

County Councillor report

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

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Dear Parish Councillors and residents,

This month has been quite the mix; some progress on the roads, ongoing maintenance follow-ups from the winter weather, and important scrutiny work.

At County Hall last month, I attended another Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, where our role is to provide a critical, evidence-based eye on policy and process. I'm pleased that – despite some pushback – we have now agreed the terms of reference for a working group to conduct a deep dive into the circumstances surrounding one of our SEND schools that was placed into forced academisation. This was a distressing experience for both pupils and parents. It's vital that Oxfordshire County Council learns from this: if there were failings in communication or process, they must be recognised and addressed so that we can strengthen our approach going forward and ensure this can't happen again.

Last month I met Highways Engagement Officers in Blewbury, alongside representatives from the Parish Council, to look at several long-standing issues including damaged and faded signage, road repairs and persistent flooding locations. A number of these have now been scheduled for action, and I'll keep pressing for the remainder to be picked up.

Resurfacing is now complete at Milton Interchange, including the correction of some initial road marking errors at the contractor's expense. However, I've since been picking up several questions from residents about the new road markings. I'm following these up to make sure everything meets the required standard.

As the worst of the winter seems to have passed, I've once again escalated a number of flooding hotspots and areas where the recent freeze-thaw cycle has caused road surfaces to break down. London Road in Blewbury, the A4130 and its junction with Great Western Park, as well as High Street and Westfield in Harwell are all on my list, along with a push for a long-term fix on Hagbourne Hill. The current road width simply isn't suitable for the increased volume of HGVs, so I'm working with officers to find a permanent solution. I know residents are also concerned about the state of the Long Wittenham-Clifton Hampden bridge road. My colleague has escalated this (I take no credit!), and we should see 500 metres of "Bobcat" patching on both approaches to the bridge this month.

As always, all maintenance work is weather-dependent, so please be prepared for dates to shift if conditions worsen. And a reminder: if any patching or resurfacing fails within 12 months, it can be redone free of charge. If you spot a recent repair that hasn't held, please report it on FixMyStreet and mark it as a "failed repair" – it really does help uphold quality.

Best wishes

Bekah

Transport update

A4130 Steventon Lights scheme Phase 2 – from now until **April 2026**, Trenchard Avenue will be closed. There are multi-way signals on the High St but two-way traffic will be maintained (in narrow lanes).

A34 Northbound Chilton-Milton – 11th March to 14th March there is carriageway closure for white lining renewal overnight only from 9pm to 6am.

A34 Southbound Milton-Chilton – 16th March to 19th March there is carriageway closure for white lining renewal 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 – 16th March to 16th April there will be multi-way signals that are likely to cause delays. I'll be keeping a particular eye on the quality of these works, as it's a road that was only surface dressed last year.

Dene Hollow, Chilton – 25th March to 27th March there will be a very short closure (outside Dalton House) while Thames Water put in a new water connection.

London Road/Blewbury Hill – 31st March – 2nd April there will be a full closure of London Road between Spring Lane, Blewbury and Stream Road, Upton. This is to undertake some **extremely** necessary patching works. We have been requesting fixes through here for a long time, so please be understanding of the long diversion up Spring Lane, Hagbourne Road and through Didcot. (Also be aware, some more wins coming up in May with resurfacing works for Boham's Road and A417 beyond Blewbury, towards Goring)

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. Ultimately, the government will decide which model to implement, but your feedback is invited by 26th March. More information is available here: <https://oneoxfordshire.org.uk/>

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. Latest update: I have still seen no notice on one.network for these works, suggesting road space still not booked. Have chased.
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 – subject to confirmation of easements and adoption of sewers
Damage to electrical unit at skate park, GWP	ONGOING	Repeated damage to the electrical unit at the skate park – Taylor Wimpey are in discussions with SSE on providing a more robust housing unit. Still not happened and box broken into again – have followed up
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)
Harwell roadworks	AWAITING RESPONSE	Investigation into the Grove Road works is ongoing – I have pushed for more information on this. Still waiting for a meeting. Have raised with Officers in context of roadworks in the area in general not meeting expectations
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
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
Newbury Road speed	AWAITING RESPONSE	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
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	Multiple road surface patches agreed but not yet scheduled due to ongoing bad weather. Pavements may potentially receive slurry treatment – awaiting news on this. Latest update: 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. Has been assigned to an engineer but not yet confirmed. Expected to be scheduled for late Spring/Summer.
Rat infestation	IN PROGRESS	Pest control should now have attended but still awaiting follow up – have chased
Blewbury Road signs	IN PROGRESS	Visit took place 19 th February – multiple signs scheduled for replacement.
Chilton vegetation clearance A34 crossings	COMPLETE	Clearance of Chilton footbridge/underpass across A34 - officers sent out to investigate, awaiting more information
Outcome of pothole trial	COMPLETE	2023 trial to test different types of pothole repair - what was the outcome?
Grove Road flooding	RESPONSE RECEIVED	Grove Road persistent flooding since 2017 – SODC engineer to visit but has to wait for current flooding to subside to investigate properly. Have chased now flooding receded
Bridleway resurfacing	COMPLETE	Harwell asked if they can undertake surface improvements to Green Road/Bridleway - response yes but with caveats - now with Parish Council
Blewbury flooding	AWAITING RESPONSE	Sheencroft corner flooding problems - escalated directly to officers at both OCC and VOWH
OFS reorganisation	AWAITING RESPONSE	Further questions from Didcot firefighters – handed over to cabinet member
Icknield Way footpath improvements	AWAITING RESPONSE	Query re: impassable footpath.
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 - have asked OCC road maintenance to pick this up now flooding seems much improved.
Hagbourne Hill improvements	AWAITING RESPONSE	Query re: safety improvements, kerbing/widening etc. – interim ditches filled with Type 1 stone but have asked for more permanent measures to be looked into
Pothole damage	COMPLETE	Private resident query relating to pothole damage claims
Alder View adoption	COMPLETE	Private resident query re: adoption of roads and sewers on Alder View development
Potholes escalation by Harwell Campus	AWAITING RESPONSE	Query re: pothole repair failure