

Focus on Parish Councils – Monthly Update

September 2026

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Dear parish councillors and residents,

I hope everyone has had a pleasant summer. I certainly have and return from holidays refreshed. September is a busy month with meetings of both the County and District Councils. I also have two new roles to get stuck into; on the District Council I have joined Cabinet with a brief covering Development, Enforcement, Legal and Democratic Services. I also now occupy a newly created position of Deputy Cabinet Member on the County Council, assisting with delivering the councils priorities. I am grateful to the leaders of both councils for trusting me with these roles and am determined to work hard and make a positive impact for residents across the District and County.



OCC News

1. Local Government Reorganisation

Where to start?! We had the decision in July as expected in favour of the three unitary authority proposal, in my view the worst of the three available options, which would have involved disaggregating vital services, creating two very small financially challenged authorities and numerous other disadvantages. There has been a flurry of activity in all the councils commencing the enormous amount of work that would be required for this change, from seeking to agree the electoral arrangement for the councils to putting together working groups and recruiting people to aid with the transition.

Yesterday, Angela Rayner announced that the LGR programme nationally is being halted, and we have essentially been instructed to down tools on the work. It will be subject to “review”, although it is unclear how much time that will take and whether it may change the outcome. Reference was made to updated legal advice received by the government in the context of legal challenges that have been made to other decisions announced before the Oxfordshire one. Those legal challenges were in some ways analogous to what has happened in Oxfordshire, where the minister’s decision would have resulted in creating a series of authorities smaller than their own criteria.

So, we are now in limbo. What does seem to be clear is that the process will be delayed by at least a year, and that there will therefore be elections to the district council next May in 2027. I will provide updates as they are available.

2. Highways

The focus of the highways programme is shifting from the summer resurfacing programme to preparing for autumn and winter. The surface dressing programme treated over 1 million square meters of carriageway over summer. The B480 between Cuxham and Chalgrove was resurfaced as an urgent priority in August after feedback from Cuxham residents and efforts from local officers to get it added to the programme, which I am grateful for.

3. Devolution

Oxfordshire and Berkshire leaders have submitted a joint response to Government supporting plans which could bring more powers and funding closer to our communities. We've also asked for further discussions with Ministers and civil servants so we can better understand how any new arrangements would work in practice. There are still some details to be worked through, but there is broad agreement on the benefits of greater devolution of powers and funding from Whitehall. I will keep you updated as we learn more, with a government response expected later this autumn.

4. Kidlington Illegal Waste Site

The illegal waste site has now been cleared and secured. A multi-agency operation removed more than 22,000 tonnes of illegally dumped waste, ending an issue that had affected residents for years. You can read more online. Thank you to everyone involved, including colleagues across our waste and highways teams, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Environment Agency. This complex work is a great example of organisations working together for local communities.

5. Consultations

There are a range of consultations open on <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>,

National Highways and Transport public satisfaction survey 2026

The NHT Network is the UK's leading benchmarking and service improvement partnership for Local Highway Authorities. Through its public satisfaction survey and performance frameworks, it provides independent insight to help councils understand how their highways and transport services are experienced by residents.

For any queries from members of the public which can't be answered locally, please contact support@measure2improve.com

6. Funding

The SODC councillor grant scheme is now open for the year, applicable to the Watlington Ward where I am a district councillor. Please contact me if you would like to discuss an application.

Parish Round-Up

I hope to attend Parish Councils in person as regularly as I can. Below are some notes on issues raised at recent meetings:

- Watlington – relief road continued planning delays, CIL funding, Church St/Chapel St/New Road.
- Britwell Salome – expansion of the 20mph area raised in parish meeting, road conditions.
- Checkendon – review of application for extension of 20mph limit; flooding issue by pub
- Stoke Row – road conditions, lotting.
- Pishill with Stonor – mobile phone coverage with retirement of analogue phonelines, road condition.

- Cuxham – Chalgrove New Town and removal of bypass proposal, HGV traffic (including construction traffic), condition of roads.
- Nuffield – Speeding enforcement, speed limits on the A4130, condition of Ewelme junction next to May's farm cottages, Fred's field.
- Shirburn – 20mph limit request, chicane (alternatives after recent trial).
- Swyncombe – issue with unpermitted development on lotted land.
- Nettlebed – community sports facilities, cycle path from Nettlebed to Bix.
- Rotherfield Peppard – repeated issue with drain cover, road conditions, junction of Stoke Row Road/Gallowstree Road.
- Highmoor – flooding issue on Holly close