**REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS NOVEMBER 2018**

**FROM CLLR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE**

**GENERAL OCC REPORT**

**IN ALL TYPES OF WEATHER OCC CREWS ARE OUT REPAIRING THE ROADS**

Earlier this year OCC put an extra £10m into fixing the roads – effectively doubling the amount of money invested in repairs – and crews are out and about every day in all types of weather doing the job. Their work has already resulted in £1.6m worth of surface dressing with around 33km of roads being surfaced. Work is also under way on a £700,000 programme of surfacing sealing projects around the county. As well as the extra cash which is going into some larger projects, the county council has also increased the amount of relatively small-scale work it does to put right local roads that are suffering from potholes, cracks and worn out tarmac. The number of completed defect repairs between January and September this year is 35,127.

**SALTING, GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARANCE**

OCC is committed to keeping the 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. OCC usually salts between 2 November and 5 April. Live updates can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/salting-and-snow-clearance> Details about how community groups can request salt bins can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/salt-and-grit-bins>

**COUNCIL TO INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE & REDUCE RUNNING COSTS**

Plans to completely overhaul the county council were given the go-ahead by the county council’s Cabinet on 16 October. They agreed a major investment in digital technology to improve customer service and reduce council running costs. The redesigned council will enable residents to report faults or book appointments online, freeing up staff time to help to service users who cannot go online or have complex care needs. Staff will be given the tools they need to do a better job and spend more time on delivering services to residents.

**OCC TRADING STANDARDS & POLICE CONDUCT OPERATION ROGUE TRADER**

Rogue traders and aggressive doorstep sellers were targeted during October by OCC Trading Standards as part of ongoing work to protect residents and business people. Working in collaboration with Thames Valley Police, Operation Rogue Trader aims to stop rogue business practices and raise awareness of the dangers linked to hiring cold-callers. Fourteen Trading Standards staff and around 30 police travelled around the county when 67 traders were approached and checked; ten warning letters were issued; five waste offenders were fined by district councils; and an overloaded vehicle was investigated along with seven doorstep crime offences and two police offences. Those who suspect someone of being a rogue trader, or find themselves accosted by uninvited doorstep sellers should contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506.

**BOOST FOR A ‘FULL FIBRE’ FUTURE IN OXFORDSHIRE**

Hundreds of businesses and homes across Oxfordshire are set to benefit from faster internet connections, following the launch of the UK Government’s nationwide Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS). The £67m investment is in addition to the £200m allocated to the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme, and will provide future-proof full fibre connections for businesses and the residential communities around them. It follows a successful pilot scheme launched in four areas around the country late last year, which has already seen nearly 1,000 vouchers used up to date. ThinkBroadband statistics show that 8% of homes and businesses in Oxfordshire already have a full fibre internet connection. Superfast broadband reaches almost 97% of premises, and even-quicker ultrafast broadband covers 51.3% of the county. The vouchers, worth up to £3,000 for a SME and £500 for a resident, provide a one-off contribution to subsidise the installation cost of gigabit-capable infrastructure. In addition to providing a boost to the 95% of the UK that can already get superfast speeds (24Mbps or faster), the vouchers could also help those not yet able to do so, helping to narrow the diminishing digital divide even further. The scheme launched at the end of March 2018 and will run until March 2021 or until all available funding has been allocated. For more information visit <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>.

**CARERS CAN SHOW BADGE FOR A FREE JAB**

Flu season is coming and the army of front line carers across Oxfordshire are being urged to make having a free jab a key priority. More than 8,500 staff employed in residential care, nursing homes or with registered domiciliary care providers, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable people, are entitled to a free flu jab. Keeping this valuable workforce fit and well is essential to easing winter pressures across the county's health and social care system. Being immunised not only reduces the chances of carers themselves and their families becoming unwell, it also means that the health of the most vulnerable people in Oxfordshire’s communities is not compromised.