

REPORT TO FARINGDON DIVISION (Buckland with Gainfield, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth with Tubney and Little Coxwell) –July/August 2020

For information, all that is detailed within my monthly reports is already 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 the 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 the local town and parish councillors.

During July the Leader, Cllr Ian Hudspeth, of OCC was unwell and required a stay at the JR. I have deputised for him and I am pleased to say that he is now back home recuperating. However, as part of his recovery he is cutting back on some of his workload and I shall be taking on some of this in his stead. I shall chair Political Cabinet, Informal Cabinet, pre-Cabinet meetings, attend the Growth Board and substitute for the Leader at the majority of the national strategic meetings such as the County Councillors Network - CCN.

Full Council - on 14th July I deputised for the Leader and presented his amended motion regarding Devolution and Recovery. There had been some misunderstanding to the original motion by the Leader mentioning next year's elections. The reason the Leader had mentioned the elections was to highlight to Government the need to work at speed as we move into the recovery phase. However, the Leader had amended his motion (prior to becoming ill), which removed the reference to the elections this meant the motion received unanimous support across the council. This now gives Cllr Hudspeth the mandate to work with not just our Local Government colleagues but all public sector areas to rebuild a better Oxfordshire that continues to deliver vital services for our residents but more importantly reduces the inequalities that currently exist. There is no point in returning to the way we were as we need to recognise new ways of working for the benefit of our residents.

Cabinet – on 21st July, I deputised again for the Leader and Chaired Cabinet. The most important item on the agenda was a paper titled “Growth Board – revision of “Terms of Reference” and “Memorandum of Understanding”. This paper is being brought to all the councils in Oxfordshire to each Cabinet and Executive. Work commenced on reviewing the TOR's and the MoU of the GB to ensure that it was fit for purposed in September 2019. The Cabinet agreed to the paper. The District Councils of West, Cherwell, South and City have agreed the revisions and it will be before VWHDC on 7th August.

Active Travel – Tranch 2 - This bid for funding must be submitted by 7th August. I bid for not only 20 mph speed limits throughout the villages in my Division as I saw this as a good way to encourage cycling and walking within the villages but also for cycle racks at bus stops on the S6 the premier bus route that runs through the entirety of my Division. This would help those who live in the villages where there is no public transport – cycle to a bus stop deposit ones cycle there and go off to work! Unfortunately, the guidelines from the DfT do not allow the funds to be used in this way and are aimed at more urban schemes, the Leader has written to ask for the guidelines to be changed to allow local determination of how funds are spent with special note that Oxfordshire is a rural county.

Libraries - We continue to re-open libraries in a phased manner ensuring that the safety of staff and customers is our first consideration, all buildings have to be made Covid-19 proof and the admittance of the general public will be limited in number to ensure social distancing within each library. I am currently seeking an update on the re-furbishment timetable of the Faringdon Library and when this work is to commence – of course Covid-19 has delayed this programme!

Trading Standards - A retailer in Challow whose employee sold a knife to a 16-year-old in December 2019 has pleaded guilty following a prosecution brought by Oxfordshire County Council's Trading

Standards Service. Haynes of Challow Limited pleaded guilty to a single offence under S141A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 at Oxford Magistrates' Court. The Court heard that on 17 December 2019, Trading Standards made a test purchase of a Stanley knife from Haynes of Challow with the assistance of a 16-year-old volunteer from the Fire Cadets.

The press release is as follows:- "Councillor Judith Heathcoat, the County Council's Cabinet Member for Community Safety said: "Anyone who sells age-restricted-products must ensure that their staff are adequately trained and prepared to request a valid form of identity, when appropriate. We have all seen the tragic consequences of what happens when there are confrontations between people wielding knives. All too often those involved are under 18. One way of stopping such awful incidents occurring is for business to take sufficient steps to prevent knives being supplied to children in the first place".

If anyone has information about the illegal sale of knives, alcohol or cigarettes to people under 18 you should contact Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **0808 223 1133** or by email: TradingStandards@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

May I thank you all for what you have done and continue to do on behalf of our communities as Covid-19 has been very demanding. It has been an exceptionally challenging time for all of us, County Councillors, District Councillors, Town and Parish Councillors, Partners, volunteers, health and social care workers and the staff running our stores to ensure that there is food to buy – many of these staff – delivery personnel and those working directly in the shops have been working in challenging conditions. Thank you everyone!

I hope that you have a restful August, and enjoy a staycation, or perhaps a holiday abroad – most of all keep safe as Covid-19 is still with us.

Judith Heathcoat

C/Cllr Faringdon Division

Deputy Leader Oxfordshire County Council

August 2020