

# **REPORT TO BIX & ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL JUNE 2020 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW**

## **GENERAL OCC REPORT**

### **SCHOOLS PRIORITISE SAFETY, HYGIENE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING ‘**

Children will be taught in classrooms where safety, hygiene and social distancing are ‘absolute priorities.’ This is the message from OCC as schools carry out risk assessments in preparation for welcoming back more pupils in June. The council has delivered hundreds of thousands of personal protective equipment (PPE) items to Oxfordshire schools:

- IIR Masks: 151,000 (these are surgical, close contact, water resistant masks),
- Aprons: 181,000,
- Gloves: 121,000,
- Visors: 900,
- Sanitiser: 7,500 litres.

This PPE equipment will help schools manage an immediate response in the unlikely event of a pupil becoming unwell. In addition, support is being provided to over 900 early years providers regarding supplies of PPE. Since the lockdown began in March, 94% of Oxfordshire schools have remained open for children of key workers. In preparation for receiving more pupils back to the classroom, schools are now being asked to complete a risk assessment in conjunction with staff and union representatives. The risks and challenges will vary, so what works in one school may not work in another. This means that some schools will be able to welcome more children, or more year groups than others. Each school will act in the best interests of each child and family. Local testing arrangements are in place; and everyone over the age of five can access them if they have COVID-19 symptoms. The council is committed to supporting disadvantaged pupils; existing free school meals arrangements will continue.

### **CYCLEWAYS AND FOOTPATHS TO BE CLEARED AND REPAIRED**

Cyclists and walkers are set to benefit from a concerted plan of action to clear and prepare Oxfordshire’s network of cycleways and footpaths ready for the expected rises in demand as lockdown is very gradually relaxed. As the people of Oxfordshire look to return to work and school during the Summer, cycling and walking will become more important than ever – both offer zero emission ways to travel which will improve health and wellbeing as well as helping to address the need to keep socially distant. A recent survey of all 63 OCC Councillors found that the need to improve cycling infrastructure was a standout priority in terms of how Oxfordshire’s share of the government’s £250m Emergency Active Travel grant fund should be spent. Amongst other practical and quick to implement measures, such as improving signage and sweeping the busiest paths and cycle lanes, keeping vegetation under control and fixing surfaces feature in our immediate plans of work. This is all part of keeping the network safe to use for cyclists and pedestrians as lockdown restrictions ease but will also hopefully encourage more people to walk and cycle in the long term. OCC is developing a programme of work for the county’s city, urban, suburban and rural areas. In each case, the work will pay particular attention to narrower areas that might be widened for greater access. Paths where any surface improvement work will also be identified so repairs can be made. If people encounter any issues whilst out walking, cycling or riding on the path network then these can be reported or checked on OCC’s website. People can report a roadside vegetation problem, as well as other street problems, through our online reporting tool [Fixmystreet](#).

## **OCC TO EXTEND OPENING HOURS AT HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES**

OCC is to increase the opening hours at all HWRCs from Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May. The centres will now open at 8am and close at the later time of 5pm. This applies seven days a week. Please note that that late-night opening on Thursdays and the acceptance of trailers and hire vans remains suspended for the time being. The following are important points:

- Residents must self-police and abide by social distancing of two metres from site teams and other residents **at all times**.
- Residents must follow any instructions given by site teams to ensure queues and sites are managed safely
- Vehicle numbers and parking bays are reduced on site, and once the maximum is reached the site will operate on a one-out one-in basis. PLEASE NOTE the potential for delays and queues.
- OCC will continue to charge for non-household waste brought to sites and this will be **by contactless card payment only**.
- Site teams will be there for guidance only and will **not** be able to assist residents in unloading their waste.
- Only one resident is permitted out of the vehicle, unless it is to remove a heavy load which would otherwise be unsafe to remove. Visits are best made by just one person per vehicle.
- In line with Public Health England guidance, residents who are vulnerable, or who are showing symptoms which may indicate coronavirus, should not visit household recycling centres.
- Residents can check if a HWRC can deal with their material by using the online tool Waste Wizard: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/repair-reuse-or-recycle>

## **BOLD PLANS FOR TRANSPORT AS OCC PREPARES FOR THE “NEW NORMAL”**

Bold transport proposals are in the pipeline for Oxfordshire as the county joins the nation in gradually emerging from lockdown and preparing for the “new normal.” Innovative ideas have been identified by county councillors all over Oxfordshire in response to the Government’s national £250 million cash fund to implement changes to roads and transport networks. There’s set to be a focus on encouraging residents to walk and cycle, with the county council linking up with district councils, Oxford City Council and other partners on the work. In terms of longer-term recovery, the use of public transport will be encouraged as part of the county-wide strategy. Oxfordshire County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment Cllr Yvonne Constance and Cycling Champion Cllr Suzanne Bartington recently asked all 63 county councillors covering every part of the county for their ideas on what should be done. Enthusiastic responses were received as the council seeks to make sure that every town and village will benefit from how the funds are invested.

## **SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON**

### **READING TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2036 (INCLUDING THIRD READING BRIDGE)**

I emailed all clerks in my Division on 17<sup>th</sup> May to let you know that Reading is now consulting on its Transport Strategy 2036. Several proposals would have major impacts on South Oxfordshire including:

- North Reading Orbital Route (p97)
- A Third Thames crossing (see p98)
- North Reading Park and Rides (p111)

The consultation closes on 30 August and I urge you to respond here:

<https://consult.reading.gov.uk/dens/reading-transport-strategy-2036/>

In addition, you may also wish to email the Leader of OCC [ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **FMS WHITE LANE 1770645 (SOIL BUILD UP)**

Whilst not deemed to be an immediate or significant risk, a request has been placed with the District Council who are responsible for street cleansing to sweep the road and thus resolve the matter.

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

On inspection the hedgerows are not considered to be presenting a danger or an obstruction that would at this time warrant intervention from the County Council. Much of the hedgerow is private and without adequate just cause to notify the land owner to take action there is nothing further the County Council would consider doing at this time. Additionally, owing to the time of year the hedgerow is protected to a point for the nesting of birds. Should the situation become sufficiently worse the County Council would be happy to reconsider at that time. The hedgerows will continue to be monitored as a part of the routine highway inspection process.

A sign has been installed at the junction of White Lane with the B480. An inspection this morning confirms that it is in place and in good order. The matter is now hopefully satisfactorily resolved.

### **OLD CYCLE PATH AT BIX**

I have put the clerk in touch with the relevant OCC Cabinet Member to see if any funding is available for reinstating this path.

### **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 and copied me on a progress note to Jon Beale in May. Please advise if further assistance is required.