

REPORT TO SHIPLAKE PARISH COUNCIL **MAR 2022** FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

BUDGET MEETING OVERSHADOWED BY FARMERS' PROTEST



At the County Council budget-setting meeting on February 8th the left-wing administration forced through a whopping 5% Council Tax increase, despite the Conservative Independent Alliance showing how the increase could be limited to 3.5%. However, the meeting at County Hall was overshadowed by a farmers' protest outside. As previously reported, the administration is trying to impose a vegan diet at all council-catered events. Richard Binning, a beef farmer from Steventon, said: "The message they are sending out is really dangerous - they are suggesting it's ok to eat avocados from Brazil, instead of our wholesome British beef." The farmers' protest received national press coverage. The motion to impose the vegan diet has to be ratified by the OCC Cabinet at its meeting on March 15th. Conservatives will be addressing Cabinet and urging them to seek change through education, persuasion and choice, not diktat.

BAD WEATHER IS THE PERFECT STORM FOR ROGUE TRADERS IN OXFORDSHIRE

Residents are being warned to be wary of cold callers or leaflets offering to do work on roofs after the recent storms. OCC's trading standards team believes it is a perfect opportunity for rogue traders to take advantage of residents who have a leaking roof or broken tile. Any Oxfordshire resident who has concerns about cold calling or potential scams can contact the Citizens Advice National Consumer Service on **0800 144 8848** or by visiting its website citizensadvice.org.uk.

CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSALS FOR RESTRICTIONS ON CARS IN OXFORD

OCC and Oxford City Council last month revealed highly controversial joint proposals to cut car use in the city with the introduction of a city-wide workplace parking levy, traffic filters and a wider Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) to cover the entire city centre. The chairman of Oxford High Street Association condemned the proposals and said: "I am totally depressed by what these two councils are doing to our city." More details on the ZEZ below.

BRITAIN'S FIRST ZERO EMISSION ZONE (ZEZ) BEGINS IN OXFORD

Britain's first ZEZ started on 28 February. Launching as a pilot, the streets included in the ZEZ are: New Road, Bonn Square, Queen Street; Cornmarket Street, New Inn Hall Street, Shoe Lane, Market Street, Ship Street and St Michael's Street. The ZEZ pilot is a precursor to the introduction of a larger ZEZ covering most of Oxford city centre next year (2023), subject to further public consultation. The ZEZ pilot will operate from 7am - 7pm, all year around. All petrol and diesel vehicles, including hybrids, will incur a daily charge unless eligible for a discount or exemption. However, zero emission vehicles, such as electric cars, can enter the pilot area free of charge. The charge will vary from £2 to £10 per day depending on the emission levels of the vehicle. Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras have been installed to enforce the zone. The scheme has been criticised as being a tax-raising measure and not a true ZEZ, as all vehicles are allowed into the zone as long as they pay the tax.

BID SUBMITTED TO DELIVER 159 ELECTRIC BUSES FOR THE OXFORD AREA

A new fleet of state-of-the-art electric buses could be coming to Oxford and its surrounding areas after a bid for government funding was submitted. OCC last month applied for £32.8 million from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme. Along with £6m from the council and £43.7m from bus companies Go Ahead and Stagecoach, the scheme could deliver 159 electric buses and the infrastructure to charge them in a package worth £82.5m. If successful, the electric buses would operate in an area stretching from Kidlington in the north to Sandford in the south, and from Cumnor in the west to Wheatley in the east. There are no proposals to support the south of the county.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Efforts to unpick the agreement between OCC and Cherwell District Council continues. A joint officer working group has been established to review the extent and cost of the current arrangements. The group reports to the member-led Joint Shared Services and Personnel Committee, and is made up of the two chief executives, monitoring officers and s151 officers. Once the group has completed its initial review, it will then prepare a transition plan. The Conservative Opposition continues to press for transparency in relation to the costs when they have been identified and quantified.

