

County Councillor report

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Parishes: Blewbury, Chilton, Harwell, Upton, Western Valley

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Dear Parish Councillors and residents,

Over the last few weeks, I've had a short period away, so thank you to those who've patiently waited to hear back from me. I really appreciate your understanding; I'm working steadily through messages and queries and will respond as quickly as I can.

I hope everyone had a restful Easter period. Working in higher education, I was fortunate to have a full week off, which gave me the opportunity to catch up on council duties and some important pieces of work that have been moving forward over recent months.

One significant development this month has been the opening meeting of the review panel examining the circumstances around the forced academisation of an Oxfordshire SEND school. I was asked to chair this panel. The review will look carefully at what happened, how decisions were reached, and whether there were shortcomings in process or communication. If any families or staff have been affected by the situation at Woodeaton and would like to contribute, please do get in touch — I am keen that the panel hears from as broad a range of experiences as possible.

A large part of the last couple of weeks has also been taken up with emails, calls and meetings with officers in relation to highways issues across the division.

After first raising concerns on 3rd March, the problematic lane markings at the Milton Interchange have now finally been corrected. This followed discussions with officers, who advised that the replacement markings were technically “legal”. There was a strong cross-party effort to have the lines reinstated to their previous layout, and I'm pleased that this has now been achieved.

In Blewbury, some long-awaited roadworks were left only partially completed and to a poor standard. After visiting the site and documenting the areas of concern, I've been promised a further update by the end of this week.

Finally, SGN unexpectedly announced proposals for a major closure of Harwell High Street lasting over three months. Following several calls with senior officers, this plan has now been withdrawn and replaced with temporary traffic lights while a gas main is replaced. The caveat remains that if work uncovers a particularly awkwardly located main, this could still revert to a full closure. If that happens, I have been clear that a comprehensive plan must be in place for access, parking, bin collections and deliveries, and that a shuttle bus must be provided at SGN's expense to maintain access to bus services.

I will continue to push for clearer information and better communication around highways works, and appreciate your patience while I try to push through the improvements we're all hoping for.

Best wishes

Bekah

Transport update

A4130 Steventon Lights scheme – from now until **April 2026**, Trenchard Avenue will be closed. There are multi-way signals at the High Street junction on the temporary roundabout, and nighttime resurfacing at the end of the month. Update is here: [A4130 Steventon lights](#)

A34 Northbound Chilton-Milton – **27th – 30th April** there is carriageway closure for survey works overnight only from 9pm to 6am.

A34 Southbound Milton-Chilton – **20th to 23rd** there is carriageway closure overnight only from 9pm to 6am. Please keep an eye out for additional A34 closures; there are a lot of them over the next couple of months but full closures are being kept to overnight works.

Harwell Link Road – **Until 23rd April** there are multi-way signals that are likely to cause delays.

High St and Drewitt's Corner, Harwell – **10th – 13th June** there will be a full closure for road surfacing. Closure may potentially be overnight only 20:00-6:00; will confirm when I know more.

Dene Hollow, Chilton – **25th March to 27th March** there will be a closure while Openreach fix a pole.

Please continue to report any highway defects on www.fixmystreet.com.

Other news and information

Harwell Campus consultation – Harwell campus is consulting on its long-term plans for the site. There will be a programme of in-person events, but you can also offer your feedback here: www.harwellcampus.com/future-vision/

Local Government Reorganisation - Three different unitary models have been proposed for Oxfordshire. A 'minded-to' decision on whether there will be one, two or three unitary authorities for Oxfordshire is expected on or shortly after 16 July.

HWRC Booking System – You now need to book a slot to visit any of the Household Waste Recycling Centres. When visiting, you will need to bring proof of address. If you're unable to sort your recycling in advance, you will be asked to do so onsite in the designated sorting areas. For more information or to book your slot, go to: <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hwrcbooking> or call 01865 519800.

Carers Phone Friends – This service from Carers Oxfordshire offers support to unpaid carers by connecting them with trained volunteers who understand the challenges of caring. You can find out more, make referrals or volunteer here: <https://www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk/carers-phone-friends/> or by calling 01295 234 850.

