

# COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS – SEPTEMBER 2020 BY CLLR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

## Public Health – COVID-19 Update

In the seven days up to 21 August, there has been a total of 86 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Oxfordshire. This is an increase from 65 cases in the previous week.

- This is equivalent to a weekly rate of new cases of 12.4 per 100,000 residents.
- The majority of the new cases are in Oxford, where the number has risen from 28 to 41. The increase is predominantly among young people aged between 18 and 29. The increase can be partly attributed to people returning from holidays in Europe, where cases of the virus are rising, and partly to lower levels of adherence to social distancing.
- The weekly rate for Oxford currently stands at 26.9 cases per 100,000 population, which sees the city moving ever closer to figures in parts of the country that have been labelled by central Government as areas of concern.

Cases of coronavirus by district, total cases, and cases in the last seven days:

Cherwell	743	13
Oxford	997	41
South Oxfordshire	640	13
Vale of White Horse	517	14
West Oxfordshire	557	05
Oxfordshire	3,454	86.

Data is correct as at 5pm on 25 August. It is important to note data is constantly being updated, so the picture is dynamic and can change quickly.

## Our response

This is a fast-moving situation, and our Public Health Surveillance Unit is continuing to monitor it very closely. We are working with our Oxfordshire system partners to issue increased and targeted communications to help contain the situation, including text messages from GP practices, targeted social media posts and digital advertising, posters and leaflets, advertising on board buses, and work with the media. If the figures continue to rise, then local control measures may need to be introduced.

## **Mobile testing unit at Cowley Road, Oxford**

A mobile testing unit (MTU) was deployed in Oxford from Friday (28 August) to Sunday (30 August). The MTU was located on the car park in Union Street, just off Cowley Road (behind Tesco). These facilities are for people who are symptomatic, and booking ahead is strongly recommended – either by calling 119 or registering online at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test).

I would be very grateful for your help in sharing this message with residents in your division so if there is a need for more MTU's in other areas the coming weeks we can reach as many people as possible. For weekly cases by local area in England, see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) positive cases by Middle Super Output Area \(MSOA\) in England](#)

**Re-start, Re-cover, Re-new** is a new initiative that has been set up to develop an ambitious Oxfordshire system-wide approach to recovery, which places the health, social and economic wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents at its heart. We have clear leadership and coordination of our recovery work, and the outputs of these are brought together at the Oxfordshire Whole System Recovery Group which includes Oxfordshire NHS, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and our Local Authorities.

## **Welcoming children back to school safely**

The new academic year has arrived and our Learning & School Improvement team have been working closely with schools and colleges to make sure that all children are welcomed back safely. Risk assessments have been carried out and hygiene measures are in place across all educational settings, and all educational providers are following Department for Education, Public Health England and County Council guidance.

We recognise that some parents may feel anxious, particularly in light of the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Oxford. We have therefore written to parents and carers across Oxfordshire to reassure them about the preparations that have taken place for the safe return of children. 94% of schools in Oxfordshire have remained open since the start of lockdown and we have not seen any significant outbreaks during this time. Moreover, research by Public Health England shows that coronavirus outbreaks and infections in schools and early years settings are very rare. Out of more than 1 million children attending pre-school and primary school in June, just 70 children were affected.

In my capacity as Cabinet Member for Education I wrote to all our MP's, our District and County Council Councillors, and their Chief Executives

on 26th August. A copy is attached. I would be very grateful if you would share the sentiments expressed with residents in your parishes.

Through our #backtoschoolsafely campaign, we are also encouraging parents and children to adopt active travel where possible, including walking, cycling or scooting to school.

If there are any congestion issues close to your local schools, then please do report concerns to our dedicated email address:  
[schoolsactivetravel@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsactivetravel@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

For those children who are entitled to home to school transport, the OCC Transport Recovery Group has liaised with schools to identify a safe service. This has included a total of 40 additional routes to ensure children from more than one school do not travel together.

### **New Bus Service between Berinsfield and Abingdon**

I am delighted that after years of my campaigning with colleagues and OCC officers, the County Council together with Thames Travel have instigated a new bus service between Cowley, Berinsfield, Clifton Hampden, Culham, and Abingdon. It's called the 45. My concern has always been to enable Berinsfield children to get to their three Abingdon secondary schools – Larkmead, Fitzharrises and John Mason. There are four stops in the village – A 4074 layby, War Memorial, Health Centre and Wimblestraw Road. It will also stop in Burcot, Clifton Hampden and outside the Culham Science Centre. The Timetable is online. At the moment, because of the pandemic, pupils are being asked to travel in year group bubbles, so years 7, 9 and 11 will be travelling together on council coaches, and years 8, 10 and 6th formers will take the 45 public bus.

**I would like to say a very public “thank you” to Jon Alcantara, who stepped up and provided a school bus service for the Berinsfield children over the last few years. He managed to operate a route that neither the County Council nor Thames Travel had been able to do in the past. I’m very grateful for his public spirited, can do attitude that impressed all those who have worked with him at OCC.**