



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

### **December 2022**

*Welcome to my monthly update. I share a regular update in the first week of every month. In the interests of transparency, I share this update publicly as well as with parish councils.*

#### **My recent meetings:**

- 8<sup>th</sup> November: Pyrton Parish Council, Watlington Parish Council
- 9<sup>th</sup> November: Ewelme Parish Council
- 10<sup>th</sup> November: Berrick Salome Parish Council
- 14<sup>th</sup> November: Lewknor Parish Council
- 16<sup>th</sup> November: Place Overview Scrutiny Committee, Oxford
- 22<sup>nd</sup> November: Brightwell Baldwin Parish Meeting
- 23<sup>rd</sup> November: Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee, Oxford
- 24<sup>th</sup> November: Britwell Salome Parish Council
- 2<sup>nd</sup> December: Cuxham, site visit

#### **Upcoming meetings:**

- 12<sup>th</sup> December: Great Milton Parish Council
- 13<sup>th</sup> December: Full Council, Oxford
- 13<sup>th</sup> December: Watlington Parish Council

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#### **Oxford traffic filters special: Q&A**

The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance has taken a bold step to reduce congestion in and around Oxford with [traffic filters](#). It's an issue many residents want to know more about - so below are a few common questions about the plan.

*What are traffic filters?*

During the times they are operating, traffic filters prohibit private motor vehicles without a filter pass from going through them. Oxfordshire County Council has approved a plan to introduce six filters across Oxford, including at St Cross Road, Thames Street, Hythe Bridge Street, St Clements, Marston Ferry Road, and Hollow Way.

*Why is Oxfordshire County Council doing this?*

Car use in Oxford has doubled in the last 20 years and is likely to get considerably worse with further housing developments. Road space has not doubled, resulting in high levels of congestion and bus routes becoming unsustainable. Traffic filters are a congestion measure, aimed at reducing the number of private car journeys to free up space for buses. The benefits will include faster bus journeys and faster journeys for anyone using a filter pass.

*Does this stop me from driving to Oxford?*

No. Everywhere you can currently reach by car in Oxford can still be reached by private motor vehicle. Households outside the city will also get up to 50 filter passes per year (25 per person/vehicle) to go through the filters with their private car. Exemptions also exist for e.g., blue badge holders and carers.

*Can I still drive to the Westgate or John Radcliffe hospital?*

Yes. Everywhere in Oxford will still be accessible by car. For example, residents that currently drive to and park at the Westgate via Abingdon Road, would need to continue on the ring road and approach via Botley Road. In most cases journey times are likely to only take an additional 5-15 minutes. The filters will make using the Redbridge park and ride much more attractive due to faster buses from Redbridge into the centre.

*When will this happen?*

Due to the closure of Botley Road in 2023 for work by Network Rail, the measure won't come into place until January 2024.

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**Adult social care in the news:** The Lib Dem led administration continues to make adult social care and children's services a priority, where over half of county expenditure takes place. The Oxfordshire Way – a new approach by the council's adult social care team – aims to support people to live well and independently, within their own communities, for as long as possible. Oxfordshire County Council is providing funding for a ['Community Catalyst'](#) programme to support local residents to set up care companies or centres and provide care in the community. A 2022-3 [Live Well Oxfordshire Care Guide](#) has also been published with lots of great information on how to find community support and access adult social care. Free copies of the guide: 0345 050 7666.

**Education commission launched:** OCC has launched an independent ‘Education Commission’, tasked with improving educational outcomes for all children and young people. A key goal of the commission will be to look at reducing the gap in educational attainment for disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs and disabilities. The commission will speak to all interested parties about what a world class education system might look like for Oxfordshire and what needs to change. The commission will be independently chaired and made up of members representing educational settings, establishments, and key stakeholder groups across Oxfordshire.

**Budget setting process kicked off:** The process of setting OCC’s annual budget has been kicked off with a public consultation. Within the context of rising inflation and rising demand for OCC’s services (e.g. adult social care, SEND), the administration is seeking to create a balanced and fair budget that protects our most vulnerable residents. Since the government has not provided funding to meet the costs of inflation, OCC has been required to make savings of £44m of real-terms savings. However, the administration has sought to protect budgets impacting vulnerable residents, with particular emphasis on children with special education needs and disability. The [consultation](#) closes on 19 December.

