

Title	County Councillor's Report
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Reduced bus fares

For three months (January-March), bus passengers can enjoy a £2 cap on bus fares. Paid for by a government scheme, fares with participating bus firms will cost a maximum of £2 per adult single fare (includes Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel). Concessions are unaffected and school services are excluded.

Anti-sewage motion passes and water summit

A motion at Full Council in December condemning the practice of dumping sewage into waterways passed with near unanimity (one Conservative opposed).

Over the Christmas period, Thames Water released raw sewage six times into Oxfordshire rivers. A water summit in December also looked at challenges facing water supply and demand in Oxfordshire.

Rainfall and Oxfordshire's river levels

There are several flood alerts on Oxfordshire watercourses. Residents can monitor the situation in their local area on our news page, which signposts key information from the Environment Agency and Met Office:

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/rainfall-and-oxfordshires-river-levels/>

Tackling carbon emissions

OxonCC has completed [its biannual report](#) on its carbon reduction plan. The council reports data from its own operational emissions (those included in our Net Zero by 2030 target), as well as a limited range of other data sources including maintained schools and some contractor emissions.

The council intends to expand the range of emissions included in its reporting in future reports, particularly major suppliers.

Although there was a 1.5% increase in emissions in 2021/22 as compared to the previous year, there was an overall reduction of 11% since 2019/20 (Pre Covid).

This equates to an average reduction of 5.5% annually in the last two years and 74.6% reduction compared to 2010/11.

Over 75% of the 60,000+ street lighting assets in OxonCC control are now run with energy saving LED lights.

Streetlighting is the largest source of carbon emissions in OxonCC's operations and is a growing cost due to rising energy prices.

The milestone represents a significant improvement in the pace of rollout and will save the council £77m over 20 years.

Tree planting

As part of the new Tree Policy for Oxfordshire, 450 trees are being planted on highways over the winter period.

Successful bid for children's homes

OxonCC has successfully bid for a £5.2m grant to part fund four new residential children's homes.

The homes would provide accommodation and support for children requiring solo provision or who can only share with one other child, children with autism, and children who have had adverse childhood experiences.

These new homes would add to OxonCC's portfolio of three homes, along with the new four-bedroom home being constructed in Aston. The matched funding by OxonCC is still to be finalised.

Chilterns AONB boundaries

Natural England is overseeing a review process of the boundaries of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Natural England is appointing consultants who will carry out a technical assessment of natural beauty before consulting with stakeholders in spring and early summer of 2023.

Contact email for enquiries:

ChilternsAONBBoundaryReview@NaturalEngland.org.uk

Special Educational Needs

Families with children and young people with learning disabilities and special educational needs now have access to a refreshed website, designed to ease the process of transitioning into adult social services.

The new Moving into Adulthood online handbook has been commissioned by OxonCC.

It has been developed by Oxfordshire Family Support Network in collaboration with parents and guardians who have had lived experience of children moving from children's services into adult's services. <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/digital-guide-putting-families-in-control/>

Minerals and waste

OxonCC Cabinet agreed on 20th December [to start a new plan](#) to replace the current one which runs to 2031, in order to ensure the council has up-to-date plans for both minerals and waste, rather than continue current two-part process.

I have asked officers to make sure parishes in areas with mineral deposits are offered a briefing on the new process early in 2023.

Planning

The scheduled planning and regulation committee meeting for 16th January has been cancelled. This was to have been considering the HIF1 (Didcot-Culham-Golden Balls road/bridge scheme) application.

New Chief Executive

Dr Martin Reeves has been appointed OxonCC's new full-time chief executive. He joins from Coventry City Council shortly.

Awards for OxonCC staff and projects

Kim James, head of OxonCC's 'School Improvement Team', has been awarded an MBE in the 2023 New Year's Honours List.

Three OxonCC projects won International Green Apple Environmental awards, including the Benson Relief Road scheme received the International Green Apple Environmental award 'Green Champion of the year 2022'.

Councillor Priority Fund

If you have any last-minute community projects requiring support, let me know, as my 2022-23 fund is about to expire and I have a small amount remaining at the time of writing.