

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS – NOVEMBER 2020 BY Cllr LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

COVID-19 UPDATE

The County Council Cabinet was presented with worrying case figures on 21st October, and I was one of our Cabinet of 10 members who voted to ask for Tier 2 restrictions to be put in place across the County. It was very clear that the virus was spreading into our towns and villages, and to all age groups. We wanted to prevent another potential surge brought on by families and friends mixing over Half Term.

Our MPs lobbied against it. So, the decision was delayed, but we knew then that it was only a matter of time before the City had to be moved into Tier 2 and that the county would probably follow soon after. We were disappointed that, despite clear evidence showing the virus spreading rapidly across the county, the decision was taken to move just Oxford into tier 2 from Saturday 31st October. The rest of the county remained at 'medium' (tier 1) level.

New national restrictions from 5 November

On 30th October the Prime Minister has announced a four-week national lockdown for England, with strict new measures coming into force from Thursday. The move comes in the wake of rapidly rising infection levels across the country and a significant rise in hospital admissions.

What are the new measures?

From 5 November, people will be told to stay at home unless they have a specific reason to leave, such as education, childcare, and work which cannot be done from home.

Pubs, restaurants, and non-essential shops and businesses will have to close, although hospitality venues can continue to provide takeaway and delivery services. Schools, colleges, universities and early years settings can remain open.

People must not meet socially indoors or in a private garden with family or friends who are not part of their household or support bubble. People are also being asked to avoid travelling in or out of their local area and to reduce the number of journeys they make.

The lockdown measures are expected to last until 2nd December (please note this is not a set end date). After this, it is anticipated that regions would go back to the current tiered system.

How will the new measures affect our services?

We are working rapidly to identify how the new measures will affect our service delivery and what action we need to take.

We know that the introduction of strict new measures will not be easy for our residents or our businesses. We have already seen the significant social, economic and health impacts that lockdown has had across our region – impacts which continue to be keenly felt. Nor will it be easy for our staff, who have given their all delivering services in the most challenging of circumstances and who have worked so hard to restart services following closure earlier this year.

However, we must do everything we can to halt the spread of the virus. Nationally, COVID-19 cases have passed one million, while the death toll has reached over 46,500. Locally we have seen cases rise rapidly across all areas of Oxfordshire in the space of just a few weeks, with older and more vulnerable age groups affected and hospital admissions rising as a result.

Over the coming weeks our focus will be on doing everything we can to help our residents, and we will be working in close partnership with our local authority, NHS and community colleagues to protect and support our communities at this critical time.

£60K+ INVESTMENT IN GARSINGTON'S ROADS

On 28th and 29th October a 240m section of the highway at the junction of Wheatley Road, Oxford Road and The Hill around the Village Hall was resurfaced.

The surfacing started just after the junction of Denton Lane on The Hill side and finished just before the twin gullies opposite Library Farm. While the closure was in place, additional patching was carried out adjacent to the junction of Denton Lane.

Included within these works were the replacement of damaged existing Full Batter kerbs on the bend and straight Bull Nose kerbs on The Hill side. New dropped kerbs were also installed at the end of the existing footpath along Pettiwell due to no kerbs present. Also included within the works were the replacement of 4 no old gully grates on the Oxford Road side.

It was also identified that there was a small section of carriageway that required surfacing on Pettiwell within the extent of the properties. A 6.5 linear metre length of full width surfacing was carried out here while the road closure was in place.

The total estimated cost to carry out these works was **40K** approx.

Drainage – Wheatley Rd & Library Farm

In addition, after a previous meeting in the village with Cllr Liam Walker, Cabinet Member for Highway Operations, members of the Parish Council and senior officers from the OCC Highways department, a way forward has been agreed to deal with the long-standing problem of flooding at the corner of Denton Lane, close to the Primary School.

The existing system that runs from Wheatley Road through to the brook has several defects that are not reachable to enable repair. This is mainly due to new out buildings and extensions built over the existing pipe over the years. The main areas are within the driveway of Library Farm and between Wheatly Rd and Sadlers Croft.

OCC officers have looked at the option of directional drilling to install a new 315mm OD pipe as they believe that this method would be ideal at these locations. The benefit of this is that there will be minimal excavating required which means less disruption to resident's properties. The soakaway chamber that was installed previously will now be used as a chamber and entrance point for the new pipe.

The estimated cost for these works, including both locations will be **20K** approx.

Traffic Calming on the Hill and Oxford Road

It was also agreed to look into widening the pavement up to the Green from the School and to the provision of a small chicane to provide protection to pedestrians at that point and to slow traffic down through a give-way system.

At the other end of the village, after another visit from OCC Traffic officers a manhole cover and speed bump in the Oxford Road is to be repaired to alleviate vibration problems to residents in the vicinity. The possibility of a chicane at the entrance to the village to slow the traffic was also discussed.

PARKING ENFORCEMENT PROPOSALS AIM TO KEEP THE TRAFFIC MOVING

Oxfordshire County Council has agreed to apply to the Government to take over responsibility for civil parking enforcement across the whole of the county. If the plans are approved by district councillors at the Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire and Cherwell, then the new measures could come into force across the county by November 2021.

The proposal, which was agreed by the county council's Cabinet on Tuesday, 13th October, would also lead to the creation of up to 168 new on-street pay-and-display car parking spaces in the Vale, South, and Cherwell districts.

The county council already enforces parking in Oxford City and West Oxfordshire, and could now take over responsibility from Thames Valley Police in South Oxfordshire, the Vale, and Cherwell, ensuring continuity across the whole county.

Members of the public would be able to report areas and incidents of illegal parking through a dedicated email address and telephone line. Officers would investigate and take enforcement action as required.

Parking offences, which include overstaying in pay-and-display bays, double-parking, dropped kerb obstruction and yellow line infringements, would be enforced by the county council's contractor Conduent. Penalty charges range from £50-£70, but would be reduced by 50% if paid within 14 days.