

HENDREDS AND HARWELL ROUND UP

***** OCC NEWS*****

Councillor priority fund: Applications to the councillor priority fund have reopened. The application process has slightly changed, requiring an online application and an email/letter of support of the councillor. Eligible organisations include, registered charities, not for profit companies, community or voluntary groups, and parish councils/meetings. Grants cannot be made to individuals, profit making organisations and private limited companies. Projects seeking funding must be deliverable by March 2025. Please note a separate cover has been sent with details on the scope and my priority areas.

Electric Vehicle Chargers: OCC is set to receive £3.6 million to rollout EV charging points across the county. The priority will be to provide charging points in rural areas and where off-street home charging is not possible. Community organisations (e.g., parishes, village halls) may be able to take ownership of the charging points to provide them as a community asset and deliver a revenue stream. Further details will follow.

Air Quality Strategy: An OCC air quality strategy (long term) and 'route map' (short term) has been developed. While monitoring of air quality is a district responsibility, the Environment Act 2021 places a responsibility on the County Council to support districts and reduce air pollution. An information campaign will follow, which will include information on indoor pollution and log burning fires.

Social care: OCC runs a 'shared lives' carer scheme whereby approved Oxfordshire residents, with space in their own home, care for a person with learning difficulties, mental health problems or other needs that make independent living difficult. Carers can offer to provide one-off respite care, or longer-term care and everything in between. The scheme has been running successfully since 2020. More information for anyone interested can be found [here](#). A scheme to match older residents with a spare room with younger people looking for alternative accommodation called [Homeshare](#) also runs as a way to provide older people with additional support / company. Both schemes are examples of the 'Oxfordshire Way' to allow people to live independently in their communities.

Verge cutting and 'no mow May': Oxfordshire County Council once again supported 'no mow May' and encouraging participation. Due to the amount of verge cutting required, OCC has an updated maintenance schedule to prioritise biodiversity. However, OCC is not able to put away its mowers for a full month and still meet its schedule of work, meaning some areas will be cut in May. Verges that need to be cut to maintain public safety will be cut back multiple times if necessary. **We now move into Let it Bloom June and I am really enjoying all the amazing flowers around!**

Household waste strategy: [Consultation](#) closed on HWRC strategy 2023-2043. The strategy replaces the 2015 Conservative HWRC strategy which aimed to close local sites

Cllr Sally Povolotsky

and deliver 3 or 4 super sites. The new strategy aims to retain the current 7 sites. The strategy encourages re-use and repair, rather than disposal in the first instance.

Hydrogen powered fire engines: Oxfordshire is taking part in a pioneering [project](#) to develop hydrogen powered fire engines

*******GRANTS AND COST OF LIVING*******

Sustainable Warmth Grants: Funding for residents without mains gas, and household incomes of less than £30,000 (or in receipt of means-tested benefits) is still [available](#).

Grants for care workers: Cost of living grants remain [available](#) for care workers.

***** **OCC NEWS*******

Town and Parish Council Charter: [more info coming soon....](#)

Unpaid carers strategy: OCC has developed a new [unpaid carers strategy](#), the final version of which is being consulted on via [Let's Talk](#). The strategy aims to better identify where carers are, increase awareness of the support available to unpaid carers and increase the level of support.

Streetlight LED project: The [project](#) to convert streetlights to LEDs is set to be completed next year. 86% of streetlights have already been converted to energy efficient LEDs

Supply chain emissions policy: OCC has developed a new policy on reducing carbon emissions as a result of procurement activity. A decision on the policy is due at Cabinet on 20 June.

Rail link feasibility study completed: A feasibility [study](#), commissioned by OCC, for a new rail link between Oxford, Witney and Carterton has been published. The study found that a rail link would be feasible and could be justified in transport strategy terms. The route would cost £700 - £900 million and require government funding.

