

OCC Annual Councillor Report Cllr Dan Levy May 26



Charlie Maynard MP, Calum Miller MP and Dan Levy at Shores Green. It will open this summer on time and budget, to relieve Witney and nearby villages.

It has been a challenging year in many ways, but with improvements in key areas.

There was, once again, flooding in Bablock Hythe, as well as road flooding in other places. This time, my understanding is that the restoration of the flood channels recently made things less bad than in the past. That is no reason for complacency. Climate change means flood events are more frequent. It is why the council is committed to doing its bit to combat climate change as well as coping with the consequences.

The County Council has done a full gulley clear, for the first time in decades. This has demonstrated that some gulleys need to be rebuilt, so we put £4m into the budget to enable this to happen.

Road surfaces have suffered after the years of neglect. Without full resurfacing, each year will see new potholes. These are being fixed, but as ever money is an issue. It would cost around £60m to keep the roads in a steady state, and even steady state means potholes each year. The government has given £39m to the County Council, which is clearly inadequate. We topped this up by £30m, borrowed and needing to be repaid. There is an £8m surface dressing programme under way – if you have travelled to Botley from Eynsham, you will see an example of this working.

The government announced a 3 year “settlement”, which includes cuts to grants to the County Council of over £24m. That will require cuts, which we will try to make as painless as possible to vulnerable residents. It may however be difficult to maintain services that are not statutory. Over 70% of revenue spend is on Adult Social Care and Children’s services, looking after people who need support.

Northmoor Parish Council Meeting Minutes - Thu 14May 26 - Reports

It also requires us to put up Council Tax by 4.99% per annum, as instructed by the government.

We are committed to supporting rural communities. I hope the new home to school transport arrangements for children from Northmoor to Bartholomew School work. It was unfortunate that the previous merging of a public service bus and school transport couldn't continue. Budget and procurement law have to be followed. But there remains a public bus, via WOCT, supported financially by OCC, and school transport each morning and evening. This took some arranging.

We expect to hear from the government in July about how new unitary authorities in Oxfordshire and Berkshire will be set up. This will lead to a new "shadow authority" starting in 2027, with it replacing the current arrangements in 2028. But the government doesn't seem on top of the process. Whatever the outcome, we need to make sure that places like Northmoor aren't forgotten because of the pressures from urban areas or the clamour from government for economic growth at all costs (regardless of the inability of infrastructure in fresh water, sewage, transport and electricity to cope even now) and the government plans to cut local input and environmental protections into planning decisions.

You have excellent representatives in your MP Charlie Maynard and the two Cosier district councillors, and I know we will all work together to support Northmoor and Bablock Hythe, whatever the future brings.

As ever, please do contact me with casework, queries and comments.

dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk

WODC Report Cllr Steve Cosier and Cllr Sandra Cosier May 26

Sandra Cosier Re- Elected as SASH District Councillor

I wanted to begin this month's report by saying a heartfelt thank you to residents across the ward for re-electing me as their West Oxfordshire District Councillor. It was a wonderful result, and I am truly grateful to everyone who voted for me, and to everyone who took the time to cast their vote yesterday. Your support means a great deal to me, and I am honoured to keep serving our community.

I have been re-elected as District Councillor for Standlake, Aston & Stanton Harcourt with 981 votes, representing 50% of all valid ballots cast. This strong result reflects clear and continued confidence from residents across the division.

I will continue working closely with the Parish Councils to ensure village priorities remain firmly on the district agenda.

Thank you

Sandra

The Downs, Standlake

Recently, Sandra and I have been corresponding with the West Oxfordshire District Council policy team regarding activity on The Downs by a developer. Residents had expressed understandable concern about why a consultation from a developer Mac & Mic had appeared before the Local Plan has been discussed. WODC's policy team explained to me that developers had increasingly been bringing forward proposals on sites identified as potentially suitable in the longer term, a pattern seen across several locations in West Oxfordshire and influenced by national pressures to accelerate housing delivery.

We made it clear that The Downs was not an appropriate location for development at the scale being suggested. We outlined the specific constraints affecting Standlake, including the limited capacity of the local road network, the pressure already placed on drainage and sewage systems, and the restricted availability of school places and essential services. I also emphasised that the landscape and character of The Downs made it unsuitable for a large housing estate. These concerns reflected practical, lived realities for residents and were presented as essential considerations for any future planning decisions.

