

OCC News April 2026

Cllr Gavin McLauchlan (Benson & Crowmarsh)

Email: gavin.mclauchlan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Mob: +44 7710 255569



Yes, it is that time! The Dorchester Festival starts on May 2nd with some “volunteers” abseiling down the tower.

OCC headlines:

Welcome to my April Newsletter.

April is a fallow month when it comes to Full Council meetings, so there is no report on previous Full Council meetings – as that was last month, whilst normally I would comment on our motion for the following month this is going to be the annual ceremonial Full Council where the new Chair and Vice Chair get voted in. Frustratingly this means no motions and no questions to the cabinet (again, as per the February Budget Full Council).

We are still trying to change the constitution to enable more motions to be heard in each Full Council along with an improved rotational approach. It would appear that there is an appetite for this – to this end post the June Full Council we will be starting earlier, the Chair can extend the overall meeting if they feel we haven't got far enough and the rotational nature of motions will be slightly restructured to be fairer to all parties – obviously if it all gets ratified, which it should as a cross-party working group has structured these changes.

The Dorchester Festival: It is “D” Day on Saturday 2nd May (i.e. Dorchester Day!) where some 18 of us will be abseiling 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](#)** (this will stay as a constant reminder here until done!). Also, the weather will hopefully be good, so why not come along and watch?

Road Resurfacing: OCC announced that **£8million** will be invested in surface treatment for the county's roads. This is a preventative measure, hopefully reducing the chance of having as many potholes next winter. The full report is [here](#).

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

Councillor Grants: The full £10k of my Councillor Priority Fund has now been allocated.

Flags: OCC has issued a formal legal [notice](#) to Raise the Colours to stop flagging street furniture. To date this doesn't seem to have worked, but some "incidents" have focussed the collective minds of OCC and TVP.

My roles: No new roles to report.

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. We should hear back prior to the summer parliamentary recess on July 16th.

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.

SEND Improvement notice: The government has removed the improvement notice for services and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Oxfordshire. Read more [here](#).

LOCAL QUESTIONS TO FULL COUNCIL:

No questions can be asked at the April 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:

East West Rail (EWR) Consultation: EWR is running a public consultation to 9th June on updated proposals with particular reference to Oxfordshire at London Road, Bicester and Oxford Parkway. More details [here](#).

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:

- Drainage issues continue in Littleworth Road with three trucks removing sewage per day from Thames Water. Longer term TW and Cala need to come to an accord.
- Mobility Hub consultation now closed. Work on monitoring existing traffic flows completed. Should hear results of both (and funding available) soon. Still waiting...
- Speeding in Benson is still a considerable issue.
- Cameras to be set up to monitor lorry movements within Benson and Ewelme. Cameras purchased – still to be put in locations.
- Salt Store – OCC may be willing to rent this area out for a peppercorn rent to the Scouts / Guides etc. Waiting on Benson PC.
- Benson is having a "Freshers Day" on May 16th. This will include most clubs and societies in the village as well as the annual Benson Parish Council meeting (albeit in a different format).
- Flag removal at the MacDonalds roundabout is in planning at the moment.

Crowmarsh:

- All plans for Benson Lane questioned at last Full Council. Andrew Gant will be visiting the area, which we hope will give some certainty over the full plans. Awaiting timing.
- Need for a 30mph sign on the Port Way (Newnham Manor development dependant...).
- SID's now in North Stoke.
- Reduction in speed request for B4009 (in planning for before Spring 2027 along with other speed restriction changes).
- Consultation on 30mph limit along Benson Lane now complete.
- Councillor surgery to take place on the morning of 9th May.

Dorchester:

- 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 going ahead £2k applied for and approved.
- Gulley clearance incomplete as per pictures provided by David Ross. Chasing. This has been "resolved", twice, but is still an issue.
- Continuation of path work to bus stop promised as part of the path refurb – on going.
- Provision of flooding signs to be sent to Mike for Watling Lane. Not yet received.

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. Still need to agree on a date.
- Will have a meeting in Ewelme re Quiet Lane status for Cat Lane.
- Bicycle parking stands to be placed at the common and the watercress beds. Money applied for and approved.

Warborough / Shillingford:

- Bollards – now registered on FixMyStreet.
- Shillingford bridge railing repairs in progress – waiting on email response to request to meet at site.
- Drop curb agreed in village centre.
- Potholes have been chased up – question raised with Cabinet on when Thame Road will be resurfaced as in an awful state.
- Culvert on Warborough Road has now been put on FMS.
- Chased up on flag removal from the roundabout. It is on the list to be done.
- New Friday bus service to Wallingford being put into motion.

Days off in May:

None planned.