

County Councillor Report
Chalgrove & Thame West Division
Nov 2026

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

Oxfordshire News

Local Government Reorganisation
As you may have seen, the minister confirmed that he is "minded to" proceed with the 3 Unitary Authority structure for Oxfordshire, which was very disappointing. There's a 3-week window in which we'll be presenting our concerns with this both to government and the public. We're also checking the legal validity of the situation, because the process for making the decision potentially seems flawed.

New travel benefits for NHS and school staff in Oxford
NHS and education staff working in Oxford can now benefit from cheaper, more sustainable travel to work.
Income from Oxford's temporary congestion charge is being invested in a new travel package for staff working at NHS sites, schools, nurseries and early years settings across the city.
What's available

- Free parking for up to 16 hours a day at Oxford's five park and ride sites.
- £1 single bus tickets to and from workplaces in Oxford.

All staff working at NHS sites, schools, nurseries, and early years settings in Oxford, including teaching, clinical, administration, catering and facilities management staff, can apply for the scheme. Eligible staff will receive a link from their employer inviting them to apply.
Find out more about the travel benefits and how to apply on our website.

Traffic filters to replace congestion charge scheme
From Monday 28 September the traffic filters trial replaced the temporary congestion charge. Car drivers will no longer have the option to pay the £5 charge but since the Botley Road reopened, there are now routes around all of the filters if you need to get through the city. Alternatively, you can use one of your 25 free permits a year. If you haven't already applied, follow the link to do so. Of course, the best and most reliable way to get into Oxford is to use the park and ride or regular bus where that's available.

OxBUS 2040 Plan for bus consultation
Oxfordshire County Council has just published a new plan for bus services in the county. This is your opportunity to press for new services, emphasise the importance of services that do exist or request changes. Given how important buses can be as a lifeline to rural areas like ours, this is a great opportunity to get your views heard. The consultation ends on 17 November.

Chalgrove and Thame West

Haddenham to Thame Active Travel route moves to consultation on routes
I'm delighted that we've finally got to the point of having a detailed conversation about the route options for a cycling and walking route to Haddenham Railway Station. Information is available online, or you can drop into an in-person event in Thame Town Hall on 14 November. More information is here: Haddenham to Thame active travel route | Let's Talk Oxfordshire. The consultation ends on 24 November.

Supporting residents coping with development near homes
At the end of September, I joined members of the Thame Meadows Residents Association to meet with Bloor Homes to raise their concerns about the ongoing building work for the next two phases of the development near the Oxford Road, including safety issues in the estate, worries about the impact of heavy machinery on nearby houses and access to the site. In most cases, we were able to achieve a commonsense solution, and the company was pragmatic in its approach. Hopefully dialogue will be easier in the future but this is very much an ongoing situation.

Ongoing issues relating to flood prevention in Tiddington
I continue to press both the County and district councils to complete the necessary actions to ensure that the Tiddington community is as protected from future storm water as much as possible. This is a complicated situation, and responsibility doesn't sit with any one body but it's important we keep up the pressure.

Chalgrove Housing Development Consultation
I attended the consultation in Chalgrove on 4th November to understand more about the proposals south of the village. It's incredibly frustrating that the outline planning permission was granted on appeal and the local plan was overridden. The overriding issues are the lack of capacity at the local primary school and the doctor's surgery, as well as the risks to the incredibly important chalk stream. I'm sure the developers are now in no doubt of the strong views on these subjects expressed at the consultation meeting. I was glad to see that the developer is planning high levels of insulation, solar panels and air source heat pumps for all properties however, which demonstrates the value of having these extra-demanding rules in place.

Thame Remembers
I was honoured to represent the County Council at the Thame Remembrance Parade and service, alongside my colleague Freddie van Mierlo MP (see photo above). Like the other remembrance events around the area, it was a special event

that brought the whole community together to pay tribute to those that fought for our freedom, current servicepeople and their families, and those affected by ongoing conflicts.

Personal update

I'm doing my best to get out and about but I'm still coping with challenging side effects of cancer prevention drugs, so my energy levels are still a bit variable. Please bear with me and get in touch if you've got an issue you'd like to raise, and you haven't spoken to me in person.

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"

Councillor Priority Grant: I still have some grant remaining in my pot, so please do get in touch if there's a great local project that needs some additional resources. I have up to £5,000 available, **but hurry – the deadline is 30th November 2026, and projects must be complete by the end of the current financial year**.

The fund is open to a wide variety of organisations. Organisations must have a committee and a constitution or appropriate rules setting out the organisations aims and objectives. Examples of organisations who would be eligible:

- Registered charities
- Not for profit companies (examples include Community Interest Companies, Charitable Incorporated Organisations)
- Constituted community or voluntary groups
- Non-constituted community or voluntary groups
- Town/parish councils and parish meetings
- Schools (academy and local authority maintained)
- Parent Teacher Associations

All projects must address a recognised need in local communities in Oxfordshire. The funding must be project based with anticipated timescales and a breakdown of costs.