

**REPORT TO THE FARINGDON DIVISION (Buckland, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gainfield, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth and Lt Coxwell) OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2018
FROM CLLR Judith Heathcoat**

GENERAL OCC REPORT

IN ALL TYPES OF WEATHER OCC CREWS ARE OUT REPAIRING THE ROADS

Earlier this year OCC put an extra £10m into fixing the roads – effectively doubling the amount of money invested in repairs – and crews are out and about every day in all types of weather doing the job. Their work has already resulted in £1.6m worth of surface dressing with around 33km of roads being surfaced. Work is also under way on a £700,000 programme of surfacing sealing projects around the county. As well as the extra cash which is going into some larger projects, the county council has also increased the amount of relatively small-scale work it does to put right local roads that are suffering from potholes, cracks and worn out tarmac. The number of completed defect repairs between January and September this year is 35,127.

SALTING, GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARANCE

OCC is committed to keeping the network of major roads free from ice to minimise the risk of accidents and ensure the smooth flow of traffic. Precautionary salting (sometimes called 'gritting') helps achieve this aim. OCC usually salts between 2 November and 5 April. Live updates can be found here:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/salting-and-snow-clearance>

Details about how community groups can request salt bins can be found here:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/salt-and-grit-bins>

COUNCIL TO INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE & REDUCE RUNNING COSTS

Plans to completely overhaul the county council were given the go-ahead by the county council's Cabinet on 16 October. They agreed a major investment in digital technology to improve customer service and reduce council running costs. The redesigned council will enable residents to report faults or book appointments online, freeing up staff time to help to service users who cannot go online or have complex care needs. Staff will be given the tools they need to do a better job and spend more time on delivering services to residents. Outdated ICT systems make it hard to join up services and will be replaced, with admin tasks automated to save money and make the council run more smoothly. The changes will support the county council's long-term vision of 'thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire'. The redesign is also needed to secure the council's long-term financial stability as demand for services continues to rise – particularly for children and adult social care.

OCC TRADING STANDARDS & POLICE CONDUCT OPERATION ROGUE TRADER

Rogue traders and aggressive doorstep sellers were targeted during October by OCC Trading Standards as part of ongoing work to protect residents and business people. Working in collaboration with Thames Valley Police, Operation Rogue Trader aims to stop rogue business practices and raise awareness of the dangers linked to hiring cold-callers. Fourteen Trading Standards staff and around 30 police travelled around the county when 67 traders were approached and checked; ten warning letters were issued; five waste offenders were fined by district councils; and an overloaded vehicle was investigated along with seven doorstep crime offences and two police offences. In Henley four traders were checked; three warning letters were issued to traders for not providing 'cancellation rights' to residents; and there were three offences for carrying waste without a licence. In Witney 11 traders were checked; and two warning letters issued to traders for not providing 'cancellation rights' to residents. Those who suspect someone of being a rogue trader, or find themselves accosted by uninvited doorstep sellers should contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506.

BOOST FOR A 'FULL FIBRE' FUTURE IN OXFORDSHIRE

Hundreds of businesses and homes across Oxfordshire are set to benefit from faster internet connections, following the launch of the UK Government's nationwide Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS). The £67m investment is in addition to the £200m allocated to the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme, and will provide future-proof full fibre connections for businesses and the residential communities around them. It follows a successful pilot scheme launched in four areas around the country late last year, which has already seen nearly 1,000 vouchers used up to date. ThinkBroadband statistics show that 8% of homes and businesses in Oxfordshire already have a full fibre internet connection. Superfast broadband reaches almost 97% of premises, and even-quicker ultrafast broadband covers 51.3% of the county. The vouchers, worth up to £3,000 for a SME and £500 for a resident, provide a one-off contribution to subsidise the installation cost of gigabit-capable infrastructure. In addition to providing a boost to the 95% of the UK that can already get superfast speeds (24Mbps or faster), the vouchers could also help those not yet able to do so, helping to narrow the diminishing digital divide even further. The scheme launched at the end of March 2018 and will run until March 2021 or until all available funding has been allocated. For more information visit <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>.

