

REPORT TO SHIPLAKE PARISH COUNCIL JUNE 2020

FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

SCHOOLS PRIORITISE SAFETY, HYGIENE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING ‘

Children will be taught in classrooms where safety, hygiene and social distancing are ‘absolute priorities.’ This is the message from OCC as schools carry out risk assessments in preparation for welcoming back more pupils in June. The council has delivered hundreds of thousands of personal protective equipment (PPE) items to Oxfordshire schools:

- IIR Masks: 151,000 (these are surgical, close contact, water resistant masks),
- Aprons: 181,000,
- Gloves: 121,000,
- Visors: 900,
- Sanitiser: 7,500 litres.

This PPE equipment will help schools manage an immediate response in the unlikely event of a pupil becoming unwell. In addition, support is being provided to over 900 early years providers regarding supplies of PPE. Since the lockdown began in March, 94% of Oxfordshire schools have remained open for children of key workers. In preparation for receiving more pupils back to the classroom, schools are now being asked to complete a risk assessment in conjunction with staff and union representatives. The risks and challenges will vary, so what works in one school may not work in another. This means that some schools will be able to welcome more children, or more year groups than others. Each school will act in the best interests of each child and family. Local testing arrangements are in place; and everyone over the age of five can access them if they have COVID-19 symptoms. The council is committed to supporting disadvantaged pupils; existing free school meals arrangements will continue.

CYCLEWAYS AND FOOTPATHS TO BE CLEARED AND REPAIRED

Cyclists and walkers are set to benefit from a concerted plan of action to clear and prepare Oxfordshire’s network of cycleways and footpaths ready for the expected rises in demand as lockdown is very gradually relaxed. As the people of Oxfordshire look to return to work and school during the Summer, cycling and walking will become more important than ever – both offer zero emission ways to travel which will improve health and wellbeing as well as helping to address the need to keep socially distant. A recent survey of all 63 OCC Councillors found that the need to improve cycling infrastructure was a standout priority in terms of how Oxfordshire’s share of the government’s £250m Emergency Active Travel grant fund should be spent. Amongst other practical and quick to implement measures, such as improving signage and sweeping the busiest paths and cycle lanes, keeping vegetation under control and fixing surfaces feature in our immediate plans of work. This is all part of keeping the network safe to use for cyclists and pedestrians as lockdown restrictions ease but will also hopefully encourage more people to walk and cycle in the long term. OCC is developing a programme of work for the county’s city, urban, suburban and rural areas. In each case, the work will pay particular attention to narrower areas that might be widened for greater access. Paths where any surface improvement work will also be identified so repairs can be made. If people encounter any issues whilst out walking, cycling or riding on the path network then these can be reported or checked on OCC’s website. People can report a roadside vegetation problem, as well as other street problems, through our online reporting tool [Fixmystreet](#).

OCC TO EXTEND OPENING HOURS AT HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES

OCC is to increase the opening hours at all HWRCs from Tuesday 26th May. The centres will now open at 8am and close at the later time of 5pm. This applies seven days a week. Please note that that late-night opening on Thursdays and the acceptance of trailers and hire vans remains suspended for the time being. The following are important points:

- Residents must self-police and abide by social distancing of two metres from site teams and other residents **at all times**.
- Residents must follow any instructions given by site teams to ensure queues and sites are managed safely
- Vehicle numbers and parking bays are reduced on site, and once the maximum is reached the site will operate on a one-out one-in basis. PLEASE NOTE the potential for delays and queues.
- OCC will continue to charge for non-household waste brought to sites and this will be **by contactless card payment only**.
- Site teams will be there for guidance only and will **not** be able to assist residents in unloading their waste.
- Only one resident is permitted out of the vehicle, unless it is to remove a heavy load which would otherwise be unsafe to remove. Visits are best made by just one person per vehicle.
- In line with Public Health England guidance, residents who are vulnerable, or who are showing symptoms which may indicate coronavirus, should not visit household recycling centres.
- Residents can check if a HWRC can deal with their material by using the online tool Waste Wizard: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/repair-reuse-or-recycle>

BOLD PLANS FOR TRANSPORT AS OCC PREPARES FOR THE “NEW NORMAL”

Bold transport proposals are in the pipeline for Oxfordshire as the county joins the nation in gradually emerging from lockdown and preparing for the “new normal.” Innovative ideas have been identified by county councillors all over Oxfordshire in response to the Government’s national £250 million cash fund to implement changes to roads and transport networks. There’s set to be a focus on encouraging residents to walk and cycle, with the county council linking up with district councils, Oxford City Council and other partners on the work. In terms of longer-term recovery, the use of public transport will be encouraged as part of the county-wide strategy. Oxfordshire County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment Cllr Yvonne Constance and Cycling Champion Cllr Suzanne Bartington recently asked all 63 county councillors covering every part of the county for their ideas on what should be done. Enthusiastic responses were received as the council seeks to make sure that every town and village will benefit from how the funds are invested.

