

REPORT TO BIX & ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL SEPT 2019 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

SUPERFAST BROADBAND CONNECTIONS ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST IN BRITAIN

Two-thirds of rural households with access to superfast broadband have signed up – one of the highest sign-up rates in the country. These are households that have benefited from the roll-out of rural broadband by OCC and BT, with support from the government. Superfast broadband take-up has exceeded all expectations. When the programme started it was anticipated take-up would be 25%, not 66%, and the contract with BT was negotiated on this basis. This very much higher rate has resulted in gainshare payments that have flowed back to the county council to be reinvested in the programme to further increase the number of homes that have access. A win-win for all concerned.

NEXT STEPS ADVICE FOR STUDENTS FROM OCC

OCC has congratulated young people on their 2019 exam successes, thanking parents, carers and Oxfordshire teachers who have helped, supported and encouraged pupils. While the vast majority of GCSE pupils will choose to stay on at school or further education colleges, there is also a wide range of workplace training schemes and apprenticeships available within Oxfordshire. For anyone unsure of their next steps after receiving their GCSE, BTEC or A Level results, further help can be found at www.oxme.info and the [National Careers Service](http://NationalCareersService.gov.uk), helpline number: 0800 100 900. The apprenticeships website is: www.oxfordshireapprenticeships.co.uk Throughout the results period and beyond, county council staff will be available via the web chat service on the Oxme website to talk to young people and parents about the wide range of learning and employment opportunities available in Oxfordshire for 16-19-year-olds. Details of drop in sessions and other local support can be found at www.oxme.info/resultsday

REDUCE THE USE: TURNING OFF THE PLASTIC TAP

Concerns over the harm single use plastic is causing our environment has been increasing both in the wider population and at OCC. With the undeniable consequences of the toxic results of plastic, OCC is putting a number of steps and changes in place to reduce single use plastics in council buildings across Oxfordshire. A cross-party single use plastic task force was created last year with the aim of reviewing which items were in use across OCC buildings and to see if these could be reduced or replaced with more sustainable alternatives. A single use plastic audit yielded encouraging results, for example:

- Plastic stirrers have been removed from the County Hall café
- Plastic cups have been replaced with recyclable paper drinking cones at water stations
- Milk is now ordered in larger containers
- The fire service is encouraging the use of refillable water bottles
- In many schools, cling film has been replaced with foil

Further to the above initiatives, the council has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030.

STEPHEN CHANDLER NAMED AS OCC'S NEW DIRECTOR OF ADULT SERVICES

Stephen Chandler has been appointed as OCC'S new Director of Adult Services. He is currently Director of Adult Services and lead commissioner with Somerset County Council and will take up his post in Oxfordshire in September. Mr Chandler gained national recognition for leading the transformation of Adult services in Somerset, as well as being system lead with the NHS for a number of urgent care work streams.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON

DOBSONS LANE, LOWER ASSENDON

Stage I of the remedial work was completed at the end of February. Stage II of the works should have started today with completion due by the end of the week.

THIRD READING BRIDGE

This project has gained new momentum and there is a Steering Group meeting on 18th October. In advance of this, I am taking a motion expressing concern to Full Council on 10th September.

FLYTIPPING

Further to my report in July subsequent to an enquiry by a resident, I have had the following response from the OCC Waste Strategy Manager:

HWRCs have always accepted all household waste free of charge. Charges have been made for non household 'DIY' waste for over 11 years. Prior to 2017 householders were allowed to deposit 3 items of DIY waste for free, and were charged £1/item thereafter. In 2017 charges were raised for the first time in 11 years and changed to £1.50/item (no items for free). Charges for tyres and plasterboard were also increased slightly. Asbestos has always been accepted for free and this remains the case. We have never accepted any type of waste free of charge at the HWRCs if the work has been carried out by a tradesperson.

Soil, rubble, hard-core, plasterboard (gypsum) other DIY type items are classified as construction waste, not household waste, and are expensive for the council to dispose of. The council is not obliged to provide residents with a disposal site for non-household waste. However Oxfordshire County Council recognises that many householders carry out small DIY projects from time to time, and by applying a small charge this allows HWRCs to continue accepting these discretionary types of non-household waste.

Fly-tipping is a serious environmental crime predominantly carried out by traders who do not wish to pay to dispose of their waste legally. We do not believe that a small increase in the charge for householders to dispose of non-household waste will drive people to criminal activity. Oxfordshire County Council consulted residents on changes to the HWRCs in 2015 and 2016. Responses indicated that residents would prefer to pay to deposit waste rather than have their local site close.

Flytipping data as presented to the resident includes flytips of all sizes and all types of waste across the time period. In order to make the direct correlation that fly tipping has increased as a result of the HWRC charges, we would need to see an increase in flytipping of the types of waste that we charge for, and not an increase in the types of waste that we don't. We requested backing data from all the districts, and analysis indicates that waste charged for at the HWRCs makes up a similar percentage of total flytips before and after the charging scheme was altered. We acknowledge that there has been a small increase in some districts, but chargeable HWRC waste is not the sole cause of flytipping increases across the county.

Flytipping is increasing nationally, in May 2019 the LAG reported a 40% increase in the number of flytipping incidents in England since 2012. This is a worrying trend and OCC and the District and City Councils are keen to see this reversed. We work together with the Environment Agency and Thames Valley Police to share intelligence and information, and have had several successful flytipping prosecutions in recent years. Our recently adopted Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy states that we will continue to improve the environment for local residents, taking enforcement action against those caught committing environmental crime.