



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

**November 2023**

*Welcome to my monthly update, shared in the first week of every month.*

### Upcoming meetings:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> November: Chalgrove Parish Council
- 6<sup>th</sup> November: Cuxham Parish Meeting
- 7<sup>th</sup> November: Full Council, Oxford
- 8<sup>th</sup> November: Ewelme Parish Council
- 9<sup>th</sup> November: Berrick Salome Parish Council
- 13<sup>th</sup> November: Residents outreach – Christmas Common
- 14<sup>th</sup> November: Watlington Parish Council
- 14<sup>th</sup> November: Brightwell Baldwin Parish Meeting
- 23<sup>rd</sup> November: Health Overview Scrutiny Committee, Oxford
- 23<sup>rd</sup> November: Britwell Salome Parish Meeting

### \*\*\*\*\* OCC NEWS\*\*\*\*\*

**SEND Improvement:** Steps are being taken to improve the support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A priority action plan has been developed by organisations involved in the delivery of SEND services, including Oxfordshire County Council and the NHS, along with the county's parent carer forum. The plan will need to be approved by Ofsted. An Improvement Board meeting will take place in November.

**Rural buses are back!:** New services for the Chalgrove and Watlington area will begin in November - the first time many areas will see services since they were cut in 2016.

- Watlington to Reading (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
  - Service 122: via Nettlebed, Rotherfield Peppard and Sonning Common
  - Service 123: via Stoke Row, Checkendon and Kidmore End

- Watlington to Thame (Tuesday, Thursday)
  - Service 126: via Chalgrove, The Miltons, The Haseleys and Moreton
  - Service 127: via Lewknor, Postcombe, Tetsworth and Milton Common

In December in the run up to Christmas, single fares in Oxfordshire will be capped at £1.

**OCC Budget 2024-2025:** Cabinet agreed an [approach](#) to setting the 2024/5 budget. Continued inflation and demand pressures (particularly in SEND and adult care) mean the council is currently forecasting £30-40 million in additional costs in 2024/5. The council's financial strategy includes a 4.99% rise in council tax for 2024/5 with 2% ring fenced for adult social care. Details of the proposals will be published in November.

**Oxfordshire tops table for county councils tackling climate change:** [Oxfordshire](#) was rated the best performing county council in the UK on climate change by the Climate Emergency UK climate action scorecard.

**Reducing disruption caused by utilities & developers:** The County's new plan for charging an increased daily fee of £2500 (instead of the £300 fixed fee) to utility companies that dig up major roads is being [consulted](#) on. By law it is restricted to 5% of Oxfordshire's roads and so will focus on busy, critical parts of the network. Surplus funds will be reinvested. The DfT is encouraging all councils to adopt schemes like this.

**Homes Upgrade Grants:** Money is available for off-gas grid homes to improve energy efficiency (including solar). To [quality](#) a resident (renter or owner-occupier) must live in a home rated EPC D or lower, and have a household income of less than £39,000

#### \*\*\*\*\*NEWS IN BRIEF\*\*\*\*\*

**Town and parish council charter:** Online [questionnaire](#). Draft to be published in Jan  
**Boundary review:** [Consultation](#) open from 3 October to 11 December.

**Highways works:** Check this OCC website showing [upcoming highways repairs](#)

**Benson relief road:** Construction has begun starting with food attenuation work

**20mph applications close:** Applications for 20mph closed on [31 October](#)

#### \*\*\*\*\*PARISH ROUND-UP \*\*\*\*\*

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

#### Chalgrove

- **Gladman planning application:** The Council is writing its response to the resubmitted planning application for 160 homes. As County Councillor I have contributed with an objection.

#### Lewknor

- **Lewknor interchange:** Muddy and narrow pathway reported to officers. General maintenance work will be carried out on 13/11/2023

- **Manor Close:** Issue has been escalated to chief executives of SODC and OCC. A meeting has been held with Beeks, who must complete the land gap application before the County Council can adopt the land. There is no planning enforcement action that SODC can take against Beeks, nor can OCC compel Beeks to complete the land gap application.

#### **Pishill with Stonor**

- **HGVs:** Signage to deter HGVs from restricted byway have been delivered and will be installed by end of November

#### **Shirburn**

- **Chicane:** Officers met on site with contractors to discuss installation of a chicane on B4009 at Shirburn

#### **Swyncombe**

- **Springalls:** Trading standards are monitoring the sale of land in small plots near Park Corner

#### **Watlington**

- **Charlotte Coxe Trust:** A meeting of the OCC Charlotte Coxe Trust Committee will be held before the end of the year to discuss the accounts
- **Red Kite View to Cuxham Road path:** No further update in October – being chased
- **Watlington Relief Road:** Planning application expected towards end of November. It is likely to go to planning committee in the new year.