



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

May 2023

Welcome to my monthly update, shared in the first week of every month.

Upcoming meetings:

- 15th May: Lewknor Annual Parish Meeting
- 16th May: Stonor with Pishill Annual Parish Meeting
- 16th May: Nettlebed Parish Council
- 17th May: Swyncombe Parish Meeting

***** **OCC NEWS** *****

Councillor priority fund: Applications to the councillor priority fund have reopened. The application process has slightly changed, requiring an online application and an email/letter of support of the councillor. Eligible organisations include, registered charities, not for profit companies, community or voluntary groups, and parish councils/meetings. Grants cannot be made to individuals, profit making organisations and private limited companies. Projects seeking funding must be deliverable by March 2025.

Electric Vehicle Chargers: OCC is set to receive £3.6 million to rollout EV charging points across the county. The priority will be to provide charging points in rural areas and where off-street home charging is not possible. Community organisations (e.g., parishes, village halls) may be able to take ownership of the charging points to provide them as a community asset and deliver a revenue stream. Further details will follow.

Air Quality Strategy: An OCC air quality strategy (long term) and 'route map' (short term) has been developed. While monitoring of air quality is a district responsibility, the Environment Act 2021 places a responsibility on the County Council to support districts and reduce air pollution. An information campaign will follow, which will include information on indoor pollution and log burning fires.

Social care: OCC runs a 'shared lives' carer scheme whereby approved Oxfordshire residents, with space in their own home, care for a person with learning difficulties, mental health problems or other needs that make independent living difficult. Carers can offer to provide one-off respite care, or longer-term care and everything in between. The scheme has been running successfully since 2020. More information for anyone interested can be found [here](#). A scheme to match older residents with a spare room with younger people looking for alternative accommodation called [Homeshare](#) also runs as a way to provide older people with additional support / company. Both schemes are examples of the 'Oxfordshire Way' to allow people to live independently in their communities.

Verge cutting and 'no mow May': Oxfordshire County Council is again supporting 'no mow May' and encouraging participation. Due to the amount of verge cutting required, OCC has an updated maintenance schedule to prioritise biodiversity. However, OCC is not able to put away its mowers for a full month and still meet its schedule of work, meaning some areas will be cut in May. Verges that need to be cut to maintain public safety will be cut back multiple times if necessary.

Household waste strategy: [Consultation](#) closed on HWRC strategy 2023-2043. The strategy replaces the 2015 Conservative HWRC strategy which aimed to close local sites and deliver 3 or 4 super sites. The new strategy aims to retain the current 7 sites. The strategy encourages re-use and repair, rather than disposal in the first instance.

Hydrogen powered fire engines: Oxfordshire is taking part in a pioneering [project](#) to develop hydrogen powered fire engines

*******GRANTS AND COST OF LIVING*******

Sustainable Warmth Grants: Funding for residents without mains gas, and household incomes of less than £30,000 (or in receipt of means-tested benefits) is still [available](#).

Grants for care workers: Cost of living grants remain [available](#) for care workers.

*******PARISH ROUND-UP*******

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

Chalgrove

- **High street safety:** A meeting will be held with officers to review parking and traffic safety on the high street.

Ewelme

- **Flooding:** Several sites have been recorded with officers as areas of flood risk and ponding on the road for assessment.

Lewknor

- **Manor Close land gap:** I am chasing officers up to find out the status of the situation.

Watlington

- **Road closure & Charlotte Coxe Trust:** Work by Thames Water to reconnect 33 High Street has been completed. OCC granted Thames Water permission quickly, and responded rapidly to reports during the road closure of buses unable to pass, working with the bus company and Thames Water to resolve the situation and avoid the work not being completed again.
- **Red Kite to Cuxham Road connection:** Work to open the connection between Red Kite View and Cuxham Road is continuing. The developer (Bloor Homes) will deliver the road/pavement improvements needed to make the route safe. This process requires OCC to review the plans, grant the developer the legal right to work on the highway, and for the developer to then commission and perform the work. OCC recognises the importance of the route and is working to streamline the process so that work can be completed in the next 3-6 months.
- **Potholes:** I have flagged to officers the poor state of Hill Road (by the car park), Spring Lane, and Britwell Road. The majority of the defects reported should be fixed by 18th May.
- **Cuxham Road flooding:** Officers are assessing the situation with a view to resolving the current flooding / ponding issue.