

Title: County Councillor's Report
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Parishes: Yarnton, Begbroke and Kidlington.
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Dear Parish Councillors and residents,

As County Councillor for the West Kidlington Division, my focus over the most recent period has been pressing for updates on planned Gully Clearance, clarification on T/TRO's, responding to planning applications, and attending Place Scrutiny which most recently looked at the Congestion Charge. I have also forwarded a trees planting proposal to all Parish Clerks, and I very much hope to put forward responses shortly.

Below are some further updates I have gathered for you.

Best wishes

Lesley

OxRAIL 2040

Proposals to bring five new rail stations to Oxfordshire have been announced. This will include new stations at Cowley and Littlemore on the Cowley Branch Line, Begbroke, Wantage and Grove and Ardley. Consultation opens on 3rd September and closes on 1st October and can be found here: <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxrail-2040>

Gully clearance.

Work to clean and empty every highway drainage gully in Oxfordshire this year, and every year going forward, is now under way. Although our area was programmed for February 2026, I have been pressing for movement on this date and now understand that clearance will be carried out over the next two months. Any identified blocked gullies should be logged on Fix My Street.

Flooding.

Section 19 reports for Garden City, Kidlington and Yarnton have been released. Further reports for Mill End/Oxford Road Kidlington and Begbroke/A44 are due shortly.

Both Kidlington and Yarnton have been allocated £25k Funding for local flood related projects, to be overseen by OCC.

Trading Standards

OCC Trading Standards service conducted an operation alongside Thames Valley Police and South East Regional Crime Unit at Kidlington Market in April 2024. A man has subsequently been convicted of possessing illegal cigarettes and tobacco and has been ordered to pay back £400k within six months or face four years imprisonment.

Public Rights of Way

TTRO's have been issued for some areas of Grovelands (Axtel and Thorne Close).

Roundham Crossing: I am currently in conversation with officers in relation to the proposed closure of Roundham Crossing and will update the Clerk when I have further information.

County Hall

OCC has exchanged contracts with the buyers (L&G) on County Hall. Receipts from the sale will be used for the refurbishment and upgrading of Speedwell House on Speedwell Street. The move out of County Hall will happen in 2027, although archaeological reports may delay occupation.

Short Story Competition.

Budding story tellers across Oxfordshire are invited to unleash their imagination and take part in Oxfordshire libraries short story competition. The winner will have their story published as an ebook and eaudiobook, further details can be found here:

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-libraries/library/books-and-reading/short-story-competition?utm_term=129874

Resurfacing and surface dressing programme

A comprehensive programme of resurfacing work to improve roads across Oxfordshire is under way.

Oxfordshire County Council and its principal highways contractor M Group will visit 36 sites to carry out essential resurfacing. Work started at the end of June and is scheduled to run until 17 October. Details of highways schemes can be found here:

https://oxfordshire.highway-iams.uk/Live/PBLC_ANON/PIP/?cg=scheme

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

This proposal will see two-tier authorities as seen in Oxfordshire, end and new unitary councils created. Unitary proposals are due to be presented to Government shortly.

OCC is proposing a single unitary council to cover Oxfordshire and part of Berkshire.

Community Capacity Grants.

The Community Capacity Fund will open for grant applications from 6th September. Grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 are funded by OCC and applications processed by Oxfordshire Community Foundation. Grants are given to projects that “support people to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible”.

Local Matters.

Tree Planting: A suggested plan for tree planting has been provided, and I look forward to receiving confirmation of any additional areas the parishes propose for planting.