



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

December 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:

- 8th November: Pyrton Parish Council, Watlington Parish Council
- 9th November: Ewelme Parish Council
- 10th November: Berrick Salome Parish Council
- 14th November: Lewknor Parish Council
- 16th November: Place Overview Scrutiny Committee, Oxford
- 22nd November: Brightwell Baldwin Parish Meeting
- 23rd November: Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee, Oxford
- 24th November: Britwell Salome Parish Council
- 2nd December: Cuxham, site visit

Upcoming meetings:

- 12th December: Great Milton Parish Council
- 13th December: Full Council, Oxford
- 13th December: Watlington Parish Council

Oxford traffic filters special: Q&A

The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance has taken a bold step to reduce congestion in and around Oxford with [traffic filters](#). It's an issue many residents want to know more about – so below are a few common questions about the plan.

What are traffic filters?

During the times they are operating, traffic filters prohibit private motor vehicles without a filter pass from going through them. Oxfordshire County Council has approved a plan to introduce six filters across Oxford, including at St Cross Road, Thames Street, Hythe Bridge Street, St Clements, Marston Ferry Road, and Hollow Way.

Why is Oxfordshire County Council doing this?

Car use in Oxford has doubled in the last 20 years and is likely to get considerably worse with further housing developments. Road space has not doubled, resulting in high levels of congestion and bus routes becoming unsustainable. Traffic filters are a congestion measure, aimed at reducing the number of private car journeys to free up space for buses. The benefits will include faster bus journeys and faster journeys for anyone using a filter pass.

Does this stop me from driving to Oxford?

No. Everywhere you can currently reach by car in Oxford can still be reached by private motor vehicle. Households outside the city will also get up to 50 filter passes per year (25 per person/vehicle) to go through the filters with their private car. Exemptions also exist for e.g., blue badge holders and carers.

Can I still drive to the Westgate or John Radcliffe hospital?

Yes. Everywhere in Oxford will still be accessible by car. For example, residents that currently drive to and park at the Westgate via Abingdon Road, would need to continue on the ring road and approach via Botley Road. In most cases journey times are likely to only take an additional 5-15 minutes. The filters will make using the Redbridge park and ride much more attractive due to faster buses from Redbridge into the centre.

When will this happen?

Due to the closure of Botley Road in 2023 for work by Network Rail, the measure won't come into place until January 2024.

Adult social care in the news: The Lib Dem led administration continues to make adult social care and children's services a priority, where over half of county expenditure takes place. The Oxfordshire Way – a new approach by the council's adult social care team – aims to support people to live well and independently, within their own communities, for as long as possible. Oxfordshire County Council is providing funding for a ['Community Catalyst'](#) programme to support local residents to set up care companies or centres and provide care in the community. A 2022-3 [Live Well Oxfordshire Care Guide](#) has also been published with lots of great information on how to find community support and access adult social care. Free copies of the guide: 0345 050 7666.

Education commission launched: OCC has launched an independent 'Education Commission', tasked with improving educational outcomes for all children and young people. A key goal of the commission will be to look at reducing the gap in educational attainment for disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs and disabilities. The commission will speak to all interested parties about what a world class education system might look like for Oxfordshire and what needs to change. The commission will be independently chaired and made up of members representing educational settings, establishments, and key stakeholder groups across Oxfordshire.

Budget setting process kicked off: The process of setting OCC's annual budget has been kicked off with a public consultation. Within the context of rising inflation and rising demand for OCC's services (e.g. adult social care, SEND), the administration is seeking to create a balanced and fair budget that protects our most vulnerable residents. Since the government has not provided funding to meet the costs of inflation, OCC has been required to make savings of £44m of real-terms savings. However, the administration has sought to protect budgets impacting vulnerable residents, with particular emphasis on children with special education needs and disability. The [consultation](#) closes on 19 December.

Plan to rationalise OCC property portfolio: Oxfordshire County Council owns a whopping 905 sites around the county, including 13 offices. Led by finance cabinet member Cllr Calum Miller, OCC is being instructed to [rationalise](#) its property portfolio to realise savings by giving up leased buildings and deliver on climate goals.

20mph scheme: Progress!

Rollout of the county's 20mph scheme is continuing for villages that applied. Some have already been installed, while others are in [consultation](#) or awaiting decision by the cabinet member. Once cabinet approval is given, installation can happen shortly after.

Village	Consultation Closes	Decision Date by Cabinet
Berrick Salome	30 th December	26 th January
Britwell Salome	Closed	8 th December
Chalgrove	Closed	Approved
Great/Little Haseley	Closed	Approved
Great Milton	Closed	Approved
Lewknor	Closed	26 th January
Little Milton	9 th December	26 th January
Nettlebed	30 th December	26 th January
Pyrton	30 th December	26 th January
Watlington	Not open	Not scheduled

Parish round-up

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

Brightwell Baldwin

- **Potholes:** Potholes in Upperton have been reported and scheduled for maintenance with the Dragon Patcher

Chalgrove

- **Mud on the road:** Mud coming from the Ridgepoint development has been reported to OCC. I have also written to Ridgepoint to emphasise their responsibilities under the Highways Act 1980 to prevent mud to be brought onto the highways

Cuxham

- **Drainage issues on highway:** I carried out a site visit with representatives of Cuxham parish meeting to view highways issues including poor drainage. I'm following up with officers to devise a plan!
- **Speed calming:** Further discussions are ongoing about speed calming measures. I am asking officers to explore adding village gates to support the 20mph scheme (only possible in new financial year).

Lewknor:

- **Postcombe / Lower Road potholes:** Have been reported to officers for inspection and follow up
- **Manor Close:** Work completed by the developer to close the highways gap will need to be inspected by OCC to ensure it is of an adequate standard.

Pishill with Stonor

- **Potholes:** Officers have requested an update from contractors on Dragon Patching for Maidensgrove

Watlington

- **Watlington Relief Road:** Work to develop the preliminary plans for the relief road is progressing. Questions can be directed to: WRRproject@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- **Streetlights:** Power has been restored to the streetlight on chapel lane. SSE are being chased to fix streetlights on Willow close and Chestnut close.