



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

March 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

- 1st February: Nettlebed Parish Council
- 2nd February: Swyncombe residents Q&A
- 8th February: Full Council (County Hall, Oxford)
- 9th February: Ewelme Parish Council
- 10th February: Watlington Climate Action Group (Chalgrove Brook)
- 11th February: Briefing with parishes on wild verges
- 14th February: Lewknor Parish Council
- 16th February: OCC Highways site visit (Watlington culverts)
- 21st February: Great Milton
- 22nd February: OCC Highways / Watlington Parish (Pyrton Lane)
- 24th February: Residents of Christmas Common
- 25th February: OCC Leader Liz Leffman / Watlington Parish
- 2nd March: Gigaclear (Chalgrove)
- 3rd March: Chalgrove Parish Council

Upcoming meetings:

- 9th March: Swyncombe Parish Council & Little Milton Parish Council
- 10th March: Oxfordshire Health Scrutiny Committee
- 10th March: Berrick Salome Parish Council
- 14th March: Watlington Neighbourhood Planning Group
- 15th March: Pishill with Stonor Parish Council
- 22nd March: Nettlebed AGM

OCC news:

Budget passed invests in residents: In February, the first budget of the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance was passed. The Conservatives failed to present any amendments to the budget. The budget increases investment to support some of the most vulnerable residents in our county, including in SEND provision, adult social care, and youth and children’s services. Other priorities to receive boosts were the climate emergency, buses, traffic enforcement, and road safety. The budget also takes into account a backlog of underfunded major infrastructure projects. The budget deals with the hospital pass from the Conservatives, who had failed to fully cost major projects, including replacement of the Kennington Bridge and projects around Didcot.

Government support extended after OCC demands: Buses continue to be under financial strain, with passenger numbers down on pre-pandemic levels. Following Lib Dem calls to the government extend pandemic grants, the government announced additional funding. Bus companies will still face a potential cliff edge in 6 months’ time however, unless passenger numbers begin to rise or the government steps in again.

Bid to electrify buses: Oxfordshire County Council has made an ambitious bid to electrify the fleet of buses in Oxford in cooperation with the bus companies. If successful, the bid could see 159 electric buses operating in the Oxford area that would save 9,200 tonnes of carbon each year (about 6,000 cars worth)

Oxford Zero Emissions Zone (ZEZ) pilot launches: A pilot of a small area of central Oxford has begun to test out the technology that will be used for the Zero Emissions Zone. The full ZEZ will come into force in 2023 (subject to a public consultation)

Police and Crime Commissioner grant applications close: The Community Fund, administered by the Police and Crime Commissioner has closed for applications. This appears to have been badly promoted, however, applications open twice a year. Sign up to the mailing list here: opcc.comms@thamesvalley.police.uk

Councilor Priority Fund: Upon being elected, I said I wanted to see the councillor priority fund for Chalgrove and Watlington being used early in the community. The £15,000 has now been fully allocated, supporting amazing projects across the division, including the Chalgrove Brook Chalk Stream film, solar panels in Ewelme, refurbishment of the war memorial in Great Haseley, First Steps in Chalgrove, and support to many villages to purchase speed calming devices.

Consultations close soon:

- SEND: 10th March
- Local Transport and Connectivity Plan: 16th March
- Libraries: 18th March

Parish round up

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

Chalgrove:

- **Gigaclear:** Following a walk around the village with District Councillor David Turner, Gigaclear agreed to reduce the rubble pile at the corner of Argosy and Fairfax Road and perform regular sweeps of the village to ensure it is being kept tidy

Ewelme

- **HGVs:** I have raised concerns with Oxfordshire County Council, about the high levels of HGV movements associated with the Waste Handling site at Rumbolds Pit, that may exceed the limits set out in a 'certificate of lawfulness'. Residents can write directly to OCC here: tellplanning@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- **Watercress center solar panels installed:** I am delighted that the solar panels at Ewelme Watercress Centre went live on 1st March. The array consists of ten 375W panels and is projected to generate 2804 kWh of electricity per year. The panels were partly funded by OCC priority fund

Great Milton

- **Lower End drainage:** Work to clear blocked drains in Lower End has now been costed by officers. With more persistent chasing, I'm confident work will go ahead!

Nettlebed

- **Potholes repaired; more reported:** Potholes reported on the A4130 have been repaired. I have reported more potholes that have sprung up near the roundabout that will be scheduled for repair

Swyncombe

- **Closure B481 for repair:** A section of the B481 was closed to perform patching work. This work is to prepare the road to be 'surface dressed' in May. Surface dressing involves sealing the road surface with a new layer of bitumen

Watlington

- **Pyrton lane traffic calming update:** Following a meeting with OCC officers, the next step of the project is for the final details of the plan to be ironed out with an

on-site visit by OCC. This will take place in mid-March, with work beginning in May/June. This is a slight delay on the Easter start date I was hoping for, but will be pushing the work to be done as soon as possible

- **Charlotte Coxe Trust:** Advances have been made in bringing 33 High Street back into use, including permissions being granted to reconnect the water. I continue to make this a top priority!
- **Flooding alleviation work to brook:** Flood alleviation work was undertaken by volunteers on Brook Street to clear debris and silt from the open culverts. A meeting took place on 16th February to map out the best way to clear the covered sections, while reducing the ecological impact
- **Road works:** Road works to connect the Castle Gardens development to utilities continue with work snaking along Shirburn Road/Street, Hill Road and Spring Lane to reach the sub-station. Resident have reported to me poor levels of communication by contractors, and I am working with officers to minimize disruption and improve communication