

## **OCC News September 2025**

**Cllr Gavin McLauchlan (Benson & Crowmarsh)**  
Email: [gavin.mclauchlan@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.mclauchlan@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
Mob: +44 7710 255569



September saw the CEO of Oxfordshire CC's visit.

### **OCC headlines:**

In contrast to August, September has been somewhat manic! As well as being a Full Council month we had a visit from Martin Reeves (CEO OCC), Lorna Baxter (Deputy CEO OCC) and Karen Fuller (Director of Adult services OCC). Ambitiously we built a programme of visits across our region as well as Wallingford and Berinsfield / Garsington. It turned out that my military timings were a little on the optimistic side with all the various conversations that were required. We ended up running thirty minutes over but think that the day was (very) worthwhile. If you missed out this time, there will be other opportunities to meet the senior OCC officers – and I won't try to make it as ambitious next time!

On September the 9<sup>th</sup> we had the Oxfordshire Full Council meeting. As written last time the motion of one opposition party payment was proposed, this time by the Lib Dems which was voted in, although it was considerably watered down from our original motion. This will come to the Audit & Governance committee (working Group) to work on – so I am hopeful of influencing the outcome to more reflect our original proposition. At this Council meeting our motion was to write to the Oxfordshire MP's and the Police and Crime Commissioner about the use of Oxfordshire Air bases and Military Training Centres by the Israeli Air Force – although we had a lot of support the feeling was that the wrong question had been asked (which as we pointed out was only because we hadn't been allowed to ask the question we wanted to!).

For the next Full Council, we are currently considering a question concerning the proposed Abingdon Reservoir. It would appear that in an emergency the reservoir would need to lose 1 metre of water across the entire footprint in one day – they (Thames Water) are proposing that this would be piped south of Abingdon at a frankly alarming rate (3x the normal river flow), and no work has been done on modelling what this would mean for all of our communities (and beyond). I am working with various organisations on understanding what this would potentially mean to us.

**Road Resurfacing:** If you missed this the details can be found [here](#) – including which sites are being managed.

**Councillor Grants:** These are now available! However, a word of warning, I have the grandiose sum of £10k to award over two years. I am therefore planning on being very selective and will only make any awards to those who speak to me about their requirement first. The minimum grant is £500, whilst the maximum is £4k. The grants cannot be awarded to individuals, or to companies, and must come with an argument as to why it is needed, what the money will go towards, and over what time period. From my perspective it also needs to have a social value. To apply you will need to fill in this [form](#) – but please bear in mind my stipulations above! Do also bear in mind that when it's gone, it's gone.

**My roles:** Are as per last month. I did have my first board meeting for the Chiltern National Landscape and our first Military Champions meeting. If anyone is interested in these, please reach out to me.

## NEWS IN BRIEF:

**A4074 policing:** In September TVP have continued to monitor the A4074, and the road had been resurfaced and remarked around Dorchester. The new road markings clearly provide less room for overtaking; this will be monitored over time.

**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](#). I am now on the location working group looking at how the new organisations could be organised. This is a difficult task as we don't know which way the government are going to turn. All we can try to do is set out the right stall and hopefully guide the government on how best to consider the restructuring. If you want my views on this, please ask!

**Drain clearing:** OCC has committed to cleaning every roadside gully, drain and manhole every year for the duration the current term. (more [here](#)).

## LOCAL QUESTIONS TO FULL COUNCIL (9<sup>th</sup> September):

All answers to questions put to cabinet are available on the OCC website, so for answers to questions already posed please go to the minutes. The last questions asked were:

1. OCC ask residents of Millars Close in Benson to maintain roadside hedges.
2. Hazell & Jeffries operation hours.
3. Speeding along the A4074, who to contact:

My proposed questions for next Full Council (November) are:

1. FixMyStreet / Councillor Enquiry platforms: Both of these platforms are there to raise local issues that need to be resolved. I know a lot of people have raised FixMyStreet issues only for them to be closed or stated as complete – when nothing has happened! Why is this happening, and what does this mean for the stats used by OCC on issue resolution?
2. Complexity of papers: During my initial meetings at OCC, I have been astounded by the volume of materials you are required to read and the complexity of the structure (i.e. flipping constantly between the agenda and the schedule of business). The Place Scrutiny meeting for the Congestion Charge required 1,008 pages of materials to be read (over the bank holiday weekend) – much of which was repetitious. It's become obvious to me that a lot of time is wasted in committee meetings with councillors asking questions, when the answers lie in the documentation. How do we go about changing this structure to be more efficient? Can we ask councillors on all committees to submit questions **before** the meetings (in the same way that Full Council does with Cabinet questions)?
3. TBC:

Please contact me (details at top) if you wish me to raise any questions on your behalf. As you can see, I have an available space for November (currently).

## CURRENT CONSULTATIONS:

September consultations:

**Congestion Charge (Oxford):** On the 10<sup>th</sup> September it was announced that the Congestion Charge will go ahead. To apply for a permit please head [here](#).

**The Future of Rail:** OxRail - 2040. This consultation closes on October 1<sup>st</sup>. So you only have 2 days to get your views known. The consultation can be found [here](#).

**National Highways and Transport Network:** This is part of a Nationwide survey and can be found [here](#).

## PARISH ROUND-UP

We had a very successful day out with the CEO of OCC visiting many of our local areas.

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.

## Benson:

Questions have been raised about:

- Management of the various areas of land in Benson belonging to OCC. Ongoing.

- Inhabitants of the Cala development have concerns over water management which they are currently working on with SODC and Thames Water. Waiting on meeting with OCC.
- Possible drug dealing “gangs” in the alleyway between Birmingham Yard and St.Helens Way. Keeping a watch and reporting sightings to Community Police.
- There is a Mobility Hub consultation in progress for Benson, please respond [here](#).

#### Crowmarsh:

- Need for a footpath exiting the French Gardens development. Discussed with OCC in August and approach agreed. ✓
- Need for a 30mph sign on the Port Way.
- Desire for a 40mph speed limit on Nosworthy Way (as opposed to 50).
- SID post requirement & replacement SID in North Stoke. Chased August.
- Reduction in speed request for B4009.
- Lighting on Wallingford bridge.
- Newnham Manor development – waiting on contract from OCC. Chasing.
- Bloor housing proposal.

#### 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. ✓
- Armco repair alongside the barrier (which was repaired) which is over the pedestrian underpass of the A4074 from Dorchester. ✓
- Pathway from Meadside to Dorchester needs fixing. ✓
- Lighting on path to Reading direction bus stop on A4074.

#### 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.
- Introduced PC to those responsible for paths at OCC. ✓
- Introduced to those who understand land ownership along footpath.
- Showed OCC CEO site of proposed footpath. ✓
- Hazell & Jeffries operating hours versus that defined in the CLEUD.
- Hazell & Jeffries building earth mound. Raised with OCC

#### Warborough / Shillingford:

- Have fed into the Neighbourhood plan (from OCC perspective). ✓
- Bollards – now registered on FixMyStreet.

#### Days off in October:

I will be taking one day off on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, plus some time over ½ term (w/c 27<sup>th</sup> Oct).