CONSULTATIONS

OCC is currently conducting a wide range of consultations at the moment. Residents can make their views known by responding. Current consultations include: Local Transport and Connectivity Plan; Location of cameras to enforce traffic regulations; Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); and Library and heritage services. An interesting recent example is the proposal to make permanent the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in parts of Oxford. The consultation showed that 74% of respondents objected to the measure or had concerns, with just 26% in support. This has resulted in the administration putting the brakes on the scheme at the last moment, which was due to be approved last month. It will be reconsidered by Cabinet later in the year. <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

RETIREMENT VILLAGE P21/S4102/RM RELATIONSHIP TO P21/S0859/FUL (ADJ TH)

OCC has confirmed no development may take place until the highways agreement in relation to the footpath is made – this element requires detailed construction plans/specs and land assembly, if necessary. Therefore, the agreed highway works must be completed prior to any occupation of the site. There is currently a most unusual new fencing arrangement: close-clad, hedging and post and rail – all bunched together. The land levels have been raised by earth moving. The path and retaining wall do not appear to have been started.

GENERAL SODC REPORT

COUNCIL MEETING FORMAT

The administration has recently issued a notice stating: "Formal council meetings will continue as they have been until further notice." I have had many complaints from residents (in relation to hybrid planning meetings in particular) that they feel this is anti-democratic as the requirement for members of the public to equip themselves with laptops and headsets then travel to Didcot to sit in rows looking at screens is a huge disincentive to attend. Conservatives are pressing for a return to normal – SODC Legal has confirmed there is no reason why this could not happen.

COUNCILLOR GRANT SCHEME

Cllr Rawlins and I have now completed distribution of grants across the parishes in our Ward.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

WEBSITE

Given that most Covid restrictions have now ended, I would like to suggest now is the time to delete the Covid section entirely. I would also like to suggest that it is replaced with another section dedicated entirely to planning, freeing up 'Issues and Concerns' for a wider range of issues relating to companies and councils.

P21/S4102/RM: RETIREMENT VILLAGE RESERVED MATTERS

There is a six-week window for making an application for Judicial Review from the date planning permission is granted, although a complainant has to notify SODC within 14 days of the decision being issued.

OUTLINE APPLICATION TO CONVERT KINGSLEY HS FROM 4 FLATS TO UP TO 8 FLATS

The officer is recommending approval of the application, which will be determined at the SODC Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday 16th March.

P21/S4616/FUL ERECTION OF 11 DWELLINGS AT REAR OF CROSSWAYS

Despite being rejected when put forward for the JHHNP, an application for this proposal has now been submitted to SODC. I am also advised that an appeal in respect of the previous application for 20 houses will be coming forward. I have asked officers for an update on both proposals.

P21/S4271/RM WYEVALE 40 DWELLINGS

Objections have been received from OCC LLFA, OCC Transport, S&V Drainage, S&V Forestry, S&V Landscape, Thames Water and TVP. An amended application has now been received in draft form, however the developer has now also submitted a new application for 55 houses – see below.

P21/S5382/FUL WYEVALE 55 DWELLINGS

The developer has now submitted a new application for 55 houses. To accommodate this, the shared green spaces have been removed and three-storey apartment blocks introduced. Harpsden PC strongly opposes the extension of the 30mph limit towards Henley and I would be grateful for the views of Shiplake PC.

P20/S2808/DIS: THAMES FARM

Following objections from OCC and SODC drainage/flood engineers, Taylor Wimpey withdrew its revised drainage proposal which involved pumping the surface water from the site along the A4155 to a discharge point near Sheephouse Lane. With regard to the ground compacting grouting proposals, Taylor Wimpey submitted an 'Application for a Certification of Lawfulness' which has been refused by SODC. There is no update. Lastly, I am still awaiting a response from Taylor Wimpey whether there are any plans to tidy up the site which is likely to remain uncompleted for a considerable period.