

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS

FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

JANUARY 2015

TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Kennington Scheme completed

Ahead of Christmas work was completed on the £7m A423 Southern Bypass Scheme at Hinksey and Kennington Roundabouts. Work began in June to introduce a “hamburger” layout to the Kennington roundabout, which will increase capacity by up to 30% to cope with current and future traffic demand, as well as completing refurbishment of four bridges and the carriageway surface between Hinksey and Heyford Interchanges. The works have also included a new subway to take foot and cycle paths beneath the new lane on Kennington roundabout. Improvements have also been made to Hinksey Hill interchange with a ‘free flow’ lane added to the A34 southbound on slip road.

Future Schemes

Work on a series of multi-million pound transport improvement projects is to start in January 2015. Schemes on London Road, the Plain in Oxford City and Milton Interchange will all get underway, marking the latest phase of investment in the county’s transport infrastructure and future economic success. Investment in the county’s transport system

Project	Start Date	End Date
London Road Improvements	13 October 2014	May 2015
Milton Interchange	January 2015	January 2016
Cycle City: The Plain	January 2015	July 2015
Featherbed Lane and Steventon Lights	January 2015	November 2015
Harwell Phase 2 (Hagbourne Hill)	January 2015	November 2015
Chilton A34 Junction – North facing slips	February 2015	December 2015
Frideswide Square (Phase 2 -Main Square)	February 2015	December 2015
Wolvercote Roundabout	June 2015	January 2016
Cotteslowe Roundabout	June 2015	January 2016
Harwell Oxford Entrance	July 2015	July 2016
Harwell Phase 1	August 2015	February 2017

The work is designed to be phased but some of the funds are dependent on spending within a certain time frame. If a project were to be deferred, it would mean some residents would not benefit from improvements. It was welcome news that we were given 6 year road maintenance funding as it will enable us to plan over a longer period with certainty of funds. *Please information on future schemes:*

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/dec/major-transport-improvement-work-begin-january-2015>

BUDGET PROPOSALS

In line with the Government’s plans to reduce public spending to cut the national deficit, the County Council has made savings totalling £265 million. With £20 million of additional pressures coming from Adult and Children’s Services the **level of savings from 2010 to 2018 totals £285 million.**

As with previous budgets, there will be some very difficult decisions to be taken to deliver a balanced budget in February. If Central Government funding is to be further reduced the County Council is exploring how we can achieve more devolved powers to determine what is best for Oxfordshire.

The Government has announced that the referendum limit will be at 2% for the coming year. We had been preparing the budget on a 1% limit to obtain the top-up ‘freeze’ grant, however that adds a pressure of £3.1 million to the medium term plan. If we decide to increase council tax by 1.99% we may decide to add the funds to the reserves to try and protect the council from future cuts from Central Government funding.

Your comments on the proposals

You can make comments on the budget proposals **until 9th January 2015**. Following this the Performance Scrutiny Committee, chaired by the Leader of the Opposition, will consider the proposals. Comments will then be fed back to Cabinet for them to take into consideration in advance of proposing their budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18 (MTFP) in January 2015. The MTFP will then be debated by a meeting of all 63 county councillors in February, when the Council will meet to agree a budget and set a Council Tax level.

Please see: https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/2015_16_budgetproposals/consultationHome

NEW TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL ALLIANCE TO BOLSTER GROWTH

The County Council is exploring ways in which further powers can be devolved to local authorities. On 16th December, the Leaders of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, Ian Hudspeth, Martin Tett and Jim Harker OBE, jointly signed a bold offer to Government to unlock further economic growth and significantly build on the £45 billion value of goods and services that the area already generates.



In the offer, called 'A shared approach to driving prosperity', the three councils call on the Government to work with them to develop a brand new 'combined authority' alliance focused on their common economies of innovation, science, technology and creative industries. Please note that it is NOT about a super Unitary authority, as each council will have its own sovereignty and will make the final decision regarding any proposals. There is no intention of merging councils, however if this is successful then we may look at other common areas to work together to be more efficient.

