

## OCC News June 2025

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### OCC headlines:

Post the elections we are now in a new Lib Dem administration having achieved a majority in the May 1<sup>st</sup> elections. Labour (12) and Conservatives (12, with some partnerships in place) are the main opposition parties – this means that, for now, Oxfordshire are going to have to fund two opposition parties at considerable additional cost. The Green Party occupies 7 seats.

The Lib Dems have stated that their core focal points for their term will be on:

- Climate action, and
- Sustainable economic growth

The first full council meeting was on the 20<sup>th</sup> May which was primarily a structural affair, electing new officers etc. The first effective full council meeting will be on the 8<sup>th</sup> July.

**SEND Improvement:** Oxfordshire County Council has provided evidence to the Parliamentary Education Select Committee's inquiry into solving the national SEND crisis. Its evidence focuses on actions required to stabilise the system, such as increased funding, which would then allow more time for necessary medium to long-term reforms to be implemented. More detail can be found [here](#).

**Government spending review:** The County Councils Network (CCN) is concerned that the Ministries budget increase of 1.1% each year during this term is nowhere near enough to cover the current and future needs of councils. Please see [here](#) for more information.

**My roles:** I will be involved in the following committees:

- Audit and Governance and associated Working Groups.
- Planning and regulation

I will also be the Military Champion for RAF Benson. There may be other responsibilities added from time to time which I will keep you abreast of here (and in the PC meetings).

### NEWS IN BRIEF:

**Climate Emergency UK:** Climate Emergency UK assessed all UK councils on the actions they've taken towards net zero. The 2025 Action Scorecard assessment consists of 93 questions across 7 different sections, created in consultation with over 90 different organisations and individuals. Each council was marked against these criteria. This work was run from July 2024 to March 2025. Oxfordshire came top of all the counties having significantly increased its score on Buildings / heating, Planning / land use, Biodiversity and Waste management & food. Although fall backs were seen in some areas. The full results can be seen [here](#).

**Local Government reorganisation:** There is a lot of talk over the proposed new Unitary Councils. In Oxfordshire we have three options which can be found [here](#). There are various consultations, data collecting and petitions surrounding these. Whilst the link states the single unitary for Oxfordshire is the OCC's preferred route this does not necessarily apply to everyone within OCC or indeed outside.

**Drain clearing:** OCC has committed to cleaning every roadside gully, drain and manhole every year for the duration the current term. This is an annual investment of £2.6m, will be completed by the end of March each year, and involves 145,000 drains, gullies and manholes. (more [here](#)).

**Encouraging active travel and reducing congestion:** Living Streets, the charity for everyday walking, is encouraging parents to swap the school run for an active travel journey, with children self-reporting how they get to school each day. Those who walk, wheel, cycle, scoot, or park and stride at

least once a week earn monthly collectible WOW badges (made from recycled yoghurt pots and other materials that would end up in landfill). Last year saw a 55% reduction in car journeys with 40% more active journeys. With funding from Active Travel England, more schools in your area may be eligible for free WOW resources.

All they have to do to join is either complete a simple online [form](#) or email:

[walktoschool@livingstreets.org.uk](mailto:walktoschool@livingstreets.org.uk). On a related topic, Emily Kerr (one of our Green Councillors) is now the Active Travel Champion for Oxfordshire.

### LOCAL QUESTIONS TO FULL COUNCIL (8<sup>th</sup> July):

These are questions to be asked at full council, which need to be submitted in advance. With all 69 councillors entitled to ask a maximum of three questions, there is no guarantee that all questions will be asked.

