

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS AUGUST 2024 FROM CLLR KEVIN BULMER

GENERAL OCC REPORT

ROAD RESURFACING

I've had a number of complaints about the quality of the work of the recent spate of road and path resurfacing.

Don't be fooled it's not really resurfacing it is a slurry seal to help preserve the underlying structure..

What they've done is basically to apply a slurry coat to the existing surface, while it provides a new wearing surface and bonds any loose material together it's not designed to do anything about uneven surfaces as it follows the existing surface .

It is a relatively cheap and quick solution (compared to a proper resurface) which the liberal administration has gone for as against a more expensive but longer lasting resurface.

It's made from emulsified asphalt and generally depending on use lasts 6-8 yrs.

Not very attractive in my personal view and given that a properly maintained resurfaced pavement could last at least 25 yrs its value for money is questionable.

It's been put to me this is so the administration can say they're looking after the roads and get them through next year's election. Not being party to the inner workings of the liberal administration I couldn't comment, I'm just disappointed a better job wasn't done.

COUNCIL MOTIONS MEETING 9th July

One motion I'd highlight from the meeting due to its importance for school age parents particularly in rural areas is :-

This Council has not historically run its Spare Seats scheme for school bus places in an optimal way. Parents and carers have too often been left in an unenviable position further to changes, with elected members often left in the dark about changes affecting schools in their divisions.

According to the Oxford Mail (22 May 2024), there is a record low number of buses and coaches being used on Oxfordshire's roads.

Parental choice remains an important principle of the current education settlement and will remain so unless changed by an incoming government. Whilst such a principle remains, it is important that this Council does all it can to facilitate transport to preferred schools at a reasonable cost or on a revenue-neutral basis.

The Council's Spare Seats scheme has aimed to do just this. However, there appears to be increasing uncertainty as to whether it will continue in the same form. Indeed, letters to parents from this Council cancelling services have been sent as recently as 11 June 2024.

The Council requests a briefing for elected members on the current Spare Seats settlement and requests that the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member(s) bring a report to Cabinet (such report being subject to pre-scrutiny) to address how existing numbers of school bus places can be

maintained and, where possible, increased. In the meantime, this Council requests Cabinet to work with parents, schools and bus companies to ensure continuing provision of affordable school bus places.

This motion passed, which is a good thing, however you have to ask why it took a motion to get the liberal administration to come clean and communicate on this important issue. I've had a number of parents contact me worried about the administration policy on school transport and the concerning rumours swirling around the issue. I say communicate, as of this report I'm still awaiting an update.

OXFORDSHIRE CYCLING MAP

OCC have announced the launch of the Oxfordshire Online Cycling Map.
[Oxfordshire Online Cycle Map | \(cyclingukoxfordshire.org\)](http://cyclingukoxfordshire.org)

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND

I still have some funds left so if there are any good causes that qualify please get to drop me a line and ill consider them

SHORT PERSONAL STATEMENT

Just wanted to say a few words on my recent decision to resign from the conservative party and become an independent.

This was not a decision made lightly or easily and I came to it with a heavy heart. It became clear I could not resolve the issues I had with the party and being ignored and arguing with the wall had little appeal. Staying and pretending to be ok with the national or county party wasn't something I felt happy doing. If there had been a longer period than a year then I'd have probably resigned but with less than a year to go I decided to stay as an independent conservative and see my final term out looking out for the residents as I believe I had been doing. To be clear I've enjoyed serving the residents of the Goring division and its been a important part of my life helping people.

My beliefs and views haven't changed I'm still a basic common or garden unionist conservative its just I no longer believed the party shared those basic views or interested in delivering policies based on them. The people who controlled and represented the party were no longer the same as the ones when i'd joined and there views had become more and more divergent from those of what I believed the conservatives originally represented.

I could make a comment on the competency of the people running things but to be frank don't think any of the current people of whatever party tick that particular box.

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REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS SEPT 2024 FROM CLLR KEVIN BULMER

GENERAL OCC REPORT

TAX

Yes apologies for swearing but as usual Aug is a quiet month with not a lot happening.

However on top of the Lab gov threats of eye watering tax increases (see the Starmers gas lighting speech) the LGA (local gov assoc) has asked the gov to allow them to increase council tax by any amount they please, currently restricted.

If only we could as employers to pay us what we wanted.

Given the amount of time politicians have been going on about the cost of living crises these potential decision's which would make things worse seem wrongheaded to me but there you go.

I'd suggest that a question people should be asking all parties before next yrs local council elections is what there plans are for council tax rates over the next 4 yrs.

Cllr Priority fund

I still have some monies in my priority fund however the clock however is ticking see this from occ:-

I'm getting in touch with all political group leaders and independent councillors to remind them that the deadline for Councillor Priority Fund applications is **5pm on 30 November 2024**. This deadline is earlier than previous funds to make sure that all grants are paid before the end of the financial year and the pre-election period in March. This is a hard deadline and we won't be able to paid any applications received after this date/time

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