



25th March 2021

## Greens Call for Radical Improvements to Public Transport System and for County Council to protect A40 rail route.

The West Oxfordshire Green Party<sup>1</sup> has repeatedly called for an integrated transport system in the district, giving inhabitants of our towns and villages a convenient, affordable and healthy alternative to their cars. A rail link between Carterton, Witney and Oxford would be a vital part of that system. Andrew Prosser Witney Town Councillor said:

*“As we start to build back from a most challenging year, it is important to maintain the pressure to reduce our carbon emissions and to improve the air quality in our towns.*

*“A radically improved public transport system has to be one of the cornerstones of any actions to tackle these problems.*

*“We believe that every town and village deserves a good public transport service, but real increases in investment in public transport are needed to achieve that and make it safe convenient and attractive for all to use.*

*“We have to work hard to make it easier for everyone to reduce the use of their cars. There is no doubt that a safe, quick and convenient rail link from Carterton and Witney to Oxford would be a major step forward.”*

Since the foundation of the Witney Oxford Transport group<sup>2</sup> (WOT) in 2013 the Green Party has supported the group's calls for a railway between Oxford, Witney and Carterton and are really pleased that WOT has applied to the Government for funds for a new feasibility study. There must be an alternative to everyone driving along the A40 or A4095 to get to Oxford and beyond.

It is clearly much too early for discussions on the possible route of any railway. If funded the feasibility study will allow engineers and transport planners to look at the options in more detail. In the meantime, the West Oxon Green Party strongly support the calls from WOT for the authorities to protect land for a possible rail-link route in the future, as part of the plans to upgrade the A40.

The change of heart of the Conservative government, signalled by the planned rebuilding of the east-west rail link between Oxford and Cambridge, has brought an Oxford/Witney line back onto the agenda, and encouraged local planners to revisit this option. David Cameron, in his maiden speech as MP, pledged to re-open the rail link, but as recently as 2019 it was dismissed by the Conservative-controlled West Oxfordshire District Council who voted not to support even a feasibility study, and Robert Courts MP has put his faith in widening the A40 and using the station in Long Hanborough as a hub. Widening roads leads to more cars on the road, not an end to congestion and certainly no way to tackle carbon emissions. To add to the existing demand on transport, literally thousands of new homes are planned for West Oxfordshire to satisfy the housing needs of Oxford City. The resulting increased traffic will potentially overwhelm the A40 and A4095 pump out millions of extra tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> and other noxious gases.

As a first step to the development of an integrated transport system for West Oxfordshire, the West Oxfordshire Green Party is calling on both West Oxfordshire District Council and the Oxfordshire County Council to put their weight behind the new proposal, as part of their commitment to delivering their Climate Action Framework<sup>3</sup>.

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**Notes to Editor**

**For more information about this Press Release and for photographs please contact:**

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**About West Oxfordshire Green Party**

The [West Oxfordshire Green Party](#) is a branch of the Oxfordshire Green Party and of The Green Party of England and Wales. We are addressing the issues of our time, taking local action to solve local, national and global issues.

The Branch supports and runs campaigns for Green Party candidates at parish, town, district and county council elections. The membership includes all Green Party members in the Witney parliamentary constituency (which covers the same area as the West Oxfordshire district).

**Contact for enquiries or additional information about the Branch:**

Further information is available on the West Oxfordshire Green Party website at [www.westoxon-greens.uk](http://www.westoxon-greens.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.westoxon-greens.uk>

<sup>2</sup> <https://witneyoxfordtransport.org.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/about-council/OCC\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Framework2020.pdf](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/about-council/OCC_Climate_Action_Framework2020.pdf)