

County Council Report from Andy Graham – July 2023

***** OCC NEWS*****

Holding utilities companies to account: OCC is seeking permission from the government to adopt a 'lane rental scheme'. The scheme aims to reduce disruptive roadworks by utilities, incentivising them to keep to schedule and work off-peak. Fees of up to £2,500/day can be collected and reinvested in the road network. The surplus could be upwards of £2 million a year from 2024-2025.

Pothole trial: A trial took place in Steventon and East Hanney testing seven different methods of repairing minor defects in the road surface. Some of the methods are already in use in Oxfordshire, while others are new types of repair. The trial will inform how defects are repaired in the future.

Fees for DIY waste: The government has announced charges for DIY waste collected at household waste and recycling centres (HWRC) should be abolished. OCC is awaiting instruction from the government on when this change should be made. The charges currently help to subsidise the cost of running waste collection centres by £0.5m a year. Government is providing no additional funding to cover the shortfall created, meaning funding will need to be found through savings or increased council tax.

Nature recovery: Oxfordshire County Council has been designated as the lead authority for nature recovery in the county. The responsibility comes with additional funding from a £14 million pot to be divided between 48 councils. Local nature recovery plans were made a legal requirement by the Environment Act 2021

SEND Ofstead inspection: Ofstead and the Care Quality Commission are carrying out an inspection of services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Parents and other interested groups are being encouraged to respond to a survey (closes 9am 11 July)

*****NEWS IN BRIEF*****

£2 bus cap: The government's cap on bus fares has been extended to October

Recycling centres open until 8pm: HWRCs will be open until 8pm on Thursdays

Platform to promote care jobs: A website has been created to encourage people to enter care jobs

*****GRANTS AND COST OF LIVING*****

Councillor priority fund: Open for applications

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)

Cllr Andy Graham

Andy.Graham@Oxfordshire.gov.uk