

**REPORT TO FARINGDON DIVISION (Buckland with Gainfield, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth with Thrupp and Wadley and Little Coxwell) November 2020**

All that is detailed within my monthly report is in the public domain and thus in the media. My monthly report is a document of varied information which will be of interest both to local Town/Parish Councillors, residents and rate payers. The report provides local news and a wider picture of the strategic work that Oxfordshire County Council undertakes and thus involves me both as your local County Councillor and as Deputy Leader for the County Council. Most of the strategic work will have implications locally and thus is “useful” for the local town and parish councillors.

The Government has confirmed that **Oxfordshire will move into the high COVID-19 alert level (tier 2) from Wednesday 2 December**. This means changes to the rules around working, socialising and running a business. Until that date, the national lockdown restrictions remain in place.

From 12.01am on 2 December, the following will apply:

- People must not meet socially with anybody outside their household or support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place.
- People must not meet in a group of more than six outside, including in a garden or other space.
- Non-essential shops can reopen, as can personal care businesses such as hairdressers, gyms and the wider leisure sector. All businesses and venues that reopen must ensure that COVID-secure measures are in place.
- Hospitality venues will be allowed to stay open until 11pm – with last orders at 10pm. However, only those that serve substantial meals can operate, and alcohol can only be served with substantial meals.
- Collective worship, weddings and outdoor sports can resume, with restrictions in place.
- Everyone who can work from home should continue to do so.

**Trading Standards: Sale of illegal cigarettes.**

This last month at Oxford Crown Court, Jacek Mazurek, Sylwia Jablonska and Malgorzata Gerwatowska pleaded guilty to a range of offences relating to the sale of illegal tobacco, connected to Witney Polish Deli Ltd, Corn Street, Witney. OCC's Trading Standards Service executed Warrants at 3 addresses in Witney and as a result, over 24,000 illegal cigarettes was seized (6,000 were later found to be counterfeit), along with mobile phones and business documentation. Sentencing is currently expected to be the 5th of January. The sale of illegal tobacco is a criminal offence which can result in imprisonment and unlimited fines. Anyone wishing to report the selling of illegal tobacco can do so anonymously online to Trading Standards at [www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk](http://www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk) or call the Illegal Tobacco Hotline on 0300 999 6 999. I tell you of this success to bring to the fore not only the illegal side of these actions but also remind everyone that smoking is harmful to health smoking remains one of the UK's biggest causes of premature death. We also know that the availability of cheap, illegal tobacco helps recruit the next generation of smokers and undermines initiatives to help adults quit smoking. **My press release stated** “This illegal activity brings crime into our neighbourhoods. That's why it is so important to clamp down on it. It also has an impact on those legitimate businesses that are trading lawfully, putting them at a commercial disadvantage by criminals peddling their illicit wares.”

**Safety Messages:-**

**Chimney Maintenance** - with the colder weather the fire service are being called out to chimney fires. Can I remind people to have their chimneys swept ideally prior to the onset of the winter. I have seen homes completely destroyed from chimney fires.

**Disposal of ash** - Improper ash removal from fireplaces and wood burning stoves cause many fires every year. Hot coals can stay hot for up to four days when they insulated by a pile of ash.

- Store ash and hot coals in a metal container that can be tightly closed with a metal lid. This helps keep air from blowing through and disturbing the ashes which can leave hot coals exposed for re-ignition.
- Wet ashes prior to closing the metal lid.
- Do not store your metal ash container inside the house, on a timber deck, in a garage, in a shed or in any location that may allow heat to transfer from hot coals to nearby flammable items.
- Never empty ashes into:
  - a paper or plastic bag

- cardboard box
- or other similar containers
- Never place hot ashes in your wheelie bin.
- Leave the ashes in the container for several days before disposing of them.
- Wood ash, once completely cooled can safely be disposed of in your garden because natural firewood ash makes a great additive that your plants will enjoy. Make sure you remove any mulching material such as dried leaves and other dried plants first, so there is nothing to catch fire in your garden.