Our concerns addressed the wider national context. Over many years, governments of different political parties had introduced housing policies designed to increase the speed of development, and commentators have noted that such policies can enable developers to bring forward proposals earlier than local planning processes might anticipate. This national backdrop formed part of the pressure being experienced locally.

We stressed to the policy team the importance of a fair and transparent process and reiterated that the scale of development proposed for The Downs did not align with the infrastructure constraints or the established character of the village. We confirmed that residents expected their concerns to be fully considered as the situation progressed, and I committed to continuing to keep the community informed as further information became available.

Croudace Application - Aston

Much to our chagrin The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has agreed to extend the determination period for the Croudace application in Aston until 22 June, stating that additional work is required to understand the flood risk assessment for the site.

However, the applicant has already been advised by the LPA that the proposal is likely to be refused regardless of the flood risk outcome, due to conflicts with heritage and landscape policies. This indicates that the extension may not influence the final decision.

Residents, the Parish Council and other expert bodies submitted detailed comments within the statutory 21day consultation period, identifying significant flaws in the application. Despite this, the applicant has been permitted to exceed the standard 8week determination timeframe.

We have been lobbying the LPA to act now in refusing the application under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Using this the LPA must determine applications lawfully and regarding all material considerations. In this case, the acknowledged heritage and landscape conflicts suggest the proposal is unacceptable in principle.

The Development Management Procedure Order requires decisions to be made without unnecessary delay, and extensions of time should only be used where they could genuinely change the outcome. As the LPA has already indicated that refusal is the likely result, the justification for extending the deadline is unclear.

Concerns also remain regarding the applicant's technical submissions, including flood risk evidence, which contain inaccuracies. Under the new planning appeal system, developers cannot introduce new evidence at appeal, meaning further negotiation is unlikely to resolve these issues.

We have therefore request that the LPA does not extend the deadline further and instead issues a timely refusal based on the information already available.

Flood Wardens

Sandra and I are becoming Flood Wardens for the area. That means that we will be extra eyes and the ears on the ground and report to OCC things liked blocked ditches and drains in the hope that we can resolve these issues before a flood event occurs.

If there is anything that you would like to discuss in this report, or any other district council issues, please contact us.

Best wishes

Cllr Sandra and Steve Cosier

WODC District Councillors – SASH Ward



Budget Monitoring Report to the end of March 2026

Last Year Actual Spend		This Year Budget	This Year spend to end March	Remaining Budget
	Staff Costs			
£ -	Clerk's salary	£ 5,000.00	£ -	£ 5,000.00
	Meetings			
£ 245.00	Hall Hire	£ 260.00	£ 90.50	£ 169.50
	Highways			
£ 2,175.00	Grass cutting	£ 2,250.00	£ 2,250.00	£ -
£ 870.48	Dog bin emptying	£ 958.00	£ 870.48	£ 87.52
£ 90.00	Playpark Maintenance	£ -	£ 21.68	-£ 21.68
£ -	Village upkeep	£ 400.00	£ 4,699.83	-£ 4,299.83
£ 61.02	Allotment Water Charges	£ -	£ 354.76	-£ 354.76
£ 79.00	Allotment Field Rental	£ -	£ 200.00	-£ 200.00
	Insurance and Auditing			
£ 443.75	Insurance	£ 582.00	£ 633.38	-£ 51.38
£ 200.00	Audit	£ 615.00	£ 730.00	-£ 115.00
	Subscriptions			
£ 235.00	Subscriptions	£ 215.00	£ 316.00	-£ 101.00
	Charitable Donations			
£ 150.00	S137 Grants	£ 150.00	£ 500.00	-£ 350.00
	Sundries			
£ 65.00	Training	£ -	£ 65.00	-£ 65.00
£ -	Admin Costs	£ 400.00	£ 180.00	£ 220.00
£ -	IT Costs	£ -	£ 207.50	-£ 207.50
£ -	Defibrillator	£ -	£ 514.95	-£ 514.95
£ 35.00	Information Commissioner Fee	£ 40.00	£ 47.00	-£ 7.00
£ 228.00	Domain, Website & Email	£ 325.00	£ 295.00	£ 30.00
£ 4,877.25	TOTAL	£11,195.00	£11,976.08	-£ 781.08
Notes:				
All figures are Ex VAT				
£66,755.89 for Bablock Hythe Flood Prevention Work not included as outside of budget				