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

READING TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2036 (INCLUDING THIRD READING BRIDGE)

I emailed all clerks in my Division on 17th May to let you know that Reading is now consulting on its Transport Strategy 2036. Several proposals would have major impacts on South Oxfordshire including:

- North Reading Orbital Route (p97)
- A Third Thames crossing (see p98)
- North Reading Park and Rides (p111)

The consultation closes on 30 August and I urge you to respond here:

<https://consult.reading.gov.uk/dens/reading-transport-strategy-2036/>

In addition, you may also wish to email the Leader of OCC ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY WREATH LAYING AT SHIPLAKE WAR MEMORIAL

Further to a request from Cllr Head, I have investigated what OCC do to assist in terms of a temporary road closure and traffic marshalling. I have provided Cllr Head advice and a contact.

YELLOW LINES AT JUNCTION OF MILL LANE AND MILL ROAD

At the request of the chairman, I have advised Highways that the immediate area needs to be swept of accumulated mud/dust from the construction site, which is partly concealing the lines, and the very faded (and erratic) yellow lines themselves need to be repainted. Parking offences are a matter for the police, not OCC.

ROADWORKS ON A4155 AT THAMES FARM

I have received complaints about traffic light failures and lack of activity here. I have resolved the failures as and when they occurred and been advised that work is about to restart.

RELOCATION OF 'LOWER SHIPLAKE' SIGN ON A4155

The boundary between Shiplake Parish and Harpsden in part runs along the A4155. Travelling south from Henley towards Shiplake the village sign is currently positioned opposite to the entrance to the former Wyevale Garden Centre. Just past this on the right hand (west) side the new housing estate is being built at Thames Farm. This estate is in Harpsden parish and will have a Harpsden address, thus the current position of the sign will be confusing for residents and visitors. The proposal is that the sign is relocated near the start of Shiplake proper, probably near Highlands House just before the left turning into Station Road. Harpsden PC has voted unanimously to support this proposal but Shiplake PC voted unanimously to reject it. I understand the chairman has now spoken to the Harpsden PC chairman and I await an update.

POTENTIAL FOOTPATH AT SHIPLAKE CROSS

Plans and costs have now been supplied to the PC for approval. I have allocated £3450 towards the cost using my Councillor Priority Fund.

TIMETABLE AND BUS STOP SIGN OPPOSITE THE PLOWDEN ARMS MISSING

As reported in December, I have obtained agreement from officers for the removal of the concrete post and installation of a new pole, flag and timetable case. I recently chased this and was advised that a budget allocation was still being awaited.

RESUMPTION OF 'FOOTPATH WARS' AT MILL LANE

It is with disappointment that I note that the battle between OCC Rights of Way and unknown persons that has been ongoing for decades has resumed after a brief lull. Specifically:

- The waymark sign next to Rivermead cottages is obscured by vegetation but there is a prominent 'Covid Keep Out' sign
- The green footpath sign and post next to Riverlawn have been removed
- The waymark sign on the gate of Willows Reach has been removed
- The waymark sign on the new Thames Path post next to the railway bridge has been removed

Once again, OCC officers will return to re-instate these signs at some cost to the tax-payer.

INCORRECT RE-LINING SUBSEQUENT TO SURFACE DRESSING AT MILL ROAD

Subsequent to the surface dressing of Mill Road, yellow line re-lining was done incorrectly. The contractor has now completed remedial works at no cost to OCC.

REPAIRS TO MILL LANE VERGES

As previously reported, the agent of the owners of Lock End wrote to the PC on 13 February giving an undertaking to repair the damage to the verges in Mill Lane caused by construction traffic. I have advised OCC Highways of this and a Highways liaison officer will be nominated.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

CURTAILING OF PC POWERS TO REFER PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO COMMITTEE

Under Emergency Powers, the following changes to planning call-ins have been adopted:

- Call-ins by Ward Councillors must be approved by the Chair of the Planning Committee.
- Applications objected to by parish councils will no longer be automatically referred to the Planning Committee but will be subject to an officer triage process.

P20/S1405/FUL LAND ADJACENT TO THE GABLES STATION ROAD

This proposal is for five flats and a car park. I have advised officers that I intend to call-in this application if they are minded to approve it. I continue to receive complaints from residents about the adverse impacts it would have. There are over 30 objections on the SODC website. Many residents are also concerned that the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is being quoted by the developer in support of the application. I share this concern.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BEHIND CROSSWAYS NEXT TO THAMES FARM

A developer has written to the PC and done a leaflet drop to selected residents about a proposed new housing estate of 20 properties adjacent to Thames Farm. If this is approved, the total number of additional new homes on the A4155 would be 234, made up as follows:

Crossways (Westbourne) 20
Mount Ida 8
Retirement Village 65
Thames Farm 95
Thames Farm Barns 4
Tower House 2
Wyevale 40

Aside from the staggering 35% increase in the size of Shiplake, there are questions about the impact of all this extra traffic on Reading Road/Duke Street, which is desperately congested in normal times when it often takes half an hour just to drive through Henley in rush hour.