**Plan to rationalise OCC property portfolio:** Oxfordshire County Council owns a whopping 905 sites around the county, including 13 offices. Led by finance cabinet member Cllr Calum Miller, OCC is being instructed to [rationalise](#) its property portfolio to realise savings by giving up leased buildings and deliver on climate goals.

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**20mph scheme: Progress!**

Rollout of the county’s 20mph scheme is continuing for villages that applied. Some have already been installed, while others are in [consultation](#) or awaiting decision by the cabinet member. Once cabinet approval is given, installation can happen shortly after.

| Village              | Consultation Closes       | Decision Date by Cabinet |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Berrick Salome       | 30 <sup>th</sup> December | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |
| Britwell Salome      | Closed                    | 8 <sup>th</sup> December |
| Chalgrove            | Closed                    | Approved                 |
| Great/Little Haseley | Closed                    | Approved                 |
| Great Milton         | Closed                    | Approved                 |
| Lewknor              | Closed                    | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |
| Little Milton        | 9 <sup>th</sup> December  | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |
| Nettlebed            | 30 <sup>th</sup> December | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |
| Pyrton               | 30 <sup>th</sup> December | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |
| Watlington           | Not open                  | Not scheduled            |

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## Parish round-up

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

### Brightwell Baldwin

- **Potholes:** Potholes in Upperton have been reported and scheduled for maintenance with the Dragon Patcher

### Chalgrove

- **Mud on the road:** Mud coming from the Ridgepoint development has been reported to OCC. I have also written to Ridgepoint to emphasise their responsibilities under the Highways Act 1980 to prevent mud to be brought onto the highways

### Cuxham

- **Drainage issues on highway:** I carried out a site visit with representatives of Cuxham parish meeting to view highways issues including poor drainage. I'm following up with officers to devise a plan!
- **Speed calming:** Further discussions are ongoing about speed calming measures. I am asking officers to explore adding village gates to support the 20mph scheme (only possible in new financial year).

### Lewknor:

- **Postcombe / Lower Road potholes:** Have been reported to officers for inspection and follow up
- **Manor Close:** Work completed by the developer to close the highways gap will need to be inspected by OCC to ensure it is of an adequate standard.

### Pishill with Stonor

- **Potholes:** Officers have requested an update from contractors on Dragon Patching for Maidensgrove

### Watlington

- **Watlington Relief Road:** Work to develop the preliminary plans for the relief road is progressing. Questions can be directed to: [WRRproject@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:WRRproject@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- **Streetlights:** Power has been restored to the streetlight on chapel lane. SSE are being chased to fix streetlights on Willow close and Chestnut close.



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

### January 2023

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#### My recent meetings:

- 12<sup>th</sup> December: Great Milton Parish Council
- 13<sup>th</sup> December: Full Council, Oxford
- 13<sup>th</sup> December: Watlington Parish Council
- 14<sup>th</sup> December: Little Milton Parish Council

#### Upcoming meetings:

- 4<sup>th</sup> January: Chalgrove Parish Council
- 9<sup>th</sup> January: Great Haseley Parish Council
- 10<sup>th</sup> January: Watlington Parish Council
- 11<sup>th</sup> January: Ewelme Parish Council
- 16<sup>th</sup> January: Great Milton Parish Council
- 18<sup>th</sup> January: Audit and governance committee, Oxford
- 25<sup>th</sup> January: Place committee, Oxford

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#### OCC news

**Reduced bus fares:** For 3 months (Jan-Mar), bus passengers can enjoy a [£2 cap on bus fares](#). Paid for by a government scheme, fares with participating bus firms will cost a maximum of £2 per adult single fare (includes Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel). Concessions are unaffected and school services are excluded.

**Anti-sewage motion passes and water summit:** A Lib Dem motion at Full Council in December condemning the practice of dumping sewage into waterways passed with

near unanimity (one conservative opposed). Over the Christmas period, Thames Water released raw sewage 6 times into Oxfordshire rivers. A [water summit](#) in December also looked at challenges facing water supply and demand in Oxfordshire.

**Three in four streetlamps now LED:** Over 75% of the 60,000+ street lighting assets in OCC control are now run with energy saving LED lights. Streetlighting is the largest source of carbon emissions in OCC's operations and is a growing cost due to rising energy prices. Since 2019/20 OCC has reduced carbon emissions by 21%, in large part thanks to the LED scheme. The milestone represents a significant improvement in the pace of rollout and will save the council [£77m over 20 years](#).