New chair of council and cabinet member: Cllr Felix Bloomfield (Conservative, Benson and Crowmarsh) has been elected chair of the council, while Cllr Michael O'Connor (Labour, University Parks) takes over the cabinet portfolio for public health and inequalities

Didcot town consultation – please do take part [here](#)

Proposed move for OCC: OCC is looking to rationalise its property portfolio. As part of this, OCC is looking at moving its Oxford City presence from County Hall to Speedwell House. Usage of the historic part of County Hall would continue.

Oxfordshire big green week: Get involved with [Green week](#), June 10-18

Cllr Sally Povolotsky

*****GRANTS AND COST OF LIVING*****

Councillor priority fund: Open for applications

*****PARISH ROUNDUP*****

Harwell Parish

FINALLY, good news and Taylor Wimpey have been relocated and agreed for the approved local plans (by the PC) to head off to public consultation. An end is in sight. I am chasing the 20mph approval from March 2022, and pending a survey by HPC on 20mph on A417, and areas not covered by existing approvals. We have had several issues with Permits on the Highways and just a reminder you can check on the network on www.one.network

What an AMAZING Harwell Feast it was too, well done to everyone involved

Steventon Parish

Sometimes in Steventon it feels like it doesn't rain, but it pours! We face a Clay Compaction study application (which I have made comments direct to planning director), another large estate application and further threats to a rural way of living. Of course, as always, working closely with HPC Councillors. I will keep everyone updated on the SESRO plans but please if you're a new councillor you can get upto speed here

[Abingdon Reservoir - Group Against Reservoir Development](#)

[Oxfordshire County Council calls for giant reservoir plan to be scrapped again](#)

Chilton Parish

No news on Chilton Fields adoption – I do ask monthly now. I have sent approval for the Chilton application for play equipment with CPF help. Hagbourne Hill, I send endless emails and have now engaged the new Chief Executive who is coming to visit the area in early July and HH is on my list of places in the division to show him. Have seen the comments about the village newsletter and perhaps these reports can be forwarded on please? There have been several applications around Harwell Campus and I have made concern again around traffic and parking numbers. Its good to see the new Garden Centre owners improving the facility but I was equally concerned about the wildflower destruction and am finding details to write to the MD / regional manager (if anyone has info please do share).

Upton Parish

Wonderful to see the nature garden looking so amazing, this was one of my CPF funded projects in 2021/22. Upton No good is merely weeks away and its good to see the use of the new cycle routing and the lights working well. Some remaining issues on

landscaping but officers assure me it is all in hand. There has been some concerns around future flooding and I remind everyone about the toolkit below.

[Flood alerts issued after heavy rainfall in Oxfordshire](#)

Blewbury Parish

Looks like movement on a crossing option into the budgeting process post the safety review. The 20mph, Speed watch group and SIDS are making a difference, and we need to focus on those areas that are still a risk. The cycle racks – have discussed with the Clerk and hopefully they should be coming soon. Great to see the Table Tennis facility up and running and the half term activity.

East Hendred

Working on setting up a joint 'Hendreds' Speedwatch group, and the ball is rolling. Have passed on concerns raised around the lack of drivers stopping at the crossings and feel like I am always arguing permits being issued locally. The new resurface at featherbed is fantastic, and there is tree cutting works happening and a temporary Notice is being made by Oxfordshire County Council to implement the temporary restriction and will operate on 23 August 2023 between 09:30 and 15:30 hours. I have checked and access for pedestrians, emergency services and frontages are all sorted. Speeding is still an issue inside the village. Hendreds Environment Group won a grant for Big Green Week and I will be supporting on 17th June 2-5pm near Penny Park with free veg plants and planting advice.

West Hendred

Attended the meeting with the PCC Matthew Barber. Working with residents and TVP on setting up the Hendreds Speedwatch and gathering data. Drawings for both crossing options now released to the WHPC and spoken to officers at great lengths about viable optioneering, speed reduction to 30mph and SIDS. I think we aren't far off some viable solutions and hope that the WHPC reopens a 20mph discussion within the village to help make streets safer for all users.

