

REPORT TO FARINGDON DIVISION (Buckland with Gainfield, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth with Tubney and Little Coxwell) – April-May 2020

For information, all that is detailed within my reports is within the public domain and thus in the media. My monthly report is a document of varied information which will be of interest both to locally elected Parish Councillors and to residents and rate payers of my Division. The report provides both a local news update 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. Much of the strategic work will have implications locally and thus is “useful” for everyone.

This report is a resume of all the work that is being undertaken at County Hall this last month which I have been involved in either directly or indirectly as your local member.

The month of April has been a busy month with many 1:1 briefings with officers together with virtual meetings across the council. With the benefit of virtual meetings I can attend meetings that had I been commuting between venues would have been physically impossible to attend!

I have virtual/electronic meetings with the senior officers of OFRS in my Cabinet Role of Community Safety. The Chief, Deputy and Assistant Chief Fire Officers brief me on a weekly basis and I attend the “Live with Fire – Gold” where all OFRS firefighters are able to contribute to ask questions of the senior officers. As Deputy Leader I am briefed on strategic matters relating to Business Management, Staffing by the Deputy CEO, the Head of HR and the Monitoring Officer.

Meetings that I have attended this last month – all being electronic using Microsoft Teams:-

Political Cabinet

General Informal Cabinet

Informal Cabinet Meetings specifically relating to COVID-19

Political Group Leaders -where subject matter has covered, Health/Testing Social Care/HR updates and Recovery for OCC after “Lockdown”.

Full Council –OCC has led the way, holding its first full council meeting on 4th May!

Appointments Board for the Director of Children, Education and Families

Unison

Conservative Councils Network

LGA – the Secretary of State and the Minister of Housing, Communities & Local Government were present

1:1 with the Leader

Council Briefing with the Chairman/Political Group Ldrs, CEO and Monitoring Officer

A420 Briefing for myself and Cllrs Constance and FitzGerald O'Connor

Telephone Conference call with Matt Parr HMIC FRS (Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service.

Senior Leaders Team Mtg for OFRS

Case Work which has included a concerns relating to Domestic Violence, housing benefit, and fraudsters targeting the old and vulnerable.

As you may be aware the OFRS firefighters have volunteered to support South Central Ambulance Service with their response to emergency calls and will drive ambulances in an unusual shake-up to relieve pressure on paramedics during the coronavirus outbreak. There has been praise for the quality of the FF's driving skills from SCAS!

I am sad to report that road workers have been subject to abuse whilst carrying out repairs during the coronavirus lockdown – I find this particularly disturbing as these staff are working under difficult conditions ensuring that whilst they work they recognise the “social distancing” that is required.

I have led on a press release asking Businesses in Oxfordshire to be vigilant against scams and fraud, malicious email attachments, false government grant phone calls and CEO impersonation scams are among a raft of scams undermining businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Oxfordshire County Council is supporting *Businesses Against Scams* – an initiative from National Trading Standards; with a free online training tool to protect businesses, employees and customers from costly scams. when Oxfordshire businesses are already facing challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, the proliferation of related scams are adding further strain. This includes scams directly

targeting businesses – such as tax refund frauds – which can lead to significant financial losses for businesses.

Scams targeting customers also undermine businesses, causing reputational damage and potential loss of custom. The emotional and mental impact on employees and business owners who have fallen victim to a scam can also be devastating and long-lasting. The increased risk for businesses has led National Trading Standards to encourage more businesses to join *Businesses Against Scams*. The initiative provides free tools for businesses to help upskill and train their workforce that will help staff identify and prevent potential scams. Businesses can take the training and sign up at: www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/BAS.

Testing now available for farmers - All farmers and members of their households who are showing symptoms of coronavirus will now be able to get tested.

Testing has been extended to all essential workers in the country which includes those involved in food production and processing as well as vets.

Essential workers can book an appointment on the Government's website, and can then choose to visit one of more than 30 drive-through testing sites, or receive a home testing kit.

For more information, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

Can I thank you all, across the whole Division for all your hard work supporting each other in your communities it has been very humbling to learn of the help that is being given by individual groups and individuals to those in need. Do please keep safe and well.

My usual surgeries are suspended during the current epidemic, but, if you wish to contact me my phone number is 01367 241468 and my email is Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Judy

Judith Heathcoat

Deputy Leader to the Council,

Cabinet Member for Community Safety

Oxfordshire County Council

Cllr. Faringdon Division (Buckland with Gainfield, Littleworth, Faringdon, Eaton Hastings,

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For information on COVID- 19 visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus

