

REPORT TO BIX & ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL MARCH 2020 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

A BUSY MONTH DEALING WITH STORMS AND FLOODING

OCC's Emergency Planning, Fire and Rescue and Highways teams had a busy February dealing with the local impacts of the storms and flooding that have made national headlines. Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis hit the UK on consecutive weekends in mid-February and with river levels already high as a result of much higher Autumn and Winter rainfall than the average, the Environment Agency issued scores of Flood Alerts and a number of the more serious Flood Warnings. Highways teams dealt with more than 150 incidents as a result of Storm Ciara and more than 100 stemming from Storm Dennis. The Storm Ciara incidents largely related to high winds (fallen trees blocking roads, debris) whereas Storm Dennis was also about flooding with some roads closing and surface water causing issues.

AIRBAND STARTS WORK ON ULTRAFAST BROADBAND FOR RURAL OXFORDSHIRE

Independent broadband firm Airband has started work on its fibre network in Oxfordshire as part of the BiRO project, which delivers ultrafast broadband to businesses in rural Oxfordshire. Work started in the first week of February 2020, with night work on Thame High Street. Airband is deploying fibre to the premise, ultrafast broadband direct from the exchange.

Airband Project Lead, Andy Brain, said he was pleased with the progress that has been made: "This first cluster stretches from Thame to Chinnor. We'll also be working on other clusters at the same time including the second cluster which goes from Henley-on-Thames to Lower Shiplake and Sonning Common and a third cluster from Childrey to Kingston Lisle, west of Wantage. We expect all of these clusters to be finished by June 2020 if not before."

The BiRO project is funded by £6.3m EAFRD funding through the Rural Broadband Infrastructure scheme to improve broadband for businesses in rural Oxfordshire and will provide ultrafast broadband to 970 SMEs across the region. The project is managed by the Oxfordshire County Council Digital Infrastructure programme in partnership with Airband.

SEVEN RECYCLING CENTRES TO CLOSE FOR SPRING CLEAN IN MARCH AND APRIL

This March and April seven of Oxfordshire County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres will be closing for two days to carry out a deep clean and essential maintenance. The work forms part of the council's planned approach to maintenance, and is designed to keep sites safe, looking clean and fresh and helping improve the customer experience when using these important environmental facilities. Only one site will be closed at any one time and all other sites will be open on those days. Residents are asked to plan for these closures, ideally holding on to waste until the site reopens or if that is not possible visiting one of the other sites.

Site closure dates:

Alkerton 3rd & 4th March 2020
Redbridge 10th & 11th March 2020
Ardley 17th & 18th March 2020
Dix Pit 24th & 25th March 2020
Oakley Wood 31st March – 1st April 2020
Stanford 21st & 22nd April 2020
Drayton 28th & 29th April 2020

For those residents with permits, please note that these can be used at any of the sites.

UPDATE ON THE YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES FUND

Voluntary and community organisations have been awarded a share of OCC's new £1m Youth Opportunity Fund. The fund is aimed at groups that can provide activities and opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-18, and 11-25 special educational needs. Feedback from Oxfordshire residents points to strong support for improving community-run youth services. This new fund was made available to help existing projects expand and new ones get started. The successful bids will now receive grants of up to £70,000 over the next few months. By offering start-up funding in previous years, the council has already helped many community-run groups provide support for younger children and families. Now the aim is to do the same for youth services. Community-run youth schemes complement the work of OCC's children's services, which target resources at young people and families with additional needs and those at risk of abuse and neglect. The council also has a desire for more youth clubs to be established.

BECOMING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COUNCIL

OCC is implementing plans to become a dementia-friendly organisation. The aim is to develop further awareness, understanding and support for vulnerable residents and staff who are impacted this condition. The number of people with dementia in the UK is expected to rise to 1m by 2021. About two in every 100 people aged between 65 to 69 have dementia, and this rises to one in five for those aged 85 to 89. Some people may develop dementia whilst still in employment; others will be combining work and a busy lifestyle with being a carer for a person with dementia. Therefore, awareness is key to understanding the lifestyle changes, choices and challenges that will occur with an individual's diagnosis. OCC aims to help people who live with dementia to stay independent for as long as possible. As the first step to becoming more dementia friendly, the Alzheimer's Society held an event for staff and councillors at County Hall on Tuesday 25 February to complete a 'dementia friends' training session to improve awareness and learn about dementia friendly communities in Oxfordshire. The next step in the plan is to help to develop dementia friendly communities across Oxfordshire to help to reduce isolation and support people to be aware of and understand dementia. This will enable people living with dementia to live well within their local communities for as long as they are able.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON

FMS WHITE LANE 1770645 (SOIL BUILD UP)

I have escalated this to officers and a Highways Inspector is due to report back.

FMS WHITE LANE 7740192 (OVERGROWN HEDGE AND MISSING GIVE WAY SIGN)

I have escalated this to officers and a Highways Inspector is due to report back.

VEHICLE ACTIVATED SPEED SIGNS

Having been assured by the clerk that there has been local consultation with favourable results, I agreed to contribute 2 x £500 towards the cost of two VAS devices from my Councillor Priority Fund. The clerk completed and submitted the application form in early February. I would be grateful for an update on progress.

DEER CROSSING ON THE NETTLEBED ROAD (A4130)

A resident has raised the issue deer crossing on the Nettlebed road (A4130). Other than erecting additional signage (if justified) there is little OCC can do to assist in this matter and the PC is advised to visit <https://www.deeraware.com/>