Ardington and Lockinge

Trying to get these bus services back into the village feels like I am pushing water uphill...it's the most logical solution to a safety issue for all. I am working on it. Meanwhile a huge toady congratulations to the Toad Taxis for the season, what an achievement and great to see the signs we got, back up again warning drivers. Lots of events happening in the Village Hall, and the RDA food fair was brilliant, was reminded of it as my Tomato plant I purchased has started to flower!

Have YOUR Say

Reminder that the OCC [website](#) has a lot of resources...

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Consultations are all [here](#)

More info on the OUFC issues [here](#)

Healthwatch latest [here](#)

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Personal Note

In the last 9 months I have faced some significant challenges within our direct and extended family, work challenges and life! I've had some feedback that some Parishes feel disgruntled at my lack of attendance and would like to remind you all I am contactable and respond fairly quickly on phone and email. Chairs and Parishes where we do things collectively, on a teamwork approach, we are achieving many positives – you can communicate with me anytime.....doesn't have to be at a Parish Council meeting. I've been your county councillor for 25 months now, and I guess what sometimes helps to establish is what you 'expect from me', just tell me!

A large part of a county councillors' workload is 1:1 casework with residents. This can be a wide remit from potholes and complaints about works permits but also more emotive issues around adult and children's social care, SEND education, school places, buses and more. I would like to just remind everyone I am human, I strive to do my very best and think I do a good job, but would appear others maybe don't. **I am not THE Council but I am YOUR voice on the council.** I am not in a financial position I cannot work full time and the county council isn't as flexible as our local district councils and meetings are in the day time. I can assure you I do around 3 hours of OCC work a day, that's 7 days a week....and we are a huge division, so huge we are being split into 3 in 2025! So please lets work together.... because I am more accessible and responsive, I get more enquiries, and that's only a good thing for those we represent!

We all work differently, and I appreciate I use social media as a way to communicate and it reaches around 15,000 people a month in the local area, but also, I only have so much time in my life, as ***the Pop Guru Harry Styles says 'Maybe we can all find a place to feel good, and we can treat people with kindness!'***

I don't have all the answers, but I am a human being and if anyone has an issue, please pick up the phone. My career as a clairvoyant wasn't very successful 😊. Like for all of you, the months of April – June are busy ones, new committees, decisions, strategy and lead up into budget setting. We are asked as politicians to priorities group and committee meetings in our schedules.

Cllr Sally Povolotsky

I have taken on a deep dive into SEND education and that's important to me, and to so many of our residents and it's something that will occupy a lot of my time the next 8 -12 weeks. But my biggest worry and time consumer the last 18 months has been the SESRO reservoir scheme and next to a pot hole it may not be important to you, but it should be as it could be the single most destructive thing to happen to our rural way of life, our communities across the division, our health, air quality, congestion, traffic and **SO MANY UNTHINKABLE** consequences.

So no, being a GOOD councillor isn't easy, it's a juggle, it affects my mental health, I am frankly terrible with politics inside of politics because all I want is action, and what our residents deserve, need, have been promised. I get trolled on social media, unwanted nasty emails, threats and I refuse to take the advice of 'get a thicker skin' because that isn't what makes me who I am! So here we are....

In May 2023 I won the district seat (2022 was a byelection win) in Steventon and Hanneys, as some of you may know I was Climate member for the District which I decided to step down from to have an apolitical position as Chair of the Council with the primary goal to share and spread the word on good democracy, debate not hate and highlight to others the pressures, positives, and people in our amazing Vale.

One thing I always carry with me is to effectively communicate we must realise we are all different in the way we perceive information and the world around us and we need to use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.

I hope we can all move forwards on a mutual understanding that we are all different and human and I am doing the very best I can inside a machine that feels like I am a square peg being squashed into a round hole. Please let it be known I am hugely vocal around the commitment parish and town councillors make for now allowance for their local communities and we need to work as part of a team to make the corridors of power hear our voices clearly.

Sally