

REPORT TO SHIPLAKE PARISH COUNCIL JUNE 2023

FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

COUNCILLOR FELIX BLOOMFIELD BECOMES NEW CHAIR OF OCC

Cllr Felix Bloomfield (Conservative) who represents the Benson and Cholsey division at OCC has been elected as the new Chair of OCC. As the ceremonial head of the council, the chair must be a serving county councillor but must remain politically impartial. A new chair is elected each May at the annual general meeting of the county council. Born in Oxford, and educated locally before attending university in London, Cllr Bloomfield has lived and worked in Oxfordshire most of his life. He was an SODC councillor for 20 years. He was also a professional photojournalist for many years, specialising in motorsport and the music industry.

NEW CABINET MEMBER

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of OCC has appointed philosophy student Michael O'Connor as the new Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equalities. His details can be found here: <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=12002>

RATIONALISATION OF PROPERTY PORTFOLIO

There is a surfeit of council-owned properties across the county, with some buildings moth-balled and others having very low occupancy rates since 'Working From Home' became widespread. OCC set up a cross-party advisory group recognising that cross-party consensus is required on this matter which could take several terms of office to resolve. The first (provisional) recommendation is that the council moves its Oxford headquarters from County Hall to a reimagined Speedwell House campus in two to three years' time. It is envisaged that the Speedwell Street offices would be an exemplar for carbon-neutral green offices. The sale or lease of New County Hall would potentially generate significant income, some of which would be invested in the refurbishment of Speedwell House, which is already owned by OCC. Regrettably, South Oxfordshire District Council is not following this lead and plans to spend £25million on a brand-new council HQ.

OCC CELEBRATES BECOMING A CARBON LITERATE ORGANISATION

OCC has received a bronze Carbon Literacy Organisation Award. I am advised a Carbon Literate organisation is an organisation that has been accredited by The Carbon Literacy Project as being 'culturally Carbon Literate'; maintaining a substantial proportion of its workforce as Carbon Literate and demonstrating its Carbon Literacy through its organisational behaviour. Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of OCC, said: *"We are proud to receive this award, which highlights the importance we place on climate action."*

OXFORD LTNS AND POLLUTION: 'SUFFERING' RESIDENTS FEEL 'TRAPPED'

According to a recent Oxford Mail report, householders living near Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) fear for their health as they bemoan "suffering" from breathing problems from idling cars. Householders have told the paper the traffic reduction measures have contributed towards "breaking the communal spirit", as "some are suffering from increased pollution whilst others are not". Oxford City Councillor Linda Smith (Labour) is quoted as saying householders' concerns about traffic being funnelled down a few roads due to the LTNs "comes as no surprise", as she previously warned OCC about her constituents "tasting fumes".

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

P22/S4613/MPO WYEVALE 40 DWELLINGS

Disappointingly, the officer is minded to refuse the 'Planning Obligation Modification' to remove the speed limit change and gateway feature on the advice of OCC Highways. However, six months on, the SODC website is still showing that no decision has been made. The PC may wish to contact the developer to request an appeal if the application is eventually refused.

RETIREMENT VILLAGE S278 AGREEMENT & P21/S4102/RM

Last month, I reported that officers had stated the S278 Agreement had been finalised and that work on the footpath would commence in May. This has not happened, but I am advised work will now start in June.

SHIPLAKE LOCK CAMPING ISLAND

I have been contacted by plot-holders who are concerned they have been blocked from using the site for health and safety reasons. I referred the matter to OCC officers who subsequently advised this matter was beyond OCC's remit.

'THE BEECHES' UNFINISHED ENTRANCE & FOOTPATH

OCC is to complete the outstanding highway works on the developer's behalf using the security deposit monies. I am continuing to press for a date when the works will start.

FMS ENQ23952220: FLOODING OUTSIDE CORNER SHOP

The gully has been cleared but the problem remains. I asked officers to investigate and they have advised there are issues relating to Network Rail and they are investigating.

FMS 4399140: ROAD SIGNS NEAR MEMORIAL DEMOLISHED BY VEHICLE

Replacement signs have been ordered.

FMS ENQ23945948: BUS STOP OPPOSITE MEMORIAL AVENUE OBSTRUCTED

Mud and vegetation have accumulated in the bus stop on the southbound carriageway of the A4155, preventing buses from pulling in. Clearance work will take place in the near future.

FMS REF ENQ22937870: A4155 TO ORCHARD CLOSE FOOTPATH REPAIR

OCC officers have supplied a quote for this on the basis the PC will match-fund the works and are awaiting a response from the PC as per my email to the clerk 22 May 2023 12:26.

FOOTPATH FROM NORTHFIELD AVENUE TO BOLNEY LANE

I have asked OCC to get a quote. Works could be joint-funded by the PC and my Councillor Priority Fund. (Once again, we have seen SODC give permission for a development based on the assumption that certain works will be done by other developers. This should not happen)

NETWORK RAIL CLOSURE OF LEVEL CROSSING IN AUGUST

I expressed concern to OCC officers that I have not been kept up to date. They replied stating nothing has been agreed and a TTRO application has NOT been received from Network Rail.