

MAY 2020 Parish Report

These are unprecedented times and the world has changed however I'm pleased to see that the community spirit is up and running across the Woodstock division with the groups that have been created to help and support our vulnerable residents. The groups are working well with the District & County councils. If you have any concerns regarding residents who may need to be on the NHS shielded list, please contact us on: 01865 89 78 20 or shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk

This is the correct approach, at this time we all need to come together to work for the benefit of all residents especially the vulnerable. With that in mind I have weekly conference call meetings with the other Oxfordshire Leaders; Cherwell, City, South, Vale and West to ensure we all are working together and not duplicating work. I also hold weekly conference calls with the Labour & Liberal opposition parties at County to ensure that everybody is kept up to date with the latest information and again we can share ideas.

There is a financial cost to all the extra work we are carrying out, which could be as much as an additional £63 million onto our budget this year. This is not just restricted to Oxfordshire as all councils are experiencing similar cost pressures. That includes our District colleagues; if you add in their potential project additional costs then it could total £100 million across all 6 Oxfordshire councils.

Central Government have provided an additional £34 million to the Oxfordshire councils which we appreciate but we could have a shortfall of £66 million in the current financial year which if we don't get the funds from central Government, we'll have some difficult decisions to balance the books at the end of the year.

All 6 Leaders have written to the local MPs asking them to lobby Government to ensure that Oxfordshire's councils do not have to make some very difficult decisions.

There have been issues with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) national distribution. To assist the process on 9th April Oxfordshire County Council received and despatched 16,128 masks, 26,508 gloves, 18,368 Aprons, and 1,840 Goggles. That's a total of 62,844 bits of PPE kit to 69 providers across the county. In addition, we placed an order of over £1 million for additional stock to help across the county. We are also working with 2 local West Oxfordshire companies who are supplying PPE.

STAY AT HOME – PROTECT OUR NHS – SAVE LIVES

For information on COVID- 19 visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus



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Testing now available for farmers

All farmers and members of their households who are showing symptoms of coronavirus will now be able to get tested. Testing has been extended to all essential workers in the country which includes those involved in food production and processing as well as vets.

Essential workers can book an appointment on the Government's website and can then choose to visit one of more than 30 drive-through testing sites, or receive a home testing kit.

A new testing site has been set up at Thornhill Park and Ride to assist in the testing process. There are 3 additional mobile testing stations in Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton all tests need to be booked in advance.

For more information, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

Fix My Street

I'm taking advantage of this time to carry out my daily exercise through the different villages in the division. At the same time, I'm logging any defects I see on the highways or pavements direct onto Fix My Street so that they can be actioned during this quiet time we are having on the roads.

Anybody can download the app which is easy to use and provides an exact location along with a photograph or you can log any defects at:

<https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

Miles of Oxfordshire road gets new lease of life

The first phase of this year's £32m road repair programme, surface dressing, has just finished. This technique improves the road surface and provides waterproofing which extends the life of the road.

In the last month the team have:

- Resurfaced an area equivalent to 80 Wembley pitches (600,000m²)
- Improved 110 miles of road
- Worked 19 shifts making the most of the good weather
- Used 11,000 tonnes of stone and 1.1 million litres of binder material

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Work Continues

At Oxfordshire County Council we have been working hard on the crisis however we still have to continue to deliver other services. For instance, we've just completed the Primary school allocations on time with a 95% first preference rate in the Woodstock Division.

The County Council held the first virtual Full Council meeting 4th May this is in line with the emergency legislation that now allows councils to hold virtual meetings. Most parish councils are holding virtual meetings too ensuring that the democratic process continues.

The Household Waste Recycling Centres closed due to the regulations in particular social distancing and non-essential journeys however we are continually monitoring the situation and considering ways in which they could be safely reopened. We will follow the Government guidance.

Another example of continued working was a recent virtual meeting of the North Cotswold Line Taskforce. We are starting to work on the Outline Business case to submit to Government. This highlights the costs involved in a rail project as to dual the 4 miles of track from Wolvercote to Hanborough is around £98 million without any land acquisition costs. A Hanborough station sub group is being set up which I will be the chairman. The aim is to develop how we can better connect the station with other modes of public transport and active travel including solving the missing link of the cycle path by North Leigh.

I was pleased to see that work continued during the crisis to install the temporary rail bridge at Tackley station which will provide a safe crossing of the railway. Its now important that we all work together to get the best permanent solution for the village.

These are challenging times and we all need to work together to protect our NHS and Save Lives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me and keep safe.

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