

OCC News February 2026

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The Dorchester Festival Abseil – May 2nd 2026.

OCC headlines:

Welcome to my February Newsletter.

At the Full Council meeting on the 10th February the Lib Dem budget was voted in. Out of all of the opposition parties only the Green Party managed to get our amendments to the budget accepted and will now be implemented. This was down to a lot of work in understanding how the budgetary process works (it is pretty opaque!), working with OCC officers on the art of the possible and talking directly with the Lib Dems on our ideas and why they are important. Thankfully they agreed with us. This means that there will be a dedicated fund (£900k) for footpaths, cycleways and pavements which we have pushed for previously. These facilities are normally funded from within the Highways budget and therefore typically compete with the road network. We also earmarked monies for community cohesion and public health focussed climate change adaption and resilience.

We are currently planning our next tranche of motions and questions and at the same time trying to change the constitution to enable more motions to be heard in each Full Council. Generally, only two motions are covered per meeting (when four or five are presented) which shows how inefficient the system is!

The Dorchester Festival: As depicted in the picture above the planning for the Dorchester Festival is in full flow. This year I have been asked to abseil down the Abbey Tower to raise funds for the Abbey and Be Free Young Carers, which is something I'm looking forward to immensely! **Please do sponsor me [here](#).**

Road Resurfacing: If you missed this the details can be found [here](#) – including which sites are being managed. I know that this, and potholes, are very topical at the moment. OCC have more than doubled the number of defect crews from an original level of 7 to address the scourge of potholes.

Crime statistics: If you are interested in the crime statistics for our area please see this [URL](#).

Councillor Grants: To date I have allocated £8,000 (of the total £10k) to worthy causes which met my extensive criteria. The grants have been split evenly between the villages I represent.

My roles: I am now also on the OCC Constitution Review committee looking at how to improve this.

NEWS IN BRIEF:

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

Local Government reorganisation (LGR):

Work is happening in the background to be LGR ready, but full planning can only happen once we hear back from government. The public consultation is now open ([here](#)) until March 26th 2026.

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

Oxford Railway Station: The railway bridge replacement was completed (on time!), and train services are now running over the new bridge.

Pizza and Politics: OCC ran this session in Wallingford Town Hall on February 6th it was over-subscribed with only 40 students permitted to attend. The feedback from the evening was positive and we will be looking to engage further.

LOCAL QUESTIONS TO FULL COUNCIL (9th September):

Due to the budget no questions to cabinet or motions were allowed at the February Full Council.

Please contact me (details at top) if you wish me to raise any questions on your behalf in future Full Council meetings.

CURRENT CONSULTATIONS:

January consultations:

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 28th February 2026.

Community Hubs: We are looking to understand more about what community hubs there are across the county. Please input [here](#) (closes March 10th).

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:

- 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. Recent heavy rains have exacerbated this issue with considerable problems experienced in Littleworth Road (again).
- 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.
- Speeding in Benson is still a considerable issue.
- Cameras to be set up to monitor lorry movements within Benson and Ewelme.

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. Meeting on 28th 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 – contract currently with the developers.
- 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.
- 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. PC chased OCC.
- 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. This has been resolved, twice, but is still an issue.
- Chasing new officer (Rian replacement) in charge of tree planting.

Ewelme:

- Cat Lane pathway / road repair discussions on-going.
- Hazell & Jeffries operating hours versus that defined in the CLEUD.
- Hazell & Jeffries traffic volumes – will be measured soon using trail cams – both in Ewelme and in Benson.
- Will have a meeting in Ewelme re Quiet Lane status for Cat Lane.

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.
- Potholes have been chased up
- Culvert on Warborough Road has now been put on FMS.

Days off in February:

I am not planning on taking any days off in March, although the mountains (skiing) are calling.