



Focus on Parishes with Cllr Freddie van Mierlo (Chalgrove and Watlington)

October 2022

Welcome to my monthly update. I share a regular update in the first week of every month. In the interests of transparency, I share this update publicly as well as with parish councils.

My recent meetings:

- 20th September: Thame River Conservation Conference, Great Haseley
- 22nd September: Health Overview Scrutiny Committee, Oxford
- 6th September: Great Milton Parish Council
- 28th September: Little Milton Parish Council

Upcoming meetings:

- 3rd October: Britwell Salome PC representative
- 4th October: Nettlebed Parish Council
- 6th October: Chalgrove Parish Council
- 7th October: OCC Full Council, Oxford (delayed)
- 7th October: Place scrutiny committee, Oxford

OCC news:

Oxford traffic filters: A [consultation](#) is ongoing for the installation of 5 'traffic filters' in Oxford. These filters permit buses, taxis, vans, motorbikes etc. to travel through them, but prevent most private cars through (exceptions for e.g., care workers, blue badge holders etc.). They are enforced with ANPR and run from 7am to 7pm. These filters are considered essential for improving the reliability of buses and reducing private car movements (a key goal of OCC).

Close public consultation: 13 October 2022

20mph rollout continues: Many villages have seen consultations go out on 20mph limits (including e.g. Chalgrove, Great Hasely, Great Milton, Britwell Salome) To fit with the fast rollout timetable these have been short consultations, but have included input from parish councils and myself as county councillor. In Chalgrove, I asked that the new housing developments are also included.

Cost of living help: OCC has approved measures to support residents this winter as a result of the [cost-of-living crisis](#). This includes emergency welfare, Council Tax support and warm places (e.g., libraries, grants for community centres) for people struggling with heating bills

Tory budget time bombs: When the Tories left office in 2021, they left the incoming Lib Dem-led alliance an unpleasant budget time bomb. Urgent repairs for bridges have been dangerously underfunded. Lib Dems are now prioritising fixing crumbling bridges that will cost up to [£80m over the next 5 years](#). The tory government has also massively underfunded adult social care and special education needs, leaving us with [£6.7 million black hole in SEND](#) and mounting (ringfenced) debts. At full council in October, councillors will debate a motion to request the government to write off the ringfenced SEND debt (after all - the Tories seems to have found the magic money tree!). There is still no news from the government on how the money intended to be raised from the rise in National Insurance and used for adult social care will be replaced.

Major overhaul of highways planning: OCC has become the first in the country to adopt a new approach to planning called "[Decide and Provide](#)". Decide and provide means that when OCC is consulted on planning matters, our response will be based the kind of sustainable and active transport we want to see, rather than 'predicting' the number of car journeys and trying to accommodate them in the road system. This is essential so that we can meet our ambitious climate change targets and build more sustainable communities from the outset.

Failing ambulance service scrutinized by councillors: I took part in the [health committee meeting](#) that asked tough questions to leaders of the NHS in Oxfordshire. The service has been rated as inadequate and requires significant improvement. Time and time again when I go to this committee, I see how the government is failing the NHS and that without a course change – things will go from bad to worse.

Thame River Conservation Conference: The conference, held in Great Haseley, heard how pollution from sewage is continuing to cause severe environmental damage to nature and to leisure. Positive stories were shared from local action groups – like Watlington Environment Group, with a campaign being led by the Thame River Trust to establish bathing water status for parts of the river and its tributaries

Parish round-up

Not all parishes are covered – below is a selection of the main updates.

Chalgrove

- **Another potential planning application:** [Obsidian Strategic](#) are mulling a planning application for 150 new homes on land off Monument Road. When I get the opportunity to respond as OCC I will be expressing my opposition

Cuxham

- **HGVs warned to slow down:** OCC and Thames Valley Police have written to contractors delivering to the Bloor Homes site to slow down through Cuxham and drive considerately

Lewknor

- **Weston Road Crescent:** Work to install 'grasscrete' (concrete blocks that allow grass to grow through) has been completed. The work fills a hole created by vehicles overrunning the verge and stabilises the area

Nettlebed

- **Footway inspected:** Slopping footways causing issues for wheelchair users and pushchairs are being inspected by highways officers
- **Brick Kiln:** OCC have agreed to put this historic brick kiln on its regular maintenance schedule
- **New bus route '23' replaces X38:** The X38, which had previously been declared unviable, has been replaced with a new service – the 23. The 23 links Nettlebed to Henley-on-Thames. It also provides a link to Oxford (though it is quicker to change in Wallingford), and importantly, a new link to Didcot train station.

Swyncombe

- **Dragon patcher pays a visit:** Dragon patching to fill potholes in Maidensgrove took place in late August. I'm pushing for another visit by the dragon patcher to finish remaining sections

Watlington

- **Pyrton Lane traffic calming:** Traffic calming measures and a 20mph zone was installed (despite the summer heat!) in August
- **Edge road:** A public consultation is still expected in Autumn 2022
- **Enforcement operations of HGV restrictions:** Enforcement of the HGV weight limits around Watlington has been ongoing with 43 drivers prosecuted with total fines & costs of £19,41. OCC and police have warned or advised a further 44 drivers and/or businesses. As OCC gained ANPR powers I am advocating for ANPR enforcement of the limits