Title	County Councillor's Report
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Parishes	Mapledurham, Whitchurch, Goring, South Stoke, Goring Heath, Kidmore End and Woodcote Parish Councils
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Dear parish councillors and residents,

I'm honoured to have been elected as County Councillor for the Goring and Woodcote Division. Thank you to everyone who supported me, whether by voting, volunteering, or sharing your concerns and hopes for our communities. I look forward to working with residents, parish councils, and local organisations to deliver positive change and represent your voices at Oxfordshire County Council. Here are some updates I have gathered for you, but please note I am yet to the set up and it may take a little while to be fully onboarded.

Best wishes,

Maggie

1. Budget

The budget was approved at Oxfordshire County Council and the highlights are as follows:

- An additional £58.8 million fixing potholes
- An additional £17.2 million for children's services
- An additional £1.14 million for SEND
- An additional £10.8 million for Adult Social Care
- An additional £11.8 million for greener schools and public buildings
- Unlocking £22.5 million of developer contributions
- An additional £1.8 million for rural active travel including £200k for the Haddenham and Thame Greenway
- £3.6 million to increase the frequency of gully clearing from every 4 years to annually
- £1 million for better rail stations and greener travel
- Park & Ride prices frozen for 2025/26

2. Recycling

For the 11th year in a row, residents in Oxfordshire are the best in England for recycling, reusing and composting, according to the latest government figures. OCC have again been named the top performing county council waste disposal authority.

3. Resurfacing Plans 25/26

Oxfordshire County Council is launching a £7.4 million road resurfacing programme this spring, aiming to improve nearly 100 roads across the county. The initiative, running from 22 April to 16 June 2025, will involve surface dressing treatments to over one million square

metres of carriageway. This preventive maintenance approach is designed to extend the lifespan of roads and enhance driving conditions. The council emphasises the importance of this work in maintaining road quality and urges motorists to stay informed about upcoming works and to drive cautiously in treated areas.

The method offers many advantages, including:

- Sealing the road surface to keep out water, one of the major causes of deterioration and potholes.
- Reducing the deterioration of the road surface.
- Restoring the necessary level of skid resistance to reduce skid-related traffic collisions.
- Enabling worn out road surfaces to last longer, increasing the time before structural maintenance is required.
- Maximising the cost effectiveness of limited highway maintenance budgets.
- Minimising traffic disruption and congestion as large areas of roads – up to 100,000 square metres – can be treated in a single day.
- The work is highly weather dependent and cannot be completed in wet conditions.

Updated details about the programme, including a map showing where and when the work will be taking place, will be available on Oxfordshire County Council's website.

In the division surface dressing is planned for **Whitchurch Hill, Gallowstee Common**.

4. Gulley Cleaning Schedule for 25/26

Below you will find the gulley cleaning schedule for the upcoming financial year. If there are any problem areas you would like me to raise with county officers please let me know.

Start	Finish	District	Ward
01/01/2026	28/02/2026	South	Goring
01/01/2026	28/02/2026	South	Kidmore End & Whitchurch
01/02/2026	31/03/2026	South	Woodcote & Rotherfield

5. Plans for Improving Bus Travel

Oxfordshire County Council has submitted an updated Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to the UK government, detailing how it intends to utilise over £15 million in allocated funding to enhance bus services across the county. The plan focuses on making bus travel more reliable, accessible, and affordable, particularly in rural areas. Key proposals include introducing new and faster services, retaining existing routes, and implementing measures such as £1 Sunday bus fares during December to encourage increased usage.

These efforts are part of a broader strategy to increase bus patronage and reduce reliance on private vehicles, contributing to environmental goals and improved public transportation

options for residents. The council's submission reflects its commitment to working collaboratively with bus operators and stakeholders to deliver a more efficient and user-friendly bus network

6. Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Oxfordshire is developing its first Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to restore and enhance the county's natural environment. This initiative, part of a national effort under the Environment Act 2021, aims to map out key areas for biodiversity improvement and outline actions to support wildlife, improve air and water quality, and mitigate climate change impacts. The strategy is being shaped collaboratively by Oxfordshire County Council, district councils, Natural England, and local communities

The development process has involved extensive public engagement. Phase 1 (February–March 2024) gathered input from 1,038 participants through workshops, events, and an online survey. Phase 2 (May–June 2024) focused on identifying specific locations for potential habitat restoration. Currently, in Phase 3, draft documents and maps have been published, highlighting priority areas and proposed actions for biodiversity enhancement. Feedback from this phase will inform the final strategy, set to be published by July 2025.

For more information and to view the draft strategy and maps, visit here

7. Devolution and Government Reorganisation

On 16 December 2024, the government published a white paper on a national programme of devolution and reform to local government. The county council's cabinet responded by requesting that the county is fast-tracked for local government reorganisation while continuing to work with partners on a future mayoral strategic authority.

The County Council's has submitted a bid for a single Oxfordshire-wide unitary authority which contrasts the view of SODC which is working on a proposal for a 'Ridgway Council' comprising South Oxon, Vale of Whitehorse and West Berkshire. Both those proposals are in line with government's white paper so it will be up to the Secretary of State to choose.

There are pros and cons to each of those, and I support the inclusion of both bids. However on balance my current preference is for a smaller unitary without an urban centre which should lead to a more equitable consideration and allocation of resources to our towns and villages.

8. School Places

More than nine out of ten Oxfordshire children with applications to start reception year in primary schools across the county have been offered a place at their first choice for the next school year.

9. The Oxfordshire all-age autism strategy 2025 – 2030

Oxfordshire County Council is developing its first all-age autism strategy for 2025–2030, aiming to enhance the lives of autistic individuals across the county. This comprehensive plan

addresses the diverse needs of autistic people and their families, ensuring access to necessary resources, services, and opportunities for a fulfilling life. The strategy has been co-produced with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

The council is currently seeking public feedback on the draft strategy. Residents are encouraged to review the draft and share their views on its vision and themes. The feedback will inform any necessary changes before the strategy is finalised in May 2025. The consultation is open until 11:59 PM on Sunday, 25 May 2025. To participate, visit the Let's Talk Oxfordshire consultation page and complete the online survey. Alternative formats and paper copies are available upon request by emailing consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk or calling 01865 792422

Related to this, if you a parent or carer of a child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)? Get information and advice straight to your inbox. Sign up here

10. Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

Oxfordshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is a key strategic document which Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority is required by law to have in place. It sets out how the council can work with others to try and make sure the public rights of way network meets the needs of the public, now and in the future. More information on ROWIPs can be found at Government guidance on improvement plans(External link).

This is the first consultation of two that are necessary to produce the third RoWIP for Oxfordshire. This is the **initial review stage** and the views of land managers, local councils and other stakeholders are being sought alongside members of the public, and, taken together, will help officers to write a meaningful and deliverable plan.

Please see the survey here

11. Grants and Cost of Living

Hardship fund: OCC's hardship fund (Resident Support Scheme) was launched in June. Phone: 01865 804171

Home Upgrade Grants: OCC & its partner AgilityEco is reaching out directly to households who will qualify to benefit from Home Upgrade Grants (to improve energy efficiency for 'off-grid' homes)

Community Capacity Grants: The Community Capacity Fund will open for grant applications from 6th September. Grants of between £5.000 and £20.000 are funded by OCC and applications processed by Oxfordshire Community Foundation. Grants are given to projects that "support people to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible"