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| Title | County Councillor's Report |
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| Parish | Thame Parish Council |
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Political Balance

After the 1 May elections the political balance has shifted slightly, and the Liberal Democrats have overall control of Oxfordshire County Council. Please see a breakdown below:

- 36 Liberal Democrats
- 12 Labour
- 10 Conservative
- 1 Reform
- 1 Independent Oxford Alliance
- 1 HRG
- 1 Independent

The Conservative Group joined forces with the Independent Oxford Alliance and an Independent which means they have the same number of members as Labour which means we have 2 official opposition parties.

A **full council meeting was held on 20th May**, the first meeting of all 69 councillors since the election and the first of the new Liberal Democrat administration. As well as the new chairs of council and committees, the new cabinet was also presented at the meeting. Cllr Liz Leffman continues as Leader, with Cllr Neil Fawcett taking on the role of Deputy Leader (with cabinet responsibility for resources including cultural services and libraries).

Other cabinet member appointments were as follows:

- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care: **Cllr Tim Bearder**
- Cabinet Member for Highways and Mobility: **Cllr Andrew Gant**
- Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services: **Cllr Sean Gaul**
- Cabinet Member for Public health and Inequalities: **Cllr Kate Gregory**
- Cabinet Member for Community Safety: **Cllr Jenny Hannaby**
- Cabinet Member for Future Economy and Innovation: (Covering Enterprise Oxfordshire, Innovate Oxfordshire, community wealth building) **Cllr Ben Higgins**
- Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation: **Cllr Dan Levy**
- Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy and Climate Action: **Cllr Judy Roberts**

Judith has been nominated on to the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny and the People Overview & Scrutiny Committees. They both have a strong health and care focus, with the former being mostly NHS and the latter being internal so public health and adult social care.

Kate is the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities and therefore sits on the Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board and Shareholder Committee

Devolution and Government Reorganisation

On 16 December 2024, the government [published a white paper](#) on a national programme of devolution and reform to local government. Public consultation will start on this in the coming weeks.

Resurfacing Plans 2025/26

There have been temporary traffic regulation notices for the A418 Thame Bypass and Oxford Road in Thame this month, to facilitate carriageway surface dressing works which I'm sure will be good news for residents. OCC is in the process of a £7.4 million road resurfacing programme this spring, aiming to improve nearly 100 roads across the county. The initiative involves surface dressing treatments to over one million square metres of carriageway. This preventive maintenance approach is designed to extend the lifespan of roads and enhance driving conditions. The council emphasises the importance of this work in maintaining road quality and urges motorists to stay informed about upcoming works and to drive cautiously in treated areas.

The resurfacing method offers many advantages, including:

- Sealing the road surface to keep out water, one of the major causes of deterioration and potholes.
- Reducing the deterioration of the road surface.
- Restoring the necessary level of skid resistance to reduce skid-related traffic collisions.
- Enabling worn out road surfaces to last longer, increasing the time before structural maintenance is required.
- Maximising the cost effectiveness of limited highway maintenance budgets.
- Minimising traffic disruption and congestion as large areas of roads – up to 100,000 square metres – can be treated in a single day.
- The work is highly weather dependent and cannot be completed in wet conditions.

Updated details about the programme, including a map showing where and when the work will be taking place, is available on Oxfordshire County Council's [website](#).

Every roadside drainage gully to be cleaned this year

Work to clean and empty every highway drainage gully in Oxfordshire this year - and every year going forward - is now under way.

For Thame, the scheduled dates this year are 1st February – 31st March 2026

The enhanced programme began in Wheatley last month, and contractors working on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council are planning to clean nearly 145,000 highway drains, gullies, manholes and catchpits by the end of March 2026.

The £2.6 million programme is taking place after an additional £1.5m investment to improve highway drainage was approved in the council's 2025/26 budget.

Drain cleaning was previously carried out on a four-year cycle, although high priority drains – such as those in areas most at risk of flooding and on high-speed roads – were cleaned more regularly. The additional investment will be used to empty gullies, carry out improved drainage management, and repair the infrastructure connecting the gullies to the outlets. Improving drainage also helps protect roads by getting water off the surfaces, reducing the risk of potholes forming during freezing weather.

Waste is removed from the drains using suction pipes and then they are cleaned with jets of water. Some may require digging out by hand if a lot of silt has accumulated.

It is expected that the work will cause minimal disruption, although there might be temporary traffic lights or manually operated stop-go signs in operation if lane or road closures are necessary. Motorists will be asked to make sure their vehicles are not blocking access to drains when the work is due to take place, and to take care when driving past gully emptying operations.

The cleaning programme is being carried out by specialist operator Drainline on behalf of the council's principal highway maintenance contractor M Group.

Help Schools Save Energy

Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools is a council funded service helping schools across Oxfordshire reduce their energy use, lower carbon emissions and save money on energy bills.

Many schools are eager to reduce their energy costs but may not realise that help like this exists. [More information is available](#) online.

Oxfordshire is a Marmot County

Oxfordshire is officially a Marmot Place, part of a national network of areas working with the Institute of Health Equity to tackle the root causes of poor health and inequality. This means taking action on the building blocks of health to create a fairer, healthier county for everyone.

The programme brings together councils, the NHS and communities to focus on three priority areas:

- Giving every child the best start in life
- Supporting fair employment and good work for all
- Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all.

Work is already underway across early years, rural inequalities and primary care, with local research and data playing a key role. By applying an inequalities lens to everything we do,

Oxfordshire aims to make lasting changes that improve health and wellbeing for every resident, wherever they live and whatever their background.

An update on this went to HOSC last week and can be found [here](#)

*****Local Issues*****

Thame to Haddenham Greenway

A meeting took place at the end of May with officers from Bucks Council and OCC, councillors and MPs and it was clear that everyone was keen to get the Greenway delivered.

Budget has been allocated this year to progress the project and officers are working hard on this.

Nelson Street

A site visit from officers took place and officers are now working on designs to make Nelson Street one way.

*****CONSULTATIONS*****

Oxfordshire Streetlight Proposal

Residents are being asked for their views on how to implement proposals to reduce streetlighting in parts of Oxfordshire where it is requested.

You can find the consultation [here](#)

Oxfordshire EV charging cable channel scheme launching in July

Oxfordshire residents without off-street parking will soon be able to apply for a scheme that allows them to charge an electric vehicle (EV) outside their own home.

EV charging cable channels are an affordable and convenient solution for people who want to drive an electric vehicle but don't have a driveway. They allow the cable from a home charger to safely cross the pavement without causing a trip hazard.

A government grant of £700,000 is greatly reducing the cost of the cable channels. We'll install them for the first 500 residents to successfully apply.

Adults Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035

The [draft Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035](#) has been developed in partnership with experts, service providers, health and other local partners. It sets out some of the most important areas where they told us actions needed to be taken. OCC want to hear what residents think about the vision, themes, aims and key priorities. Feedback received will help the council to know if we need to make any changes to the draft plan before the final version is agreed. [The survey will be open](#) until midnight on Sunday 13 July

Oxfordshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025.

The Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board must produce an assessment of pharmaceutical services in its area every three years. This is required by law under NHS regulations. [They are consulting with any patient, consumer or community group in the county](#) who has an interest in the provision of pharmaceutical services as well as our statutory stakeholders. Comments received will inform the final assessment which will be published in September 2025. The consultation will be open until Sunday 3 August 2025.

Free period products available in county council buildings.

Free period products (both reusable and disposable) are available for all Oxfordshire residents in a trial to help achieve period equality for all. So we can better understand period product provision for Oxfordshire and work towards a proposal for long-term provision to alleviate period poverty, we would like residents' anonymous feedback on the products. The short [online questionnaire](#) is an opportunity to provide feedback on residents' experience of our period product trial, if it's helping, and what the scheme should look like in the future.

*****GRANTS AND COST OF LIVING*****

Hardship fund: OCC's hardship fund (Resident Support Scheme) was launched in June.
Phone: 01865 804171

Home Upgrade Grants: OCC & its partner AgilityEco is reaching out directly to households who will qualify to benefit from Home Upgrade Grants (to improve energy efficiency for 'off-grid' homes)

Community Capacity Grants: The Community Capacity Fund will open for grant applications from 6th September. Grants of between £5.000 and £20.000 are funded by OCC and applications processed by Oxfordshire Community Foundation. Grants are given to projects that "support people to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible"

The Councillor Priority Fund will be reopening in the next few weeks.