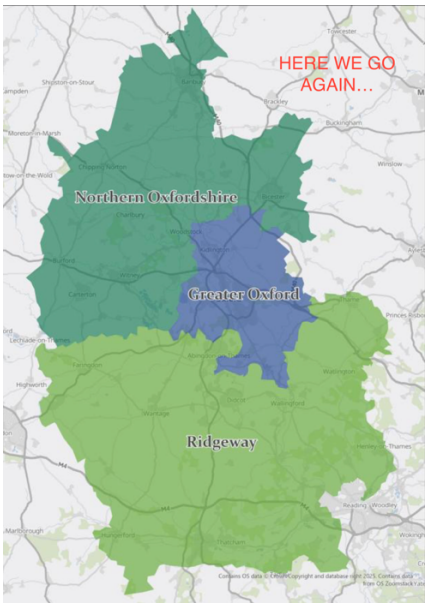
OCC News October 2026

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



Ever get that feeling of déjà vu?

OCC headlines:

Welcome to my October Newsletter.

"The only constant in life is change" - Heraclitus

Three months ago we heard of the new unitary structure, a month ago we heard it was paused and today (29th) we hear it is back – just delayed by a year. No reasonings, no information on what the civil service advice was. This is not a reversion to the original minded to decision, it is a new decision with some new (strange) boundaries. In between OCC put out a statement saying:

"Earlier this month, we sent a legal letter to the government and also issued a protective claim in court in relation to a potential judicial review of LGR in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

The county council has been asking government to provide the evidence and analysis that informed its minded-to decision in July for this area. We will now consider any information shared by the government that has informed its new minded-to decision, assess our position and any further appropriate actions.

The joint LGR implementation board, made up of all chief executives and the system LGR programme director, will be meeting on Monday to discuss the next steps and how our work will continue."

District Council elections will definitely happen next May, with potentially Unitary elections happening the following year – depending on the actions OCC decide to take. Under current plans the Unitaries will now come into force on April 1st 2029 after a year shadowing the district and county councils.

MSA – Mayoral Strategic Authority. It was announced that Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon (!) will get a Mayor who will be responsible for major transport and housing schemes. This will be likely voted on in 2028 (probably at the same time as LGR).

More on both of these stories over the coming months I am sure!

The end of the year is always marked by two full councils in quick succession. We have one on November 3rd with one on December 8th following shortly afterwards. Our motion this month is on the ecological crisis confronting the UK.

We were visited by OCC officers Stephen Fitzgerald and Rosie Lawrence on October 20th. We visited sites in Wallingford, Crowmarsh, Ewelme, Benson and Warborough in what was a successfully busy and very wet day!

Policing: If you are interested in the crime statistics for our area please see this URL.

Bus Fares: The government have announced a return to the £2 cap on single bus fares. This will come into effect on Jan 1st, 2027.

Councillor Grants: The full £10k of my Councillor Priority Fund has now been allocated.

NEWS IN BRIEF:
Oxfordshire Highways Annual Report: The annual report can be found here.

Drain clearing: OCC has gone back on its commitment to cleaning every roadside gully, drain and manhole every year for the duration the current term. **It is therefore more important than ever to report any issues via FixMyStreet.**

Thames Water: A reminder - Thames Waters hosepipe ban is still in place.

LOCAL QUESTIONS TO FULL COUNCIL:
Questions can be asked of the cabinet at the next Full Council on December 8th (it is too late for Nov 3rd meeting). Please let me know if you have any questions you would like me to ask of Cabinet at this meeting or at any relevant Cabinet meeting.

CURRENT CONSULTATIONS:
Traffic Filters Trial in Oxford: OCC want your views. Please head here to comment and find out more about them. They came into effect on Monday 28th September. The consultation runs until March 28th, 2027.
School Streets Trials: OCC want your views on the Oxfordshire School Streets trial which is being trialled in four areas of Oxfordshire, including Didcot. The trial started on the 2nd September. The consultation (here) runs until 1st March 2027.
OxBus2040: There is a limited window to put your views across for this consultation as it closes on November 17th. The consultation is to allow OCC to hear your views on the plans and actions for Oxfordshires buses.
Thames Valley Police: Are looking for input on their local crime survey.

PARISH ROUND-UP
Please refer here: for all Fix My Street queries in your area. There is a huge volume of these and cover the gamut of OCC responsibilities. Completed actions have been removed.
By Parish Council – in alphabetical order.

Benson:
Questions have been raised about:

- Mobility Hub – have been informed that a briefing will be arranged for Benson Parish.
- Salt Store – OCC may be willing to rent this area out for a peppercorn rent to the Scouts / Guides etc. Document now supplied to OCC from Scouts / Guides. Awaiting feedback.
- Many people are still asking when the Relief Road will be opened….
- Visit of Stephen Fitzgerald and Rosie Lawrence to area.

Crowmarsh:

- Need for a 30mph sign on Port Way (Newnham Manor development dependant…).
- Reduction in speed request for B4009 (in planning for before Spring 2027 along with other speed restriction changes – Part of Vision Zero).
- Visit of Stephen Fitzgerald and Rosie Lawrence to area – discussed Port Way and Benson Lane.

Dorchester:

- Continuation of path work to bus stop promised as part of the path refurb – on going.
- Provision of flooding signs to be sent to Mike for Watling Lane. Now received.
- Local Government Restructure back on...with a difference.

Ewelme:

- Positive meeting with Hazell & Jeffries and Benson Parish Council held in September. We will be told about significant movements in advance in the future.
- Visit of Stephen Fitzgerald and Rosie Lawrence to area discussed Cat Lane, the bus top by the shop and the pothole near H&J.

Warborough / Shillingford:

- Shillingford bridge railing repairs – several abortive attempts at meeting.
- Visit of Stephen Fitzgerald and Rosie Lawrence to area – showed them the state of Thame Road, the potholes around the village, the ditch by the shop (and discussed Caldicott Close, the roundabout heading to the bridge and FMS Power Users).
- Local Government Restructure back on...with a difference.

Days off in November:

I have no planned days off in November.