

## OCC News January 2026

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The “Abingdon Reservoir” as proposed by Thames Water.

### OCC headlines:

Welcome to my first newsletter of 2026, and Happy New Year (yes, I know...it's almost February!).

When I last wrote our motion on the Abingdon Reservoir was going to be heard on December 9<sup>th</sup> – which was thankfully voted in, and a letter concerning the reservoirs Emergency Discharge Facility has now been sent by OCC to the Secretary of State with my input. The Lib Dem motion, which we seconded, was also voted in, and we are now working out what a combined community cohesion action plan could look like. This is in reaction to the recent climate of uncertainty and fear epitomised by the flag-flying on lamp posts. I will keep you posted on how both of these motions progress over time.

The next Full Council meeting is on the 10<sup>th</sup> February. We are currently in budgeting season, which means that at the February meeting we will not be having any motions put forward and no questions can be asked of cabinet. It is **ALL** about the ever-decreasing monies allocated to local government by the government and how we can (somehow) do everything with less. The sums involved are substantial, but over the next three years we will have to budget with £5.4m less in 2026/7 which reduces further over the following years by substantially increasing amounts. This is obviously a concern to all of us, and we are giving a lot of thought as to how we can imaginatively construct a budget which delivers for all our residents.

**Road Resurfacing:** If you missed this the details can be found [here](#) – including which sites are being managed.

**Councillor Grants:** These are now available! However, a word of warning, I have the grandiose sum of £10k to award over two years. I am therefore planning on being very selective and will only make any awards to those who speak to me about their requirement first. The minimum grant is £500, whilst the maximum is £4k. The grants cannot be awarded to individuals, or to companies, and must come with an argument as to why it is needed, what the money will go towards, and over what time period. From my perspective it also needs to have a social value. To apply you will need to fill in this [form](#) – but please bear in mind my stipulations above! Do also bear in mind that when it's gone, it's gone. To date I have allocated £6,000 to worthy causes which met all the above criteria.

**My roles:** I am now an HMS Diamond Champion along with my other roles.

## NEWS IN BRIEF:

**Oxfordshire Highways Annual Report:** The annual report can be found [here](#).

### Local Government reorganisation (LGR):

This is on-going. Work is happening in the background to be LGR ready, but full planning can only happen once we hear back from government. A statutory consultation is expected to begin in early February which will run for seven weeks – I will make sure that everyone is aware of this. Final decision is expected in early summer this year.

**Drain clearing:** OCC has committed to cleaning every roadside gully, drain and manhole every year for the duration the current term. (more [here](#)). **I know some drains have been missed** – so please do report these directly to OCC via FixMyStreet.

**Moving out of County Hall:** OCC will be moving out of County Hall in late 2026 (this will be converted to a 4\* hotel). Speedwell House will become the new city centre hub for Oxfordshire County Council although the council are looking for suitable accommodation in the city centre prior to Speedwell House being ready.

**Oxford Railway Station:** For anyone following the Botley Road saga, please note that the existing Botley Road rail bridge will be demolished from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> February. This means the walking route from the Botley Road to the city centre will be changed and that train services from Oxford to Didcot will be replaced by buses. Please check [here](#) before travelling.

**Pizza and Politics:** OCC is running this session in Wallingford Town Hall on February 6<sup>th</sup> (5.30-8pm) the session is intended for young people aged 11-18 years old. Please register [here](#) by Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February.

## LOCAL QUESTIONS TO FULL COUNCIL (9<sup>th</sup> September):

All answers to questions put to cabinet are available on the OCC website, so for answers to questions already posed please go to the minutes. The last question asked was:

1. **HIF1:** What are the forecasts costs for HIF1, what is the County Council's exposure and how does this compare to the funds which have been signed off? And when is work likely to commence?

Please contact me (details at top) if you wish me to raise any questions on your behalf in future Full Council meetings. As stated previously, no questions can be asked of cabinet at the next Full Council meeting.

## CURRENT CONSULTATIONS:

January consultations:

**Improving our fire service:** This consultation is now closed as of 31<sup>st</sup> January.

**Nationwide Highways and Transport Network 2025 survey:** Oxfordshire is taking part in a nationwide survey on public satisfaction with transport and road services. The survey can be found [here](#). This will close on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

## PARISH ROUND-UP

Please refer [here](#): for all Fix My Street queries in your area. There is a huge volume of these and cover the gamut of OCC responsibilities. Completed actions have been removed.

By Parish Council – in alphabetical order.

## Benson:

Questions have been raised about:

- Management of the various areas of land in Benson belonging to OCC. Interactive digital map provided by OCC (sent to all PC's). ✓
- Inhabitants of the Cala development have concerns over water management which they are currently working on with SODC and Thames Water. Had positive meetings in January with residents and SODC.
- Drug dealing "gangs" are back in Benson. Police informed and keeping watch. Residents are encouraged to report sightings to Community Police. Benson now on TVP Alert list.
- Mobility Hub consultation now closed. Work on-going on monitoring existing traffic flows. Chasing up what the outcomes of the consultation are. Awaiting response.
- LCWIP survey has been communicated to relevant parishes. Now closed.
- Antisocial driving reported by residents, details provided to the police (& video posted on Facebook).

### **Crowmarsh:**

- Need for a footpath exiting the French Gardens development. Discussed with OCC in August and approach agreed. ✓
- Need for a 30mph sign on the Port Way.
- Desire for a 40mph speed limit on Nosworthy Way (as opposed to 50). Pointed out to Cllr Gant on revamp of A4074 speed limits.
- SID post requirement & replacement SID in North Stoke. Chased August. Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> October – still waiting on follow-up & implementation.
- Reduction in speed request for B4009 (have been assured in planning for before Spring 2027).
- Newnham Manor development – waiting on contract from OCC. Now with SODC...
- Bloor 2 housing proposal now in has implications for multiple projects in Benson Lane – have requested a local meeting with OCC & PC to bring all projects together.
- LCWIP consultation has been communicated to relevant parishes now closed.
- Consultation on 30mph limit along Benson Lane.

### **Dorchester:**

We are waiting on input on:

- Armco repair alongside the barrier (which was repaired) which is over the pedestrian underpass of the A4074 from Dorchester – assured would be done, hasn't been. Waiting on picture.
- Pathway from Meadside to Dorchester needs fixing. ✓ (in progress)
- Lighting on path to Reading direction bus stop on A4074. Have agreed £2k towards cost of doing this from Councillor Fund.
- Gulley clearance incomplete as per pictures provided by David Ross. Chasing.

### **Ewelme:**

- Cat Lane pathway / road repair discussions on-going.
- Introduced to those who understand land ownership along footpath.
- Hazell & Jeffries operating hours versus that defined in the CLEUD.
- Hazell & Jeffries building earth mound. Raised with OCC. Action being taken. ✓
- Hazell & Jeffries traffic volumes – will be measured soon using trail cams – both in Ewelme and in Benson.
- LCWIP consultation has been communicated to relevant parishes now closed.

### **Warborough / Shillingford:**

- Bollards – now registered on FixMyStreet.
- Pine needles blocking drains in Shillingford.
- Shillingford bridge railing repairs in progress (although no response to request for meeting at site with Jonnie).
- Drop curb agreed in village centre.

### **Days off in February:**

I am not planning on taking any days off in February.