

REPORT TO SHIPLAKE PARISH COUNCIL JUNE 2022

FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

CONSERVATIVES CALL FOR GREATER FOCUS ON TOWNS & VILLAGES

The Conservative Opposition remains concerned that the LibDem/Green/Labour ruling administration is being heavily distracted by matters over which it has little control, or are beyond its remit. It remains to be seen if the £millions being spent on climate change will bear any fruit, while the imposition of a vegan diet at council meetings continues to generate a lot of debate, wasting councillors' and officers' time. Costs are still awaited for the transgender measures. Additionally, much of the council's effort is focused on the city of Oxford, where anti-car measures are generating much concern and some civic unrest. As previously reported, mundane matters – which are nevertheless of vital importance to residents – such as roads and drains in towns and villages do not feature in the administration's list of priorities.

UNAUTHORISED VEGAN MEALS BEING SERVED

The original, highly controversial, plan to serve only vegan meals at all council-catered events was scaled back in the report approved by OCC Cabinet in March, and it was agreed that the vegan diet was only to be imposed on councillors at Full Council meetings six or seven times a year and on the general public at civic events, with officers entirely exempt. However, complaints have been received that exclusively vegan meals are being served at other council meetings. The matter is currently being investigated.

NEW CHAIRMAN TO PRIORITISE VISITING TRAVELLER SITES

Labour councillor Susanna Pressel, who represents the Jericho and Osney division of Oxford city at OCC, has been elected as the new Chair of OCC. She has lived in Oxford for most of her life since being a student. She was Lord Mayor of Oxford between 2008 and 2009. She is to visit Traveller sites as one of her first acts in her new role as she believes they are the most underrepresented communities in our society. She is also to visit farmers where she may experience a frosty reception in view of the council's anti meat & dairy (vegan) policy. Press report here: <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/20160536.traveller-sites-top-priority-new-no-nonsense-council-chair/>

RESIDENT FURY OVER ANTI-CAR MEASURES IN OXFORD

Roadblocks that were set up by OCC as part of a new low traffic neighbourhood (LTN) scheme in East Oxford have been smashed down as fury against the measures continues. Residents are concerned that LTNs benefit one area at the expense of another, simply shifting traffic and pollution, rather than reducing it. There have been widespread reports of huge traffic delays and incidents of road rage. Royal Mail has been forced to close some postboxes. Reports here: <https://www.thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/news/20158184.east-oxford-ltn-smashed/>
<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/20158812.oxfordshires-ltns-may-increasing-pollution-nearby-roads/>

The public consultation is now open seeking residents' views on the measures. Anyone can provide feedback on the proposals before 30 November 2022. Details here: letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/east-oxford-ltns-2022

PLANS TO ATTEMPT TO DRIVE DOWN CARBON EMISSIONS APPROVED

OCC's Cabinet has approved plans which they hope will see OCC corporate carbon emissions cut over the next three years. The OCC Capital & Revenue budgets for this period feature over £15m on climate change measures – only time will tell if this is money well spent.

£10.4 MILLION AWARDED FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL IMPROVEMENTS

OCC has been awarded funding from the third phase of the government's active travel fund. The grant will support infrastructure investment including the delivery of improvements to:

- Bicester, A41/London Road
- Bicester, Middleton Stoney Road and Shakespeare Drive
- Witney High Street
- Oxford, Garsington Road
- Oxford, School Streets programme

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PLANS

OCC has an annual budget of £212 million for adult social care which represents 40 per cent of its overall budget. It is responsible for funding care for more than 6,200 adults – made up of older people, people with learning, physical and mental health disabilities. Despite a swingeing 5% Council Tax increase, including an adult social care supplement, the council is calling on central government for additional funding.

PROPOSALS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Detailed plans are being developed by OCC and its partners in line with the following objectives:

- Improving outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Developing a continuum of local provision to meet the requirements of these children and young people.
- Good physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Improving post-16 education, learning, employment and training opportunities.
- Facilitating a positive move into adulthood for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF LEVEL CROSSING FOR RAILWAY MAINTENANCE WORKS

Further to my report last month, I am awaiting contact from Network Rail about their proposals for access to Bolney Road etc during the maintenance work planned at the level crossing.

FMS ENQ22924787: 'WIG-WAG' SIGN NEAR SHIPLAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

In the nine years I have been a councillor, this sign has either been knocked down or damaged four times. On each occasion, the parish council has asked for it to be re-positioned, and OCC has always refused. I have asked OCC what the plans are this time: is it going to be repositioned, or will it be reinstated in the same position where history suggests it will last less than 18 months before being hit again?