CARERS CAN SHOW BADGE FOR A FREE JAB

Flu season is coming and the army of front line carers across Oxfordshire are being urged to make having a free jab a key priority. More than 8,500 staff employed in residential care, nursing homes or with registered domiciliary care providers, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable people, are entitled to a free flu jab. Keeping this

valuable workforce fit and well is essential to easing winter pressures across the county's health and social care system. Being immunised not only reduces the chances of carers themselves and their families becoming unwell, it also means that the health of the most vulnerable people in Oxfordshire's communities is not compromised. The flu is not the same as getting a cold. It can seriously affect an individual's health and the risks of developing complications are greater for people within the 'at-risk' groups – for example the over 65s and those with medical conditions like heart, lung and kidney diseases, diabetes, asthma and multiple sclerosis. Healthy individuals usually recover within two to seven days, but for some influenza can lead to a stay in hospital, permanent disability or even death. All workers across the NHS will get flu jabs – meaning the immunisation of the whole health and social care workforce will make the system more resilient. As well as workers in social care settings, anyone who receives a carers allowance, or is the main carer for an elderly or disabled person, is eligible for a free vaccination; all they have to do is present their ID badge to a pharmacist or GP surgery.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR THE FARINGDON DIVISION

On Monday 1st October I was invited as the County Councillor for Faringdon to attend the licensing of The Revd Jason St John Nicolle as Area Dean and The Revd Jeremy Goulston as Assistant Area Dean of the Deanery of Vale of White Horse by The Rt Revd Colin Fletcher OBE Bishop of Dorchester. The service was held in All Saints Church, Faringdon. The Mayor of Faringdon also attended – we both invited to welcome both Jason and Jeremy to the Deanery.

The Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has been undergoing a rigorous examination/inspection by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service over the last few weeks on Friday 18th October the team met at the OFRS HQ in Kidlington for a strategic briefing. The Senior Officers, CFO and 2 ACFO's gave detailed and very professional presentations on the fire service and fire service delivery in Oxfordshire – these took all morning and then the HMICFRS met with me. Week beginning 29th October the inspectorate team returned and inspected named fire stations. The report from HMICFRS will not be sent to us until spring next year. The OFRS provides a superb service for Oxon, and thus the Faringdon Division benefits from – "Safe and Well Visits", body collection for the county's Coroner, supporting Cadets, supporting Junior Citizens, tree removal, rescuing people from road traffic accidents (RTC's), inspection of commercial premises. Within the Community Safety umbrella, the CFO has responsibility for Trading Standards and Gypsy and Travellers Service – all of this of course falls within my own Cabinet Portfolio.

Safe and Well Visits = vulnerable people within the community have house visits to ensure safety within the home and any social care issues are reported back to Adult Social Care.

Body Collection – a service provided by our fire service on behalf of the Oxfordshire Coroner's Service.

Cadets – there are 6 units across the County – I have been to drill nights for these groups where they learn many skills.

Junior Citizens – OCC is the corporate Trustee – this group sees year 6 pupils from across the county to teach personal safety. The courses are FOC at delivery – schools pay for the transport to the Junior Citizens Safety Centre at the fire station in Rewley Road, Oxford. Some 6,000 year 6 students attend these courses.

I have attended a "Ladies Taster Day" at Didcot Fire Station on Saturday 20th October. A day for women to have a "taster" on what being a firefighter is all about. OFRS are exceptionally keen to draw in more females and to broaden the diversity within the service. I would advise that Faringdon does have females within their crews!!

On 31st October, I was invited to attend the opening of the "Wilson" building at the Faringdon Community College. This was a delightful event and one close to my own heart, having served for some considerable time as a Governor previously, attended the Academy's presentation evenings over many years and generally been involved "behind the scenes" in the development of the Academy from a local County Councillor perspective with regard to planning permissions etc. It has gone from strength to strength and this was due in no small part to David Wilson, Colin Proffitt and the dedicated team of staff both academics and support staff on site who have not only maintained and maintained the academic excellence but, also ensured the resilience and self-confidence of the students.

I have handled my case work as usual this month and through the month met with local people to discuss concerns or problems. I shall be holding my surgery on Saturday 3rd November in the Faringdon Library, and there will be a surgery on Saturday 1st December. There will be no surgery on Saturday 5th January. If you are unable to come to my surgery, you can reach me on 01367 241468, or 01865 815284 – County Council office, or on Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Judith Heathcoat
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