**Libraries** and other cultural services in Oxfordshire are set to reopen once the national lockdown ends on December 2. All of the 32 libraries and 3 heritage sites that had opened before the November lockdown will reopen again. There's also further good news in that the 12 libraries that had not reopened since the initial lockdown in March 2020 will be opened during January and February 2021. However, Libraries will close on December 24 at 4pm for the Christmas period but Banbury, Witney, Henley, Abingdon, will also open 29, 30, 31 December.

The Oxfordshire Museum, the Museum Resource Centre in Standlake and History Centre in Cowley will also reopen on December 2. The Oxfordshire Museum will then close during the Christmas period from Monday 21 December 2020 to Wednesday 6 January 2021. The History Service will close to the public Thursday 24 December 2020 12.30 pm and re-open Tuesday 5 January 2021.

**Apprenticeships – Faringdon!** Rugby-loving Emily Rothwell has been taking the next steps in tackling a career in adult social care after securing an apprenticeship with the help of Oxfordshire County Council. Emily, who is 17 and from Faringdon, had always been interested in a career in social care but didn't know where to start until she attended her school's careers fair last year. Now she's urging others who may be thinking about a career in social care to take the plunge. I wish her lots of success in her chosen career!

**Flu Vaccination-** There's still plenty of time to get vaccinated against the flu this winter

[Read more on the county's website](#)

Carers and frontline health and social care staff are reminded of the importance of ensuring that they get their flu jab at the earliest possible opportunity this winter.

In light of the risk of flu and COVID-19 co-circulating this winter, the national flu immunisation programme will be absolutely essential to protecting vulnerable people and supporting the resilience of the health and care system. "Flu is not the same as getting a cold. It can seriously affect your health and the risks of developing complications are greater for some people. Healthy individuals usually recover within two to seven days, but for some the disease can lead to a stay in hospital, permanent disability or even death.

"With the added risk of COVID-19, it's more important than ever that those who work in health and social care, or those with caring duties get vaccinated."

Those eligible for a free NHS vaccination, should contact their local GP or pharmacy. Some Oxfordshire pharmacies offer a bookable and walk-in service, with costs ranging between £13 to £15 for those not eligible for a free vaccination.

**Parking in Oxford leading up to Christmas** - Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council are providing free parking at Oxford's five park and ride sites from Saturday 5 December until Sunday 27 December, to support businesses and help reduce congestion and by making parking free all week at all five sites, they aim to reduce peak-time congestion on routes into the city and around city centre car parks. The councils are also asking people who plan to use the service to travel outside peak times if possible.

Oxfordshire will be in the high alert level (tier 2) from Wednesday 2 December, when lockdown ends. The government has updated its safe travel advice, including for those walking, cycling, and travelling in vehicles or on public transport. You can read the latest advice [online](#).

Oxford Bus Company, which operates services from the five park and ride sites – Pear Tree, Redbridge, Seacourt, Thornhill and Oxford Parkway – is supporting the initiative by running a '£4.80 per car maximum charge' promotion. This will mean that any more than two adults in the same car will get their bus journey for free. Children will go for free too.

Motorists will be kept up to date with car park closure developments through the @OxonTravel Twitter account, media updates and signage at 11 locations around the city. The TTRO is expected to remain in place until early in the new year.

Anyone with mobility impairments can use the disabled parking bays situated at off-street car parks around the city centre, with additional disabled parking bays in Albion Place, St Ebbes Street and Littlegate Street.

### **New speeding taskforce group aims to save lives**

**Read the story on the Oxfordshire County Council [website](#), or below:**

Residents will be given more of a say on how to stop drivers speeding in their neighbourhoods, thanks to a new organisation set up to tackle the problem in Oxfordshire.

