July 2023 County Councillor Report – Cllr Robin Bennett

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**Shared Lives: Could you share your home with someone with additional needs?**

Caring households in Oxfordshire that offer adults with additional needs a place to stay and grow their independence, have been celebrated during shared lives week.

 The Oxfordshire shared lives scheme is a service where carers who have the skills, commitment and training have chosen to share their homes and lives with people who need support. If you think you could support an adult with additional needs, you can find out more about the programme at **oxfordshire.gov.uk/sharedlives** or by calling **01865 897971.**

**Summer reading challenge Ready, Set, Read! at Oxfordshire libraries**

Over 1.5 million visits were made to Oxfordshire libraries in the past year, and with the summer holidays coming up, it’s a great time for families to come and join in the fun at one of the county’s 44 libraries.

The Summer Reading Challenge 2023, Ready, Set, Read! aims to keep minds and bodies active over the summer break, empowering young people to forge new connections with others and unleash the power of play, sport and physical activity through reading. It is produced by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust. The free challenge launches on 8 July and runs until 9 September 2023.

You can also sign up to our regular Library Service newsletter, here:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/online-library-services/library-enewsletter>

**Decarbonising our pension investments**

We've taken proactive steps to re-shape Oxfordshire pension funds. The aim is to maximise investment returns and better contribute to our strategic objectives to create a greener, healthier and fairer county. At its meeting earlier in June, the Pension Fund Committee agreed to reduce its allocation to the UK market and in particular to the FTSE100 companies that have links to major oil, gas and and mining companies. The committee also chose to end investments in emerging markets reflecting concerns about social and governance issues – specifically within China and Saudi Arabia.

The Oxfordshire part of the Local Government Pension Scheme is overseen by the Pension Fund Committee, which is hosted by us at the county council. It also represents the district and city councils and other public sector organisations, including Oxford Brookes University, academy schools, further education colleges and housing

associations.

**Broad Street, Oxford**

The Broad Street project aims to transform Broad Street’s historic highway into an

accessible and welcoming space for everyone to enjoy, and is delivered under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and will provisionally be in place until spring 2024. An online consultation for residents to share their views is now live until 31 July. <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/broad-street-consultation/>

**HIF1 planning application:**

The plans for the road(s) and bridge linking the A34 Milton interchange to Golden Balls roundabout are again scheduled to come to the OCC planning and regulation committee at the end of the month. After the June meeting was postponed, 2 new dates have been set aside for this application, on **17th and 18th July** at County Hall.

**In brief:**

**Councillor priority fund**.

A reminder that this is now live, and the application details can be found here: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund)

**Council Future Governance**

I am taking part in a committee which is looking at whether OCC should operate under the present cabinet system, or adopt a committee system which could involve a wider range of members in decision-making. We’ll also be looking at how participatory democracy (such as citizens’ juries/assemblies) could be used to make the council more open to its residents and improve decision making.

**County Council’s City Centre properties**

I’m also part of a group which is helping to advise on what the council should do with its various city centre properties, including New County Hall, which is in need of major refurbishment, with a view to making better use of space given the way workplaces have changed since the pandemic, while keeping the democratic process accessible to all.

**Dorchester/Shillingford:**

Tragically, a cyclist was killed in a collision on Tuesday 4th July close to the junction with Henley Road towards Dorchester. Police are investigating. I have previously asked for this stretch of the A4074 to be made safer for all road users, and will continue to press for this.

**Nuneham Courtenay:**

20mph proposal out to consultation soon. This will swap the existing 30mph stretch to 20.

**Berinsfield/Dorchester:**

Some improvements will be made this summer to the informal crossing point of the A4074 which connects to the old Oxford Road path into Dorchester opposite Clovers. The area will be all scraped back of debris and have 6 bollards installed (along with ‘cycles crossing warning signs on the vehicular approaches).

**Garsington:**

Pettiwell double yellow lines now completed.

School pedestrian crossing still has a planned start date for installation of 24th July.