

County Cllr Report to Deddington Annual Parish Meeting 2017

It has been another interesting year as County Cllr for Deddington. I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as your County Cllr over the last four years and hope to continue to do so after the local elections on May 4th. In addition to individual pieces of casework I would highlight the following points over the year.

Unitary

Over the past 12 months there have been a number of proposals from both OCC and the district councils on alternative methods of local government in Oxfordshire. This has now reached a pivotal moment with OCC's submission to government for a county wide unitary. My views on this matter are well known and I am happy to discuss this with anyone who wishes. I think there are pros and cons to each model and it is now for the SoS to decide. I think you have to find the right balance between saving money, practicality, and local accountability.

Phasing of Lights at Hempton Road Junction

I was asked to investigate the phasing of the pedestrian crossing at the Hempton road junction (opposite the Holly Tree club). After investigation with OCC officers, it is felt that the crossing does offer enough time. The green man goes out well before the lights change to discourage others from stepping on to the road without sufficient time to cross. Additionally, the lights from the new development will be linked to those at the crossing, providing the option to synchronise to improve traffic flow should this be an issue.

Horton Hospital

I have also taken an active role in doing what I can in my role to fight against proposed changes to the Horton Hospital. Over the summer, I was part of the cross-party campaign led by Victoria Prentis to prevent the downgrading of the maternity unit at the Horton. I seconded a motion at The County Council in July which called for the Council to examine businesses case to continue the vital service. Below is a picture of me in my "Hands off the Horton T-shirt" during the Hands around the Horton demonstration.

The Committee considers nothing further can be gained by discussions at a local level. HOSC has provided effective challenge to the temporary material changes in the provision of maternity care but that it will not agree to ongoing material changes to take place without consultation.

Therefore at its meeting on 2 February, members resolved to refer the matter to the Secretary of State under Regulation 23(9)(b) of the 2013 Regulations and ask that he refer the issue of the provision of maternity services at The Horton General Hospital to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel.

Highways

Over the last six months OCC has been working hard to make Fix My Street work more effectively and the service has been launched. It will improve the quality and consistency of public reports, as well as OCC internal processes for closing down reports, making it easier to reliably see what's going on in a given area. Members of the public who consistently give good information can be rewarded with 'trusted reporter' status, meaning OCC will fast track future reports to the contractor, resulting in quicker resolution for the resident and reduced effort for the inspectors.

The 'Dragon Patcher' – a new pothole fixing machine. After the successful introduction of the first machine in 2015, OCC's highways contractor, Skanska, will soon put a new dragon to work on the county's rural routes blazing a trail in the fight against holes in the roads. The original machine was shared with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, but the new machine will be dedicated to Oxfordshire. It is nicknamed the 'Dragon' because it breathes fire to de-ice and dry out the road surface enabling it to work all year round. The area is then cleaned with compressed air and sealed with a stone mix and hot bitumen emulsion. With the pothole gone in just two minutes, the patcher can move onto the next repair – the Dragon Patcher is five times faster than traditional methods and can do more work for the money. Since 2015, the Dragon Patcher has made 5,000 repairs to potholes and larger patches.

Note: Anyone who gave my election leaflet a cursory glance before placing it in the recycling may have enjoyed a laugh at your County Cllr in high-viz out seeing the Dragon Patcher at work in my division

Other

I thoroughly enjoy attending the Farmers Market most months and each year it is an honour and a privilege to be invited to take part in the Remembrance Day parade.