



Above: Cllrs van Mierlo and Bearder at Pyrton Lane, where traffic calming will be introduced

Focus on Parishes with Cllr Freddie van Mierlo (Chalgrove and Watlington)

February 2021

Welcome to my monthly update. I share a regular update in the first week of every month. In the interests of transparency and sharing good ideas I will be sharing this update publicly as well as with parish councils in Chalgrove and Watlington division.

My recent meetings

- 6th January: Chalgrove Parish Council
- 10th January: Great Haseley Parish Council
- 11th January: Watlington Parish Council
- 12th January: Little Milton Parish Council
- 13th January: Shirburn Parish Meeting
- 28th January: Fire & Rescue Service, Watlington
- 1st February: Nettlebed Parish Council
- 2nd February: Swyncombe residents Q&A

Upcoming meetings:

- 8th February: Full Council (County Hall, Oxford)
- 8th February: Watlington Parish Council
- 9th February: Ewelme Parish Council
- 10th February: Watlington Climate Action Group (Chalgrove Brook)
- 11th February: Briefing with parishes on verges
- 14th February: Lewknor Parish Council

If there are meetings you would like to invite me to please get in touch: freddie.vanmierlo@oxfordshire.gov.uk

OCC news:

Balanced budget that reinvests in Alliance priorities: The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance is presenting its first budget at full council on February 8th. During the elections, candidates promised to prioritize the climate emergency – and treat it like the emergency it is! This means we have carved out £1.3 million to address climate change, including boosting active travel. The budget also sets aside an increase in £2 million for Special Educational Needs / Disability (SEND) to speed up assessments and placements. We will also be investing in infrastructure to improve the safety of roads, bridges and complete underfunded projects signed off by the previous administration.

20mph limits set to be fully funded: Requests for 20mph speed limits will be fully funded by the county council in the budget set in February. Villages and towns that have already put in applications (or plan to do so), will be bundled into two batches. The first round will take place in summer 2022 and the second in winter 2022. Further rounds will be planned in 2023 and beyond.

Transport Plan (LTCP) – Last chance to have your say! The public [consultation](#) will close on 16 March 2022. The consultation has lots of long documents, but don't feel like you need to read all of it to respond! The headlines are that the county wants to reduce car journeys and make active / public transport the first choice for travel. In rural areas like ours, this will be especially challenging but make sure to have your say on how you think it can be done! Would you like to see more buses (or old routes return)? More dedicated cycle routes between villages and towns? What about mobility hubs with better infrastructure for switching from bike to bus? More local foot and cycle paths? This will be a key piece of policy on which many planning decisions will hang their hat on, so have your say!

HGVs – timeline to county-wide solution: Freight is an important part of the transport plan (LTCP). The core idea is to say 'yes' to freight on the strategic network (e.g., M40) and 'no, except local access' everywhere else. Between Spring and Autumn 2022 the freight strategy will be further developed, with local area strategies following. Our area will be called 'South Oxfordshire Rural'

More power to the council: We are calling on the government to devolve more powers to the county council to allow for more effective enforcement of 'moving traffic' offenses, including the ability to install speed cameras, and make better use of average speed cameras and ANPR technology. These technologies are critical for enforcing offences – including from HGVs!

Libraries and heritage strategy 2022-2027 – consultation opened: Oxfordshire County Council's heritage and libraries strategy is open to [consultation](#) until 18th March

Parish round up

Not all parishes are covered – below is a selection of the main updates.

Chalgrove:

- **Flood alleviation scheme:** A new flood relief channel has been installed to help protect Mill Lane residents. Financial contributions were made by South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, and the Environment Agency

Great Haseley

- **War memorial refurbishment funded:** A local resident has spearheaded work to make the names of the fallen legible again. I was delighted to have been able to contribute through the councilor priority fund. Funding also came from SODC, the Parish council, pumpkin show, and Taylor Blackall. Work will be carried out when the weather improves

Nettlebed

- **Brick kiln cleared:** Finally cleared of debris!
- **Potholes and street signs:** I reported potholes on the A4130, which have been scheduled for repair. Street signs on Elms Way have been replaced also

Swyncombe

- **State of roads:** At a meeting with residents, it was emphasized that the roads in Russells Water & Park Corner are in a particularly poor state. This has been reported to officers and will be followed up on

Watlington

- **Pyrtton lane traffic calming:** Proposed measures, including a 20mph zone, 2 full width humps and 1 speed cushion were signed off by the county. Work can now proceed to final design stage with implementation starting around Easter
- **Charlotte Coxe Trust:** The persistence of the parish and residents is paying off – with the issue elevated to a top priority for the county's legal team. A proposal led by actor Jeremy Irons to bring 33 High Street back into habitable condition for emergency housing (e.g., for a refugee family) has kick started a process to unlock the house's potential from a legal quagmire. I have elevated the issue to the highest levels of the county, and with the support of Lib Dem Leader, Cllr Leffman, I am hopeful we can reach a resolution at last
- **Fire & Rescue visit:** I had the pleasure of visiting Watlington's fire station in January to learn more about how it is run and funded. I will continue to support the essential work of the station and the brave personnel who work there
- **Flooding alleviation work to brook:** Local volunteers have cleared part of the open culverts on Brook Street, with the support of environmental experts. A meeting will be held with the county council to assess how we can best restore capacity of the covered culverts without disturbing the chalk stream's unique ecosystem