



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

April 2023

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:

- 3rd March: Watlington Business Association, Watlington
- 7th March: Nettlebed Parish Council
- 9th March: Watlington Relief Road consultation, Watlington
- 13th March: Great Haseley Parish Council
- 14th March: Watlington Parish Council
- 16th March: Homes England (Chalgrove Airfield), Online
- 21st March: Swyncombe Parish Council
- 21st March: Nettlebed Annual Parish Meeting
- 28th March: OCC Full Council, Oxford

Upcoming meetings:

- 11th April: Watlington Parish Council
- 12th April: Little Milton Parish Council
- 17th April: Lewknor Parish Council
- 21st April: Watlington Annual Parish Meeting
- 26th April: Ewelme Annual Parish Meeting
- 27th April: Britwell Salome Parish Meeting

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

OCC saves £5m with new NHS deal: OCC has reached a new deal with the NHS that will save OCC nearly £5m a year. OCC pools resources with the NHS in order to deliver social care and mental health services in a coordinated way. However, a review of how costs are apportioned to each organisation has meant OCC will reduce its liabilities in

the agreement. The agreement will allow OCC to focus funding on its responsibilities while also allowing OCC and the NHS to continue to cooperate into the future.

Suite of cost of living measures agreed for 23/24: A range of measures, totalling £9.5m, to support residents with the cost of living was agreed by cabinet for 2023/2024. The measures are funded mostly through national grants, but with £2.3m contribution from OCC. National government funding does not cover the full range of measures that councils are encouraged to take. The measures include, council tax support, practical support for those leaving hospital, and significant funding for children in receipt of free school meals during school holidays. A new Local Crisis Fund (administered by district councils) has also been established, which will support people during periods of financial crisis.

Freight strategy engagement: The county council is engaging with parish and town councils as it develops its freight strategy further. Parishes have been invited to input via LetsTalk. This is not a public consultation, but rather an opportunity for key stakeholders to input early, local knowledge on areas that would benefit from area weight restrictions and identify areas challenged by HGVs. The strategy seeks to keep HGV movements off inappropriate roads and keep them on the strategic road network (e.g. M40). Responses should be sent by 10th April

Boundary review: OCC has submitted to the boundary commission its suggestions for new county division boundaries (passed unanimously at Full Council). The Commission's [consultation](#) will close 9 May. The Commission will then develop its recommendations and consult on draft proposals 1 Aug- 9 Oct

***** **NEWS IN BRIEF*******

Gigahubs: The project to install broadband to community hubs is 50% complete

Councillor priority fund set to reopen: Applications to the fund will reopen in April

Future generations: A motion was passed at full council, asking the council to include in its decision-making processes consideration of the impact for future generations

Recycling centre closures for cleaning: Oakley Wood will close Thursday and Friday, April 20 and 21 for deep cleaning and maintenance. Full list of closures [here](#)

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

£6.4m to help low-income households tackle energy inefficiency: OCC's climate team was [successful](#) in its application to the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2). The money will be used for whole-house retrofit installations to at least 310 properties across Oxfordshire that are not heated by mains gas.

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, available from the [Care Workers' hardship grant](#)

*****20MPH SCHEME*****

Village	Decision Date	Installation
Berrick Salome	Approved	Installed
Britwell Salome	Approved	Installed
Chalgrove	Approved	Installed
Ewelme	Phase II	
Great/Little Haseley	Approved	Installed
Great Milton	Approved	Installed
Lewknor	Approved	Installed
Little Milton	Approved	Installed
Nettlebed	Approved	Installed
Pyrton	Approved	Installed
Watlington & Christmas Common	Approved	

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

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

Berrick Salome

- **Benson Relief Road:** Two issues have delayed the project – a flooding assessment and a land agreement. The flood assessment has been completed. Officers hope to complete the land deal by mid-2023, with construction to follow. However, land acquisition may delay the project further if the land transfer does not conclude by agreement.

Chalgrove

- **Airfield:** SODC and OCC councillors held a meeting with Homes England on 16th March. Homes England restated their desire to build a sustainable ‘market town’ in Chalgrove and plan to consult with stakeholders this year. Work to resolve the issues that led to them previously withdrawing their planning application is ongoing. As an OCC councillor, I made that OCC policies relating to car journey reduction targets need to be complied with
- **Mud from Ridgepoint development:** Complaints have emerged again of mud being dragged onto the road from the Ridgepoint development near the surgery. I have written to Ridgepoint, as have OCC officers to complain.
- **OCC objects to Obsidian planning application:** OCC has again objected to the planning application by Obsidian for land off Monument Road
- **11 bus timetable:** A revised timetable will start on 16th April.
- **Road repairs:** Surface dressing of B480 planned in 2023-2024

Cuxham

- **Highways:** I have alerted officers to an incident involving an HGV damaging a building in Cuxham. I have also pushed again for work to resolve drainage issues and potholes on the B480

Ewelme:

- **Road repairs:** Surface dressing of Benson / Brook Street is included in the 2023-2024 work programme

Lewknor

- **Bledlow Recycling Centre:** At the request of Oxfordshire councillors, a meeting was held with Buckinghamshire councillors. Buckinghamshire councillors agreed to look again at the costs involved in allowing Oxfordshire residents to use Bledlow. For comparison, the average cost to OCC of a visit to an Oxfordshire recycling centre is just £4.50. Councillors also pointed out that Buckinghamshire residents use OCC centres elsewhere in the county.

Watlington

- **Road closure & Charlotte Coxe Trust:** High Street will be closed 10th April, for a maximum of 5 days, to facilitate connecting 33 High Street to mains water.
- **20mph:** Limits for Watlington and Christmas Common were approved by the cabinet member for highways. An adjustment was made to the proposed limits for Britwell Road, where the 20mph extents were reduced to line up with Harmans Way (Watlington Relief Road), which is being built to 30mph specifications. This avoids a situation that would require motorists to go from 50 to 20 to 30. Should the parish wish to reduce the Relief Road to 20mph in the future, the situation could be reviewed again for Britwell Road.
- **Red Kite to Cuxham Road connection:** The footpath connecting Red Kite View to Cuxham Road is subject to 's278 road agreement' that needs to be progressed in order to open the path to residents. This includes an assessment of three silver birch trees on Cuxham Road that officers report need felling to fulfil an agreement made in 2018 as part of the development to make way for a footpath and bus stop. While I have expressed my opposition to their felling, the agreement made in 2018 is binding. I have requested as per OCC trees policy that 6 replacement trees are planted as near as possible, which will be done during the next planting season
- **Cuxham Road safety:** After two reports of residents experiencing falls into the Marlbrook on Cuxham Road from the pavement, officers have agreed to meet onsite with WPC to discuss options to reduce the risk of falling. A meeting will take place on 12th April.
- **Howe Hill temporary road closure:** B480 at Howe Hill will be closed on 23rd April from 9.30 to 15.30 for work to a pole. Diversion is around Benson and Nettlebed