



County Councillor Report  
Chalgrove & Thame West Division  
May/June 2026

Cllr Judith Edwards  
Cabinet Member for Local Government  
Reorganisation & Human Resources

### **Returning to work as a councillor – and a promotion!**

After a tough but ultimately successful few months away from my councillor role battling breast cancer, I've been delighted to return to my council work to some extent this month. I'm taking it slowly but thoroughly enjoying getting out and about again.

I was excited too to be voted into the cabinet by my Liberal Democrat colleagues. We've had a bit of change within the cabinet, including a new Leader, Cllr Tim Bearder from Wheatley, who many of you will already know. There are more details about the changes below. My new role is going to be all about managing the move to unitary local government over the next two years. I'm all about finding ways to make the new authorities as accountable and accessible to residents across the county as possible. You'll no doubt hear more about this as the months progress.

## **Oxfordshire News**

### **Change in leadership and Cabinet at OCC**

There has been a change in leadership and some of the Cabinet at Oxfordshire County Council. Both Thame County Cllrs are now on the Cabinet.

Leader of OCC: **Cllr Tim Bearder**

Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources: **Cllr Neil Fawcett**

Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair: **Cllr Liz Leffman**

Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services: **Cllr Sean Gaul**

Cabinet Member for Public health and Inequalities: **Cllr Kate Gregory**

Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Human Resources: **Cllr Judith Edwards**

Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy: **Cllr Laura Gordon**

Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation: **Cllr Dan Levy**

Cabinet Member for Adults: **Cllr Rebekah Fletcher**

Cabinet Member for Transport: **Cllr Gareth Epps**

## **Oxfordshire bucking regional trend on road safety as casualty figures fall**

Newly published provisional government statistics suggest that Oxfordshire is seeing significant improvements in road safety, with serious and fatal collisions falling sharply while the wider Thames Valley area has seen increases.

The Department for Transport published its provisional personal injury collision and casualty statistics for Great Britain on 28 May 2026. While the figures remain provisional and may be revised as additional data is confirmed, the early trends are encouraging for Oxfordshire.

More details [here](#)

## **Quiet Lanes pilot announced for Oxfordshire**

Quiet lanes are minor roads where we reduce motor traffic to make it safer for you to walk, wheel, cycle or ride a horse. Most through-traffic is removed by use of signs, speed limits and physical measures such as bollards or gates, but access is still allowed for: residents, farmers and landowners, local businesses and emergency services. They are only implemented where there is local support and a suitable alternative route for motor traffic.

Several quiet lanes have already been introduced in response to local concerns about motorised traffic flows, speeds, and road safety. We are now formalising how we identify, trial, and designate a quiet lane to ensure the process is consistent across the county. This will also speed up the delivery of appropriate schemes.

The programme is voluntary and locally led. A quiet lane will only be brought forward where there is strong local support and a clear evidence-based case. Following approval by our cabinet in May 2026, we will launch a pilot programme of up to 10 new sites during 2026. We are currently identifying potential sites. Parish councils or residents interested in suggesting local options should contact the county council quiet lanes team [via this webform](#).

## **Oxfordshire fire crews launch water safety campaign**

Water safety advice is being issued linked to concerns about people getting into difficulty in the county's waterways and lakes or during visits to the seaside, particularly during the hot weather.

Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service is warning that even on a hot day, the temperature of a body of open water can remain very cold, meaning falling or intentionally jumping in can result in a cold shock response. More information and resources can be found [here](#).

## **Healthy school snacks help Oxfordshire pupils arrive ready to learn**

Pupils in Oxfordshire are arriving at school better prepared to learn, thanks to a county council funded healthy snacks project that is improving wellbeing, behaviour and attendance.

Funded through the council's wider cost of living programme, the initiative supported four secondary schools in 2025/26 - The Oxford Academy, North Oxfordshire Academy, Cheney School and Henry Box School - with £25,000 to ensure children from low-income households are not going hungry during the school day.

More details [here](#)

## **Budget challenges ahead**

The county council is beginning its work for the 27/28 budget now, as we're strongly aware that there are significant challenges ahead. As a starting point, the cabinet is exploring options for making savings and doing things differently with senior officers. There will be more on this later, but it's worth being aware that we'll have some difficult decisions ahead.

## **Local Government Reorganisation**

We're expecting a decision from the Secretary of State in July before the end of the current session of Parliament about which model of unitary government is preferred. Once we have clarity, the county council will be moving forward at speed to deliver the new authority or authorities according to the new timescale. This will be a huge challenge, but also an opportunity to make the new bodies more accountable and accessible. In the meantime, we're working hard to answer technical questions that will ensure a smooth transition, whichever model is chosen. This is my area of interest as a cabinet member, so I'm very happy to answer questions at any time.

## **Local News**

### **Flood Prevention Grants awarded**

The County Council has agreed several grants to help prevent flooding in the Chalgrove and Thame West Division. These are in Thame, to the rear of Cedar Crescent, as well as in Chalgrove, Little Milton and Waterstock. Details are [here](#).

### **20mph Speed limit approved for Brightwell Baldwin**

After a long campaign by residents, a 20mph speed limit was approved in April for Brightwell Baldwin. This is great news and means that the village will be in line with other similar places around the county where reduced speed limits are already delivering greater safety for our communities (see above). It's expected that the work will be done during the summer months.

## **Useful Links**

[Roadworks around the county](#)

[Apply for a congestion charge permit](#)

[Report a pothole](#)

\*\*\*\*\*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"