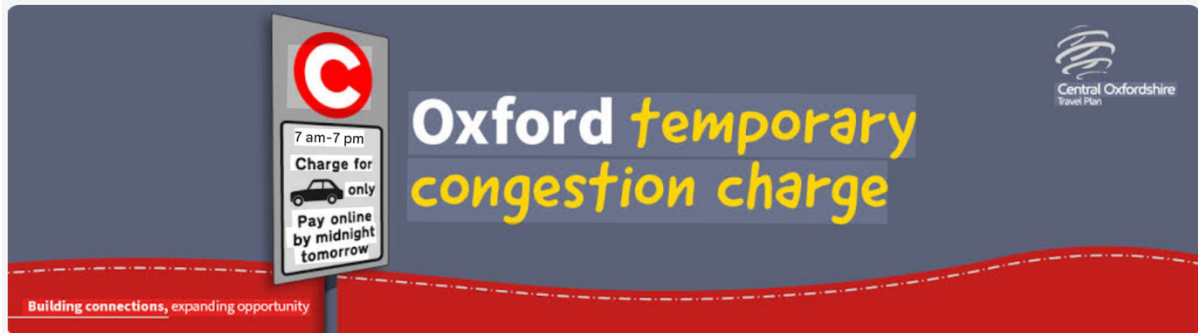


OCC News October 2025

Cllr Gavin McLauchlan (Benson & Crowmarsh)

Email: gavin.mclauchlan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Mob: +44 7710 255569



The Oxford temporary congestion charge is now in place.

OCC headlines:

October, not being a Full Council month, has seen things running slightly slower than is usual. However, this is about to change with two Full Councils coming in rapid succession in November and December. We are in full swing for the November meeting with our motion coming up second on the agenda, which also means we will be up first in December.

For November 4th (next Full Council), we are tabling a question concerning the proposed Abingdon Reservoir. The Abingdon Reservoir story has been familiar to all of us in Oxfordshire for the last 20 years. Even though pretty much every public body in Oxfordshire has objected to the SESRO plans this still seems to be forging ahead with strong governmental backing and a desperate provider in Thames Water (even with the increase in forecast costs from £2.2bn to a staggering £7.5bn). In reality we collectively have been left clutching at straws on how to stop this – with our last chance maybe the emergency discharge facility required, and what could happen if this is actually triggered. Fingers crossed we get the support of the council (which I'm sure we will!).

Our motion this time round will be seconded by the Lib Dems showing good cross-party working. We are also putting forward a joint motion with them on a combined community cohesion action plan with appropriate resourcing and funding in light of the recent climate of uncertainty and fear.

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. To date I have allocated £2,500 to worthy causes which met all the above criteria.

My roles: Are as per last month. With the addition of an advisory capacity for the Ewelme Exhibition Endowment and on the working group for Military education.

NEWS IN BRIEF:

A4074: The A4074 consultation is over and is now being put into action with the resurfacing of the Dorchester bypass and the remarking of this stretch of road to make it less conducive to speeding vehicles. Some corrections in the overall plans have been pointed out to OCC prior to full implementation.

Local Government reorganisation (LGR):

If interested in the LGR details – please see below for timings.

- 29 October: Option 2 (two unitary councils) will appear on the Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Berkshire, West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse council websites.
- 31 October: Option 1 (single unitary for Oxfordshire) will appear on Oxfordshire County Council's website.
- 31 October: Option 3 (three unitary councils) will appear on Oxford City Council's website.

Councils will consider and discuss their proposals on the following dates:

- Cherwell District Council: Council on 10 November and Executive on 13 November. All-member briefings have been held in the lead-up to submission.
- Oxford City Council: Special Scrutiny Committee on 5 November, Cabinet on 10 November, Council on 24 November.
- Oxfordshire County Council: Place, Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 November and Cabinet on 13 November.
- South Oxfordshire District Council: Council on 6 November, Joint Scrutiny Committee (with Vale of White Horse) on 10 November, and Cabinet on 13 November.
- Vale of White Horse District Council: Council on 5 November, Joint Scrutiny Committee (with South Oxfordshire) on 10 November, and Cabinet on 14 November.
- West Berkshire Council: Council on 4 November, special Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee on 10 November, and Executive on 12 November.
- West Oxfordshire District Council: Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 November, Council on 12 November followed by the Executive on 13 November.

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 (9th 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 4th) 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 due to the sheer volume of information. How do we go about changing this structure to be more efficient? Can we have a management summary for each committee – allowing all to be easily up to date.
3. Review of local treasury decision processes: In light of climate change how can we materially prioritise the climate and ecological emergency when considering investment policies and can we influence the CIPFA code of practice which dictates what councils should prioritise.

Please contact me (details at top) if you wish me to raise any questions on your behalf in future Full Council meetings.

CURRENT CONSULTATIONS:

November consultations:

Congestion Charge (Oxford): The Temporary Congestion Charge started on October 29th.

Improving our fire service: OCC are asking for your views on proposed changes to how we respond to emergencies, ensuring that we have more fire engines consistently available and to overall enable us to get to incidents across Oxfordshire more quickly than we can now. To participate enter [here](#).

Closes 20th January 2026.

PARISH ROUND-UP

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. Benson now on TVP Alert list.
- Mobility Hub consultation now closed. Work on-going on monitoring existing traffic flows.

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). Pointed out to Cllr Gant on revamp of A4074 speed limits.
- SID post requirement & replacement SID in North Stoke. Chased August. Meeting on 28th October – hopefully now moving forward. ✓
- Reduction in speed request for B4009.
- Lighting on Wallingford bridge. ✓
- Newnham Manor development – waiting on contract from OCC. Now with SODC...
- Bloor housing proposal.

Dorchester:

We are waiting on input on:

- The various Unitaries that are competing with the Ridgeway option. See above.
- 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. Response provided.

Ewelme:

- A public meeting will happen on the 8th 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. Action being taken. ✓

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 9th October, plus some time over ½ term (w/c 27th Oct).