

## REPORT TO WEST HENDRED PARISH COUNCIL MAY 2020 FROM CLLR MIKE FOX-DAVIES

Following the past period of lock-down, this is the start of the New Normal!  
This report includes some items that may have been repeated in other arenas, but I have tried to exclude those regularly featured in the press.

### **New COVID-19 testing sites**

As part of the Department of Health & Social Care's (DHSC) intention to widen access to Covid-19 testing through Mobile Testing Units (MTUs) run by the military, Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TV LRF) has been working closely with each partner local authority to identify, select and develop suitable MTU sites. There are around 5 sites currently either operational or under active consideration in Oxfordshire. I'm pleased to say that the following sites have been approved by the Department of Health & Social Care as a Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) for Oxfordshire and its communities:

- Carterton Leisure Centre
- Chipping Norton New Street Car Park
- Didcot Civic Centre
- Banbury Bodicote House
- Bicester Village

Bookings for these testing sites will be managed in line with current DHSC guidance. Further information can be found at the .gov.uk site

### **Councillor Priority Fund update**

This week the council has paid **£6,675** in total to help support COVID-19 specific applications as agreed by councillors, with a running total of **£36,255** since the fund opened. This week we have fulfilled applications from

- A first steps families hub, helping families with children aged 0-5.
- Food provision and community support for a parish council and village charity.
- A youth club, providing support and entertainment for children and young people during lockdown

Our team is ready to process new applications as soon as they come in. The application form for the 20/21 Councillor Priority Fund and guidance on how to apply is on our website at [oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund](http://oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund).

### **Re-opening of Oxfordshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres**

Oxfordshire's HWRCs will **re-open on 18 May**. OCC want to manage their re-opening sensitively so the sites can operate safely, do not become overwhelmed or impact negatively on travel.

Please emphasise that Government guidance says that trips to an HWRC should only be made if 'essential' – that is if the waste cannot be stored safely without harm to health. The Government guidance states: "It would be reasonable for residents to

undertake a journey to a HWRC if the waste or recycling could not be stored safely at home or disposed of through other legitimate routes such as a dedicated collection. By this we mean that the waste/recycling could not be stored on their property without causing a risk of injury, health or harm to the resident or other members of their household or harm to public health and amenity."

OCC will begin a proactive communications to residents at the beginning of next week and a full list of FAQs is now live on our website: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastereopenquestions](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastereopenquestions). If you have any questions about the re-opening of Oxfordshire's HWRCs please contact the waste management team on [wastemanagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:wastemanagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **Road repairs still rolling**

Miles of Oxfordshire road are getting a new lease of life as work to deliver the county council's massive spring and summer list of repairs is continuing at pace. Having just completed 110 miles of surface dressing across the county, our road crews are now turning their attention to three structural patching projects at:

- Spring Lane, Watlington
- Manor Road, South Hinksey
- A417 Challow Road, Wantage

There is also a programme of safety schemes starting in mid-May to resurface the following roads:

- B4027 Milford Bridge
- B4030 Steeple Barton
- A4095 North Leigh (Boddington Lane)
- London Road, Wheatley
- Southwold Ln Rbt, Bicester
- A4185 Rowstock Rbt

Transport and Infrastructure work will be key to the country's economic recovery and this work is all part of the county council's promised [£32m repair pledge](#). Although the use of the roads has fallen dramatically in recent weeks, please remind your communities they can still report safety-related problems with public highways, such as potholes, directly to the county council via <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

### **Libraries open for online business**

While our library buildings may be closed, we want to remind residents our **digital library service** is very much open for business. We are offering 1000s of eBooks, eAudio, newspapers and magazines to borrow for free and we've even got a music streaming service, with over 60,000 albums. Residents can get involved and discover everything on offer at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries). We'd also encourage them to head over to our [Oxfordshire Libraries' Facebook](#) page for our weekly Bloomin' good book club and songs and stories to entertain the younger members of the family from our fantastic library service team.

## **Refreshed coronavirus webpages and new easy read COVID-19 guide**

The county council's [coronavirus webpages](#) have been transformed to provide a more accessible hub of information. The new look pages are easier to navigate and provide up-to-date information.

## **Local Economy and Business**

District and City Council colleagues are continuing to work incredibly hard to communicate and action the significant changes that are being developed by Government to support residents, the economy and businesses through COVID-19.

A recent key focus for our district council and city council colleagues has been on actively contacting businesses that are yet to submit their details for grant support in response to COVID-19, including those who already receive 100 percent rate relief. If you are aware of any business that may benefit from funding support and has yet to apply, please point them towards the local council website. Here they can find more information, confirm their eligibility for a Business Grant and apply.

Quick links are below:

- [Cherwell District Council](#)
- [Oxford City Council](#)
- [South Oxfordshire District Council](#)
- [Vale of White Horse District Council](#)
- [West Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Self-employed people in urgent need of financial assistance are being advised by the Government to apply for Universal Credit and Council Tax Reduction. This will provide them with support until a grant for the self-employed becomes available in June.

## **Scam awareness for business**

At a time when Oxfordshire businesses are already facing challenges posed by COVID-19, the proliferation of related scams directly targeting business are adding further strain. We are supporting ***Businesses Against Scams***, a new element of the successful **Friends Against Scams** initiative, run by National Trading Standards. They provide free online training to protect and prevent businesses, employees and customers from becoming victims of scams. Please help us to promote this initiative [www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/)

## **Full Council**

Democracy in Oxfordshire has passed a **landmark moment** with committee meetings being staged electronically for the first time ever and our first virtual Full Council meeting took place on **Monday 4 May at 10:30** through MS Teams.