OBSTRUCTIONS UNDER RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER MILL LANE

OCC has put a notice on the objects under the railway bridge stating they must be removed by the owner, or OCC will remove them.

'UNSUITABLE FOR HGVS' SIGNS ON MEMORIAL AVENUE

From 2016, Shiplake PC campaigned hard for 'Unsuitable for HGVs' signs to be installed at each end of Memorial Avenue to ensure all HGVs used Plough Lane. The signs were finally installed in 2019. At the APM last month, some residents expressed the wish that the signs were moved to Plough Lane so that HGVs used Memorial Avenue. They said this was straighter and wider, hence a more appropriate route. Clearly HGVs have to use one or the other, so we can't have signs at both. The options are to: leave things as they are; move the signs to Memorial Avenue; or remove the Memorial Avenue signs so there are no signs at all.

RETIREMENT VILLAGE P21/S4102/RM & LAND ADJ TOWER HOUSE P21/S0859/FUL

OCC has confirmed no development may take place until the highways agreement in relation to the footpath is made – this element requires detailed construction plans/specs and land assembly, if necessary. The works that commenced prematurely at the retirement village site have now paused,

GENERAL SODC REPORT

JOINT LOCAL PLAN

The consultation runs until 23 June. Full details are on the SODC website.

TEMPORARY OFFICE RELOCATION AND IMPACT ON PUBLIC MEETINGS

Details on timing of the move and subsequent arrangements for councils meetings are awaited.

VEGANISM PROMOTION

SODC seems to have jumped on the veganism bandwagon and is promoting a vegan lunch day.

LITTER MAPPING PROJECT

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have launched a joint litter mapping project aimed at identifying where and what type of items are littered, this information will then be used to target those areas. The summer-long survey asks litter pickers to record the location and types of litter either online using the online survey or by post using a set number of criteria - available on the councils' websites. More information is available here:

www.southoxon.gov.uk/littermapping

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

WEBSITE

As mentioned in previous reports, given that most Covid restrictions have now ended, I would like to suggest it is time to delete the Covid section entirely. I would also like to suggest that it is replaced with another section dedicated entirely to planning, freeing up 'Issues and Concerns' for a wider range of issues relating to companies and councils.

UPDATE ON THE PLOWDEN ARMS/THE PLOUGH

Both the PC and I received an email advising that the new owner of The Plowden Arms is 'Big Betty Food Co' and that it will be re-opening in September as 'The Plough'. Details of the planning application status can be found on the SODC website.

P22/S1193/HH ADDITIONAL SHIPPING CONTAINER STORAGE IN MILL LANE

At the request of the PC, I have called-in this application in order that it is determined by the SODC planning committee, should officers be minded to approve it..

P21/S4102/RM: RETIREMENT VILLAGE RESERVED MATTERS

As reported above, the developer commenced works in advance of the 'Discharge of Conditions' provoking an enforcement investigation. Works have now paused.

P22/S1675/FUL IRIS HOUSE READING ROAD

The developer has applied for a variation of condition 9 (footways) on application P21/S0859/FUL. The intention is to obtain approval to reduce a section of the footpath below the 1.5m width previously specified. As the PC has objected, the decision will go to the planning committee if officers are minded to approve the application.

P21/S4616/FUL ERECTION OF 11 DWELLINGS AT REAR OF CROSSWAYS

This has been refused and has now gone to appeal. The earlier appeal against the refusal for 20 houses has been withdrawn.

P21/S4271/RM WYEVALE 40 DWELLINGS

Objections have been received from OCC LLFA, OCC Transport, S&V Drainage, S&V Forestry, S&V Landscape, Thames Water and TVP. The developer will be submitting an amended RM application to address the issues raised.

P21/S5382/FUL WYEVALE 55 DWELLINGS

The developer has also submitted an application for 55 houses. To accommodate this, the shared green spaces have been removed and three-storey apartment blocks introduced. I am advised the application will be refused. I have informed OCC that both Harpsden PC and Shiplake PC strongly oppose the extension of the 30mph limit towards Henley and the introduction of a 'gateway' feature.

P20/S2808/DIS: THAMES FARM

I am not aware of any progress regarding this development which has effectively been abandoned for two years because of the drainage and dissolution feature issues which remain unresolved. I asked the SODC Deputy Chief Executive to write to Taylor Wimpey requesting that the site is tidied up. An acknowledgement has been received from Taylor Wimpey but no formal reply, although some minor tidying appears to have taken place. I will be meeting the SODC Chief Executive to discuss the community's concerns about this ongoing blight on the area and how the issues are going to be resolved.