

## **District Councillor Report – Sam Casey-Rerhaye, April-May 2020**

### **Covid-19 and emergency/resilience planning**

If you or someone you know has been identified as extremely vulnerable by the NHS and have nobody around to help with day to day tasks, like shopping please call 01865 897820 or email [shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Anyone that is in this situation but is not considered high risk can check to see if there are any volunteer groups nearby to help them at [www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups](http://www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups) or they can call 01235 422600 or email [communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk)

These support lines are open 8.30am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturday and Sundays.

For local updates on District council activities such as waste collections and help for households and business, please see:

[www.southoxon.gov.uk/news-events/coronavirus-covid-19-information](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/news-events/coronavirus-covid-19-information)

All Councils in Oxfordshire are part of a Local Resilience Forum and are working closely with other organisations such as the police, NHS and fire service to deal with all the issues that are arising as a result of this pandemic. Councils are also working with all contracted services on their Business Continuity Plans to ensure as good a service as possible and the Council will update its website and send out regular communications with press etc to try and keep everyone as up to date as possible. I know many local communities and Parish Councils are getting together to offer help and support to those in isolation or who are unwell. It is encouraging to see and hear of all the focused efforts to help each other, many in small but really significant ways.

For up to date national advice, check the Gov.uk website ([www.https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response) ) and the NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

For business support and information, check <https://www.svbs.co.uk/coronavirus-guidance-and-support/>

### **Grant money for local Covid19 support**

I still have some grant money available for local groups for activities in your parishes related to Covid19 and supporting people. Please ask me for information – there is a very straightforward and simple application

process and wide criteria for the grant. Call me on 01235 799489 if you want to inquire or just talk through an idea.

I must say it has been fantastic to see the number and variety of groups of people in villages and towns in the District working together to help each other in this emergency, truly imaginative and inspiring. Who said there was no such thing as society?!

### **Planning & other Council business**

Most Council business has stopped except that relating to Covid-19, apart from Planning which the government has said needs to be ongoing. The Inspectorate which reviews Local Plans for legality and soundness is developing remote ways of working but at present we do not have any specific information on how this will affect the Local Plan 2034 Examination or the order from the Minister to adopt it by December 2020. My own opinion is that this date must be extended as it was already a very tight deadline to proceed through all the stages and give a fair hearing in public. The council leader, Cllr Sue Cooper, and (new) member for Planning, Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson, are writing to the Minister to request a general postponement of planning regulations and the five-year housing land supply rule.

### **Culham-Didcot bridge, Clifton Hampden by-pass and new bridge in Didcot – HIF1 Project**

Oxfordshire County Council launched a consultation on this in mid-March. The route for the Culham-Didcot bridge and the by-pass is different from previous drafts. I and a number of other councillors wrote to OCC on 17<sup>th</sup> April requesting a postponement during Covid19 emergency as we do not think it is possible to consider the proposal properly during lockdown and while people are living in such precarious and stressful circumstances.

### **Waste Collections**

Garden waste collections have been suspended during this period so that Biffa is able to concentrate all staff on essential waste collection. We have had to suspend our kerbside collections for batteries, small electricals and textiles recycling service because the centres that would normally accept these items are currently unable to take them for processing. We ask people to keep these items until the service has resumed. Do **not** put them in the general rubbish or recycling bins because of the fire risk to bin trucks. We remind people that gatherings like community litter picks should no longer be taking place until the

government guidelines allow, and until our waste contractors is able to cope with the extra waste collection

**Please do not hesitate to call me or email for any information or concerns you have about any District council or Covid19 related issues:**

**01235 799489, or email me at [sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk)**