For more information please see: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/dec/new-tri-county-council-alliance-rev-local-prosperity>

CONSULTATION ON OXFORDSHIRE'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

We would like your views to find out if the Children's Trust is on the right track, so it concentrates on the areas that are most important to you and the young people of Oxfordshire. The Children and Young People's Plan drives the work of the Children's Trust and is jointly authored by all of the Trust's members. It is based on evidence from the Oxfordshire Children's Needs Analysis 2014. The Children's Trust wants Oxfordshire to be the best place in England for children and young people to grow up in, by working with every child and young person to develop the skills, confidence and opportunities they need to achieve their full potential.

Consultation closes on 20th February 2015

Please see: https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/CYPplan_Adults/consultationHome

CONSULTATION ON CARE HOME FEES FOR APRIL 2015

As in previous years, Oxfordshire County Council is undertaking a consultation regarding the fees paid to care homes. The Council recognises the need to ensure that good quality care is sustainable and properly funded, and we are mindful of our obligations to consult with providers regarding this matter. We would therefore like to invite you to participate in this consultation and share with us your views on care home fees for 2015-16. Your views will then be shared with and considered by Cabinet in making decisions about future care home funding.

Consultation closes on 8th February 2015

<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/carehomefee2014/consultationHome>

OXFORDSHIRE LEADS THE WAY FOR RECYCLING

Oxfordshire County Council has maintained its position as one of the best counties for recycling of waste in the country, coming top in 3 of the 7 categories. Figures compiled by the Department for Environment, Energy and Rural

Affairs (Defra) show that Oxfordshire had the lowest amount of residual waste per household in the country. The county was also top of the tables for recycling & composting percentage and dry recycling percentage and where the best performing county council for household waste per head.

Please see: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/dec/oxfordshire-leads-way-recycling>

MOVE-ON HOME WILL KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

Plans for a 'move-on' home for older teenagers preparing to leave care and make the transition to adulthood are set to be unveiled in Witney. The council is proposing to build accommodation for up to four 16-19-year-olds as they develop independence skills, attend college or enter employment. The move-on home, at the former Moorlands Centre on Dark Lane, would help keep vulnerable young people safe, enabling them to live closer to home as they prepare to leave the council's care. It is one of four new residential developments planned across the county for children in care or at risk of coming into the care system.

For more information please see: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/dec/move-home-will-help-keep-vulnerable-young-people-safe>

COUNCIL STAFF NAMED IN QUEEN'S NEW YEAR'S HONOURS LIST

Oxfordshire's Chief Fire Officer and the person responsible for managing the Olympic Torch route through the County have been named in the Queen's New Year's Honours list. David Etheridge, who joined Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service 28 years ago, has been made an OBE while County Network Co-ordinator Katherine Powley has been awarded the MBE. Congratulations to all those who have received Honours from the Queen.

BE PREPARED FOR WINTER

The county council website provides a considerable amount of advice on how to mitigate problems from the winter weather, including guidance from the Highways Agency and Central Government. There is a particular focus on travel and what residents can do to help us before and during emergencies.

Please see: <http://winter.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/node/21> and

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/fireandpublicsafety/emergency/AreYouReadyBooklet.pdf>

We are committed to keeping a network of major roads free from ice to minimise the risk of accidents and ensure the smooth flow of traffic. Precautionary salting (sometimes called 'gritting') helps achieve this aim. Gritting teams have already been out in November due to falls in overnight temperatures. The County Council's website displays a considerable amount of information including up to date information on road surface temperatures that indicate when and where gritting will take place. It also shows the roads that are routinely salted during the winter. The page also links to general advice on dealing with snow and ice, and school closures. Daily updates on the roads are also sent out via twitter for those following @oxfordshirecc.

All the information can be obtained from: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/salting-gritting-and-snow-clearance>