Councillor Priority Fund – All County Councillors have access to a pot of funding to support local community projects. Applications are open until November 2026. The minimum grant is £500, and there are rules regarding eligibility of applicants and projects. You can read more at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/communities/councillor-priority-fund>

Councillor queries

Recent queries I've raised on behalf of residents and Parish Councils include:

Ticket description	Status	Outcome/latest information
Traffic calming Harwell village	IN PROGRESS	Works have now been confirmed. No news on traffic calming, but the resurfacing that we want to take place in advance of this has now been scheduled for June
GWP adoption	ONGOING	Spine roads adoption currently stuck in negotiations between Leap Utilities, SODC and Taylor Wimpey. We can't adopt any estate roads until the spine roads are adopted. Latest update: main spine road close to adoption once some verge clearance sorted – adoption of sewers still in progress
Damage to electrical unit at skate park, GWP	ONGOING	Repeated damage to the electrical unit at the skate park – Taylor Wimpey is in discussions with SSE on providing a more robust housing unit. Still not happened and box broken into again – have followed up twice
Blewbury road safety	ONGOING	Funding for a puffin crossing at Savages has been submitted for inclusion in forward plan of works (2026/27 financial year) – officer contact should be in touch shortly
Harwell roadworks	AWAITING RESPONSE	Investigation into the Grove Road works is ongoing – I have pushed for more information on this. After raising with Officers in context of roadworks in the area in general not meeting expectations, was offered a meeting – provided availability and then no response
Road safety issues on A417	IN PROGRESS	Crossing confirmed at the Winnaway, with other speeding measures to be included as part of the works. Have asked for an update. Included in budget for 26/27, so officer should be in touch shortly.
Coffin Way cycle path	IN PROGRESS	Requested briefing on previous work re: footpath/potential cycle route between Blewbury and Upton – relevant officer on leave. Meeting date being arranged but keeps being passed around to different people.
Newbury Road speed	HANDED OVER	Have asked about possibility of reducing the adopted section of Newbury Road to 20mph due to number of houses facing straight onto road and considerable traffic – should be taken up by County Cllr for Charlton, Ardington & Hendreds
Harwell – High St. flooding	IN PROGRESS	Visit undertaken 6 th Jan – waiting list for drain maintenance c. 10 months – have followed up with colleagues on interim measures.
Harwell – pavement repairs and maintenance	IN PROGRESS	Church Lane, School Lane, Kings Lane, Jennings Lane, The Cleave, Brookside, Gaveston Road, Loder Road, Westfield, The Styles, Manor Green, Townsend, The Croft, Barrow Road, Tyrells Close, Broadway Close, and The Park – all earmarked for footway slurry. Additionally, Didcot Road, Blenheim Hill, and Burr Street are marked for footway reconstruction, while Westfield Road is set for carriageway surface inlay. Current estimated date: June 2026
Rat infestation	AWAITING RESPONSE	Pest control should now have attended but still awaiting follow up – chased again on 24 th March. Will escalate – again.
Blewbury Road signs	IN PROGRESS	Visit took place 19 th February – multiple signs scheduled for replacement.
Grove Road flooding	RESPONSE RECEIVED	Grove Road persistent flooding since 2017 – SODC engineer to visit but must wait for current flooding to subside to investigate properly. Chased now flooding receded
Blewbury flooding	AWAITING RESPONSE	Sheencroft corner flooding problems - escalated directly to officers at both OCC and VOWH. Been told to “expect update” but drainage backlog is huge
OFS reorganisation	AWAITING RESPONSE	Qu's from Didcot firefighters – handed over to cabinet member. Briefing due in April.
Icknield Way footpath improvements	COMPLETE	Query re: impassable footpath. Project now starting to replace surface with limestone in some places, tarmac in others (depending on landowner agreements)
Reading Road - flooding	AWAITING RESPONSE	Flooding query - now that the weather has turned, asked for flooding sites to be re-investigated.
Flooding Frank Williams Way	IN PROGRESS	TW have cleared the beany blocks and swales but the road is still a mess - OCC referred to District so have contacted Biffa for clearance. They have said “ASAP”
Hagbourne Hill improvements	RESPONSE RECEIVED; FOLLOWED UP	Query re: safety improvements, kerbing/widening etc. Initial response is that we are currently reviewing historical planning decisions, with a view to selecting the best option for improvement, but no firm plan yet. I've asked for a timeline.
Potholes escalation by Harwell Campus	COMPLETE	Query re: pothole repair failure - now filled
Milton interchange re-marking	COMPLETE	Apologies on poor comms; lines now put back to how they were prior to resurfacing.
London Road resurfacing	AWAITING RESPONSE	Roadworks incomplete and of poor quality; followed up directly with Director of Highways to establish solution
Harwell High St SGN works	IN PROGRESS	Original proposed full closure now expected to be lane closure subject to location of gas main. Still struggling to get clarity on exact dates and location of traffic lights.
20 mph signs Harwell	AWAITING RESPONSE	Query about odd location of some 20mph signs, blocking pathways.