**Tree planting:** As part of the new Tree Policy for Oxfordshire, [450 trees](#) will be planted on highways over the winter period, supported by £185,000 from budget reserves.

**Successful bid for children's homes:** OCC has successfully bid for a £5.2m grant to part fund four new residential children's homes. The homes would provide accommodation and support for children requiring solo provision or who can only share with one other child, children with autism, and children who have had adverse childhood experiences. These new homes would add to OCC's portfolio of three homes, along with the new 4-bedroom home being constructed in Aston. The matched funding by OCC is still to be finalised.

**Health consultation:** A draft strategy developed by local healthcare leaders from across the health and care system in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire (BOB) area is being consulted on (closes 29<sup>th</sup> Jan). Survey: [link](#)

**Chilterns AONB boundaries:** Natural England are overseeing a review process of the boundaries of the Chilterns AONB. Natural England are appointing consultants who will carry out a technical assessment of natural beauty before consulting with stakeholders in spring and early summer of 2023. Contact email for enquiries: [ChilternsAONBBoundaryReview@NaturalEngland.org.uk](mailto:ChilternsAONBBoundaryReview@NaturalEngland.org.uk)

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## News in short

**New Chief Executive:** Dr Martin Reeves has been appointed OCC's new chief executive

**Traffic filter fake news rebutted:** Watch rebuttals [here](#)

**Award winning council:** OCC wins three [environmental awards](#)

**Guide to adulthood for SEND children:** Guide on refreshed [website](#)

**Increase in highways funding 22/23:** OCC increased funding by £0.8m for 22/23

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## 20mph scheme

All villages that applied have completed the consultation phase (except Watlington). 20mph limits have already been installed in Chalgrove, Great/Little Haseley and Great Milton. The remainder are likely to be installed between February and April 2023.

| Village              | Consultation Closes | Decision Date            | Installation |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Berrick Salome       | Closed              | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |              |
| Britwell Salome      | Closed              | Approved                 |              |
| Chalgrove            | Closed              | Approved                 | Installed    |
| Great/Little Haseley | Closed              | Approved                 | Installed    |
| Great Milton         | Closed              | Approved                 | Installed    |
| Lewknor              | Closed              | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |              |
| Little Milton        | Closed              | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |              |
| Nettlebed            | Closed              | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |              |
| Pyrton               | Closed              | 26 <sup>th</sup> January |              |
| Watlington           | February (TBC)      | March (TBC)              |              |

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## Parish round-up

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### Chalgrove

- **EV charging points:** An opportunity to install 1-2 EV chargers at the village hall car park as a 'microhub' is being explored with the parish council (tbc - funding not yet secured)
- **High street (new housing estate) traffic calming measures:** Traffic calming measures are being [consulted](#) on (closes 13<sup>th</sup> Jan) linked to the new housing estate. The measures include,
  - Zebra crossing on a flat top road hump 160m west of Marley Lane
  - Raised flat top road humps with heights of 75mm
  - Buildouts with priority workings, narrowing the carriageway to 3.4m
  - Bus stop clearways (with a 'No stopping except local buses restriction').
  - Footway improvement works and re-alignment of the existing carriageway at the western end of High Street

### Cuxham

- **Drainage issues and potholes:** Drainage issues on B480 by Ivy cottage could be addressed as a scheme to upgrade the four 'off lets' for 'gullies and pots' and has

been added to the 23/24 drainage program. Following improvements to the drainage, work can be carried out to improve the road surface more satisfactorily.

### **Ewelme**

- **HGVs:** A Planning Contravention Notice was issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> December against the directors of Hazell Jefferies to investigate a suspected breach of planning regulations following the installation of a concrete loading facility. OCC also anticipates the operators to apply for an updated lawful development certificate and have been given until mid-February to come forward with an application.

### **Lewknor**

- **Manor close:** The land gap issue has not been resolved by the developer according to OCC officers. Although some work appears to have been carried out, this is not on land considered by OCC to be within the highway
- **M40 junction:** National Highways have advised they *'are not in a position to advise further as yet and are unable to enter any conversation with local councillors'* OCC has indicated it would be willing to financially support an initiative to improve the safety of the junction for bus users and pedestrians.

### **Pishill with Stonor**

- **Potholes:** Additional patching has been carried out in Maidensgrove

### **Watlington**

- **Streetlights:** Power has been restored to streetlights on Willow close and Chestnut close.