

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DRUG REFERENCE GROUP

This group was established early in 1996 under the direction of a Government White Paper with the main aims of; increasing the safety of communities from drug related crime; reducing the acceptability and availability of drugs to young people; and reducing the health risks and other damage caused by drug misuse.

Membership of the Drug Reference Group includes representatives from Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Health, local Secondary Schools and College, Housing Associations, Crime Prevention Panel, Probation Service, Oxfordshire County Council Youth Service and West Oxfordshire District Council.

The levels of drug misuse and the availability of drugs is difficult to assess but the view of the agencies working in this field is that most illegal drugs are readily available and probably 50% of young people experiment with drugs (particularly cannabis) at some time or other. However most of them come through this phase of their lives without any harmful effects or addiction. Nevertheless, it is essential to guard against any complacency and it is reassuring to know that a lot of work is taking place in West Oxfordshire:

~ the Thames Valley Police Drug Strategy includes action on enforcement, education and a diversion scheme for juvenile offenders;

~ in our College and Secondary Schools, a structured programme of drugs education/awareness is now in its third year;

~ the Youth Service run "The Flat" counselling and information service at Church Green, Witney where support is available on many issues including drugs;

~ the health authorities in Oxfordshire are co-ordinating the services they provide for rehabilitation and care for addicts;

~ a new project "The Arrest Referral Scheme" is also encouraging its basic aim is to offer help, care and counselling to people taken into police custody who may have a drugs problem,.

It is important also to remember that smoking and alcohol cause serious long term health problems.

West Oxfordshire Drug Reference Group Secretary:
Len Wise, Community Safety Officer, West Oxfordshire District Council,
Woodgreen, Witney Oxon OX8 6NB.

WYCHWOOD SINGERS

The Summer Concert will be held in Kingham Hill School on Saturday 14th June at 7.30 pm. Tickets will be £4 each which can be purchased from choir members or at the door. The programme will be of music to be enjoyed on a Summers Evening. Do come if you can. This year the Charities that will benefit from the concert will be T.O.P. (Triumph over Phobia) and A.F.A.S.I.C. (The Association for all Speech Impaired Children)