

REPORT TO SHIPLAKE PARISH COUNCIL SEPT 2020 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS WELCOME CHILDREN BACK

Schools, colleges and early years providers have been working closely with OCC to make sure that all children are welcomed back safely in September. Education and childcare providers are following guidance from the Department for Education, Public Health England and the County Council. Risk assessments have been carried out and hygiene measures are in place across all education and early years settings. All Oxfordshire education settings, including our special schools, will be open in September. Arrangements will vary, as what is needed in a small primary will be different from a large secondary or upper school. Classes may be different as measures, such as teaching children in separate groups or 'bubbles', may have to be put in place to help keep children and staff safe. Childcare providers' arrangements may also vary, as what is needed in a childminder's home will be different to a larger nursery or preschool.

BRAKES COULD BE APPLIED TO OXFORD'S LOCKDOWN EMERGENCE AS COVID CASES RISE

Measures that could put the brakes on Oxford's gradual emergence from lockdown have moved a step closer as a result of another week of uncomfortably high rises in COVID cases in the city. The number of cases in Oxford in the week ending August 21 was 41 – which is 26.9 cases per 100,000 and sees the city moving ever closer to figures in parts of the country that have been labelled by central Government as areas of concern or that require intervention.

REPORT INTO OXFORDSHIRE COUNCILS REORGANISATION

Management consultants PwC have taken a fresh look at the different options for local government structures that could emerge for debate among communities and councillors in Oxfordshire as the nation awaits a Government blueprint for the future. During the Autumn the Government will publish a White Paper on recovery and devolution, which will act as a guide to setting out how local government structures may be reorganised across the whole country – taking into account the changed landscape following the COVID-19 pandemic. Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council recently commissioned a piece of work to look at the various options that may be viable in the county. This followed a motion unanimously agreed by county councillors in July. Both councils asked experts at PwC to complete the work. PwC are currently acting in an advisory capacity to Government and other local authorities undertaking similar pieces of work. The options reviewed are:

1. Optimising the existing two-tier collaboration
2. Establishing a new single unitary authority
3. Establishing two new unitary authorities, based on a 50/50 split of the population to meet Government criteria around size.

The report can be downloaded from the OCC website.

READING TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2036 (INCLUDING THIRD READING BRIDGE)

I emailed all clerks in my Division on 17th May to advise that Reading was consulting on its Transport Strategy 2036. Several proposals would have major impacts on South Oxfordshire. I urged all parish councils in my Division to respond to the consultation and am delighted that most have, either individually or as part of a cooperative effort led by Kidmore End PC.

OCC and SODC have also submitted their responses.

OCC states:

"We are opposed to the Plan in its present form, as we do not agree with the proposed schemes and measures it includes for cross boundary travel between Reading and Oxfordshire. We are particularly concerned about the approach proposed to developing large-scale 'multi-modal schemes' to the north of Reading, in particular the proposed Thames Crossing, Reading Orbital Route and North of Reading Park & Ride sites."

The full response is available on the OCC website here:

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/response-to-readings-local-transport-plan/>

SODC states:

"We are particularly concerned about the approach proposed to developing large-scale 'multi-modal schemes' to the north of Reading, in particular the proposed Thames Crossing, Reading Orbital Route and North Reading Park and Rides. We believe that development and delivery of these major schemes is inconsistent with the objectives and many of the policies of the plan, they will not be effective in managing cross-boundary travel movements, and are likely to have significant negative impacts on South Oxfordshire."

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

OBSCURED/MISSING YELLOW LINES AT JUNCTION OF MILL LANE AND MILL ROAD

As previously advised, sweeping was undertaken on 13th July. Ironically, the crew arrived a couple of weeks later to undertake the siding-out and relining but could not do so because of parked cars. I am chasing for a revised date for the work.

IMPACT OF ROAD WIDENING ON A4155 AT THAMES FARM

I have received complaints about the impact of the road-widening that fall into two categories: 1) There is a kink in the road where the widened section meets the old road near Bolney Lane and this allegedly causes some drivers to poorly position themselves, endangering other road users; 2) The widened road has increased speeding by motorists. With regard to 1), I reported the matter to officers and they said the changes were in accordance with specification and there were no safety issues. With regard to 2), there is little I can do based on anecdotal evidence. The PC may wish to undertake a speed survey which would provide hard evidence (or not). This would cost approximately £400 in total for two locations.

FOOTPATH SIGNAGE ISSUES AT LOWER MILL LANE (FERRY LANE)

Further to the site visit by the PROW officer on 13th July, some of the missing waymark signs have now been replaced. The officer has also written to the owner of 1, Rivermead Cottages in relation to the unofficial Covid sign and advised that the wording should be amended so that walkers are encouraged to keep a safe distance rather than keep away.

STEEL GATE POSTS ON MILL LANE (FERRY LANE) NEAR 'THE DEN'

Steel gateposts have been erected each side of Mill Lane near 'The Den'. Presumably there is an intention to attach gates at some point. I understand this work has been done by a resident of the lane. I am seeking officer advice on this matter.

REPAIRS TO MILL LANE VERGES

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 once the project had been completed. As that moment now approaches, the PC may wish to contact the agent for an update.

POTENTIAL FOOTBRIDGE OVER THE THAMES

As stated at the previous meeting, I doubt this Wargrave initiative will get anywhere because of access and funding issues, but would like to know the PC's stance on the proposal.

NEW FOOTPATH ON PLOUGH LANE

Plans and costs were approved by the PC earlier in the year. I have allocated £3450 towards these using my Councillor Priority Fund. Work is scheduled to commence this month.

TIMETABLE AND BUS STOP SIGN OPPOSITE THE PLOWDEN ARMS MISSING

As previously reported, I obtained agreement from officers for the removal of the concrete post and installation of a new pole, flag and timetable case. This has now been completed.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

THAMES FARM: P20/S2825/EX (EXTENSION OF TIME) & P20/S2808/DIS (DRAINAGE)

The application from Taylor Wimpey (TW) to extend the construction schedule by one year attracted over 50 objections from residents. Their concern is not that construction is delayed, but that TW are planning to delay the tree replanting until construction commences. I have corresponded with TW in relation to this, as has John Howell MP and the SODC Planning department. TW have not changed their position. Officers have advised that the TW reply to the Planning department is a public document and the parish council may wish to consider publishing it on the village website.