The speeding taskforce group is a joint initiative involving Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Thames Valley Police and the Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner. Announced to coincide with Road Safety Week, its aims include educating drivers about the dangers of breaking the speed limit and helping communities to tackle the issue. This may involve more enforcement from Thames Valley Police or the County Council changing the layout of roads or reducing speed limits in areas, but the key point of this group is to bring us together so we can start to have these conversations and focus on the changes needed so we can save lives."

The speeding taskforce group is made up of C/Cllr Walker, Paul Fermer (Oxfordshire County Council's Assistant Director of Community Operations), Matt Barber (Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley), Superintendent Colin Hudson (Head of Roads Policing Unit for Thames Valley Police) and Andy Ford (Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's Road Safety Manager).

**The Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner, said:** "Speeding and road safety is a legitimate concern for almost every community in the Thames Valley. By taking a strategic approach, which involves improving "Community Speedwatch", more targeted, intelligence-led police enforcement and safer road management by councils, we can cut speeding, reassure communities and, ultimately, save lives."

Initial virtual meetings have been held to identify how the different organisations can share data about key accident and speeding hotspots. The group wants to focus on more awareness campaigns, alerting drivers to the effects and consequences of speeding and giving the issue as much attention as drink-driving or not wearing a seatbelt.

It also aims to support communities that want to help tackle speeding by ensuring they have the support to set up Community Speedwatch groups in their area to monitor motorists who break the limits.

### **Local contact tracing helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Oxfordshire**

[Read more on our website](#)

More than 500 residents have been successfully reached and had their contacts identified by Oxfordshire's local COVID-19 contact tracing system since it was launched in mid-October – making a crucial contribution to #StopTheSpread across the county. "The 500 local residents that have been reached may not otherwise have been contacted and, without the local contact tracing team, they and their contacts may have gone on to spread the virus during October and November. The scheme is a partnership between the six Oxfordshire councils, Public Health England, NHS Test and Trace and Oxford's two universities. The NHS Test and Trace national system initially tries to contact all cases in the county but where they are unable to reach someone within 24 hours, the case passes to Oxfordshire's local contact tracing team. The local Oxfordshire County Council call handlers first try to reach a case by phone. But where they are unable to get through, trained staff from the city and district councils visit cases at home to speak with cases and deliver letters explaining why the council

is trying to get in touch and asking people to contact the call centre. Once contacted they are advised to isolate, talked through how to access local support when isolating and asked about details of their close contacts so these can then be followed up by the national NHS Test and Trace team and the service has been running seven days a week, with calls coming from the council using a local (01865) phone number. Text messages and emails are also sent to people with mobile phones and email addresses telling them to expect a call.

Adam added: "The extra layer of protection that the contact tracing system has provided has been valuable and it will continue to be an extra tool in the fight against the virus as we enter winter. We are very pleased with how it has been operating since its launch.

"If you are contacted, it will be a locally based person on the other end of the phone. They will talk to you about what you need to do to protect your friends and family whilst isolating and about what support is available nearby.

"The overall aim is simple – to limit the transmission of COVID-19. By isolating when you have symptoms, getting a test and picking up the phone when we call, we will give ourselves an even better chance to #stopthespread.

"Oxfordshire will be moving into tier 2 local restrictions on Wednesday when national lockdown is lifted. Our aim is to reduce case numbers still further so that we can be moved down to tier 1 as soon as possible."

The government decides which areas of the country are allowed to launch local test and trace systems based on various criteria including the number of local cases being reported. Oxfordshire was given approval to launch its local system on 13 October and was one of the first in the south-east to go live.

Since the Covid Pandemic started, I have not held a surgery but I can be reached via [Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or on 01367 241468. I am happy to meet people as long as the meeting is Covid compliant.

Can I wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and New Year. This year has been very challenging and I should like to thank everyone, Parish Councillors, Town Councillors District Councillors, Clerks and members of our communities who have ensured that everyone is supported as best as possible. Thank you.

Judy

Judith Heathcoat, C/Clr Faringdon Division  
Deputy Leader of Oxfordshire County Council and Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Regulatory Services

1 December 2020