1. What are we doing about clearing the cycle lanes across the county, in particular I am referring to the cycle lane that runs along the A4074 from Warborough to Benson. It is currently impassable and therefore not usable. This encourages short inter-village journeys to be taken by car, not by bicycle. (asked to Councillor Gant).
2. How and when are all the OCC owned lands across the county maintained? In my area (Benson & Crowmarsh) we are looking very overgrown at the moment, part of which is down to the season, however many areas are rarely if ever maintained and are a local eyesore. Road signs are obscured in many places which isn't particularly helpful to those needing to follow them and pathways are often inaccessible. It would also be useful to understand which lands are actually managed and maintained within each area, as often there is confusion. (asked to Councillor Levy).
3. Speeding is a massive issue in my area (Benson and Crowmarsh), especially down the A4074 which is somewhat of a racetrack. What is being done to ensure that TVP takes measures to manage and penalise the offenders? There is a day (11th July) where TVP are encouraging the Community Speed Watch groups to actively get out and monitor traffic speeds, however there is much doubt about the actions then taken - with no real successes attributable to CSW actions in the past. There is also an issue with "recognised" speed measurement devices, with TVP often not using the data generated by certain cameras (i.e. AutoSpeedWatch - which also collects other very useful information on whether the car is MOT'd or insured etc.), which are recognised by other police organisations. (asked to Councillor Gant).

Please contact me (details at top) if you wish me to raise any questions on your behalf.

### CURRENT CONSULTATIONS:

**Congestion Charge (Oxford):** With the Botley Road still closed, it has been suggested that a temporary Congestion Charge is put in place to reduce traffic and pollution in Oxford and to enable the public services to run on time. This will then morph into the previously agreed filter system once the Botley Road is open. The survey is now open and can be found [here](#). Responses should be submitted by 11:59pm on Sunday 3 August 2025.

**Oxford to Caversham A4074:** This consultation was looking at changing the speed limits on the A4074 (and other related roads) to 40 / 50 mph. This consultation closed on the 20<sup>th</sup> June.

**Oxfordshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025:** The Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board must produce an assessment of pharmaceutical services in its area every three years. The survey can be found [here](#) and runs until the 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

**Part Night lighting:** Please see the consultation on this [here](#) this consultation closes 6<sup>th</sup> July.

**Adults Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035:** We want to hear what residents think about the vision, themes, aims and key priorities of the Draft Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025-2035. The survey is [here](#) and runs to 13th July (midnight).

### PARISH ROUND-UP

Reminder: the OCC CEO will be visiting our area (as well as Wallingford and Berinsfield/Garsington) on the 8<sup>th</sup> September (along with two other senior officers). A Monday has been chosen to demonstrate the sheer volume of speeding traffic associated with the H Café. We will be collectively creating an agenda to cover the major issues in each of the parishes.

Please refer [here](#) for all Fix My Street queries in your area. There is a huge volume of these currently and cover the gamut of OCC responsibilities.

By Parish Council – in alphabetical order. These will expand as I get increasingly involved in your Parish Council meetings and understand more about your requirements.

#### **Benson:**

Questions have been raised about:

- Management of the various areas of land in Benson belonging to OCC.
- Inhabitants of the Cala development have concerns over water management which they are currently working on with SODC and Thames Water.
- Litter currently everywhere in Oxfordshire (a District matter)

#### **Crowmarsh:**

- Need for a footpath exiting the French Gardens development.
- Need for a 30mph sign on the Port Way (meeting arranged for 10<sup>th</sup> July)
- Desire for a 40mph speed limit on Nosworthy Way (as opposed to 50)

#### **Dorchester:**

We are waiting on input on:

- The various Unitaries that are competing with the Ridgeway option.
- What time the lights would be turned off should Dorchester opt for this post a village review.
- When the new markings will be implemented on the A4074.
- When the gate will be (finally) fixed on the A4074 by the bus stop).
- Have informed of the desire by Oxford City to incorporate into their desired Unitary.

#### **Ewelme:**

- A public meeting will happen on the 8<sup>th</sup> September about the proposed pathway on Cat Lane, hopefully after the visit (same day) from Martin Reeves.

#### **Warborough / Shillingford:**

- Have fed into the Neighbourhood plan (from OCC perspective).
- Informed of the desire by Oxford City to incorporate them into their Unitary.