junction owing to the RBWM not responding to the consultation request in time. Discussions with RBWM around the unsightly silver and yellow boxes are also ongoing – couldn't they at least be painted green to merge with their surroundings?

Last – but definitely not least - both our Borough Councillors fully support the efforts of the Parish and Community in trying to save the Jolly Gardeners. The 'Jollies' has been part of the village for a very long time and we all hope it can be saved to continue serving the community for many years to come.

With all that is currently going on and the significant challenges we all face it is possible that some things might get overlooked. Please be assured that Lynne and Neil are always focused on the day-to-day 'bread and butter' ward work and want to hear from you if you have any concerns about:

- RBWM and/or Abri
- Road works, Highways & Street Lighting
- Trees
- Bin Collections
- Maintenance of RBWM owned public space

Please carry on raising your issues directly with them, it is important that they have a good grasp of what's going on in the Ward, and they will respond and do their best to help. Their contact details can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

Newsletter Delivery

Previously (before Covid) OWRA had a number of helpers that would deliver the newsletter to their street. Obviously over time people move away from the village and we are now looking to fill some of the gaps in our delivery network

If you could spare some time to help Old Windsor Residents Association with their deliveries, please could you contact Lynne or Neil.

Flooding Risks

Local flooding issues are always a concern and OWRA keeps a close eye on river levels. Despite pressure from our Ward Councillors, RBWM has been unable to honour its commitment to partnership funding of the River Thames Scheme, largely owing to financial issues, and the scheme has progressed without 'section 1' (Datchet to Egham) being included. As many of you may recall in August 2010 the Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Strategy Report stated that there was no viable alternative to the River Thames Scheme - and OWRA is convinced that there are no short term measures that will protect the village in the way the Jubilee River protects Maidenhead and Windsor. This really is a major concern and we need our Ward Councillors to stay on the case. Just to summarise: RBWM was not willing to borrow the required £40m to protect homes in Old Windsor, Wraysbury, Datchet & Horton from flooding but in contrast happily borrowed that amount to build a new Leisure Centre in Maidenhead. Please be assured that Lynne and Neil will continue to flag up the issues with RBWM and the Environment Agency at the forthcoming consultations as well as at meetings of the Flood Forum. However, you will all understand that if there is no money there will be no scheme and no protection for Old Windsor. There is no Plan B.

Borough Finances

OWRA is increasingly concerned about the Borough's difficult financial position and the likely impact on the services provided to all residents. A recent report shows that by 2024/25 RBWM will be carrying debt just short of £260 million and that the cost of servicing that debt will reach nearly £15 million a year. The report makes it clear that the debt will start to reduce after 2024/25 - but only if RBWM receives the anticipated income from selling off Maidenhead Golf Club. It must be clear to everyone that the immediate consequence of this level of debt is that further savings will have to be found across council departments. Additionally it is unlikely that there will be any new capital projects coming forward in the next 5 years or so, unless they can be funded without borrowing or pay for themselves upfront. RBWM intend to increase council tax by the maximum allowed for the next 5 years, this increase will be used to offset borrowing costs on the debt and not to protect or enhance services.

This is all deeply unfortunate but no real surprise. Lynne and Neil are very clear that the decisions made by RBWM in the last 7 years have led directly to this dire situation. The policy was to spend on vanity projects without ensuring a guaranteed income to cover basic services. It is too easy to point to the Covid pandemic as the major factor in RBWM's financial difficulties: Lynne and Neil have been highlighting issues with RBWM's financial governance over many years and of course as you will know, much of the cost of Covid was repaid by Central Government. Just to summarise RBWM need to make another £10 million in savings/cuts to services in the next financial year. This will result in a greater reliance on voluntary bodies including Parish Councils to plug the gap.

You will hear some councillors applauding the achievement of a balanced budget: this is always achievable if you cut staff and services... but at what cost to RBWM and its residents?

RBWM online—My Account

You now have the ability to create an online account, giving you access to many of your requests and **allowing you to track the progress**. The services available via your account are:

- Make a complaint, pay us a compliment or leave a comment
- Report a missed bin collection—Order a new bin or replace a damaged bin
- Sign up to a Green Waste subscription
- Get help to put your bins out
- Request a collection of large items
- Renew your bus pass
- Apply for a blue badge
- Apply for school transport
- Appeal a school place decision

Please visit www.rbwm.gov.uk to sign up.

You can access the 'My Account' link on the home page, below the 'Services' icons.

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