

Annual Report to the Faringdon Division (Buckland with Gainfield, Littleworth, Faringdon, Lt Coxwell, Gt Coxwell, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Buscot with Buscot Wick

The last 12 months have been busy and interesting. I have travelled within the county some 6300 miles and attended over 50 statutory meetings this last year – Full Cabinet, Cabinet Member Delegated Decisions (each member of Cabinet has the delegated power within the constitution to make decisions within their portfolio – the public can attend and speak), Performance Scrutiny – as an observer, Health Overview & Scrutiny as a substitute for the Leader, Oxfordshire, OCC Employees Joint Consultative Committee – a closed meeting with union members and elected members, OCC Fire Service Joint Committee – a closed meeting with the Fire Brigades Union and elected members, Audit and Governance as an observer, Remuneration Committee a closed meeting, Thames Valley Fire Control Service – Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service are also represented on this committee, and finally the Thames Valley Collaboration Board which has an elected member from RBFRRS/BMFRS/OFRS and representatives from South Central Ambulance and Thames Valley Police sitting on the board.

I have attended an eclectic mix of meetings apart from the statutory ones and these have included: Political Group Leaders, Informal Cabinet, I have chaired a working group on Governance Review and on the Corporate Plan Review. I meet with Unison and Fire Brigade Union reps and I visit our staff at the Fire Stations across the county accompanied by senior officers from the fire service. I attend Strategic Leaders Team meetings which is made up of senior fire staff from the Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire officers and some dozen other senior staff and this is held in fire stations across the county.

My Cabinet portfolio of Community Safety means I have responsibility for: Governance and Internal management, HR & industrial relations, policy co-ordination, customer services, Fire & Rescue, Trading Standards, Emergency Planning, Gypsy and Travellers, and the Prevent agenda. I have 1:1 meetings with all the senior officers from these areas on a monthly basis to ensure that I'm up to date, and free discussion at these 1:1's can take place on policy and strategy. I have undertaken an eclectic mix of local radio and TV interviews covering subject meeting relating to the Gypsy and Traveller communities, Blue Badge Parking Permits and Trading Standards with particular reference to "weight restriction limits" on our rural bridge systems in the county and the illicit sale of cheap counterfeit tobacco. The latter one concerns me particularly as the cheapness of the sales of these tobacco products encourage young people to smoke a habit which is of course damaging to health.

The Faringdon Division has challenges being both urban and rural in setting. The Division consists of Buckland with Gainfield, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth and Lt Coxwell and thus has both urban and rural concerns from rural isolation, social problems and deprivation across the piece. I attend both Parish Council and Town Council meetings within the Division. I write a monthly report which is split into two parts, the first a general report giving up to date news within the County and a second part specifically for the Faringdon Division.

I also substitute for Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Leader of the County Council at “outside” meetings and have attended the Growth Board (both as a substitute and an observer), the Oxford Strategic Partnership, Partnership Working on Regulatory Services with Cherwell, Staff Induction Ceremony, County Council’s Network, Health & Wellbeing Board Meeting, the Partnership Working on Regulatory Services with Cherwell and I have chaired, on his behalf, Informal Cabinet and full Cabinet meetings.

I have laid a wreath at the annual service of Remembrance for the Firefighters Memorial Trust held in London. This service has taken place at St Pauls, St Bartholomew Without, and this year it is in May at the Holy Sepulchre London. There are many hundreds of people attending this occasion, from active fire service personnel, to retired, to British Isles personnel to representatives from the rest of the world. We parade through the streets and lay our wreaths of Remembrance at the Fire Services Cenotaph which is a very striking piece of sculpture just across the road from St Pauls.

I travel up to London to attend the LGA Fire Commission meetings which gives me the opportunity to meet other councillors who have within their portfolios, the fire service.

The last budget it was agreed that for the financial years of 2018-19 and 2019-2020 there should be a fund called the “County Councillors Community Fund”. This fund gives each County Councillor a total of £30,000 to spend in their Divisions or allows councillors to join up with colleagues to “pool” these monies. This last year I have supported the following schemes:-

Buckland purchase of salt bins, Lt Coxwell monies to support their playing field, and the construction of a “self-help” project to renovate a footpath, Faringdon Town Council grants for the Pump House Project and for the Faringdon Museum, the Oxfordshire Play Association, Coleshill monies for the renovation of their war memorial and Gt Coxwell for the renovation of their war memorial and monies towards the repairs required for their Reading Room. I already have applications for this financial year!

I prepare and circulate a monthly report – a report split into two parts – part 1 for the County Council’s monthly news and part 2 for a specific report on the Faringdon Division – this is circulated to a great number of people. I also attend Parish Council meetings in my Division and hold a monthly surgery in the Faringdon Library on the first Saturday monthly. I am also contactable on 01367 241468 or Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

I thoroughly enjoy my busy life and can state that my portfolio of work reaches out to all the communities of Oxfordshire and particularly those who live in my Division of Faringdon.

Judy