

REPORT TO BIX & ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL JANUARY 2021 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

KEEP TO TIER 4 DISCIPLINES IN 2021 AS CASES CONTINUE TO RISE

Steep rises in COVID-19 cases in Oxfordshire have continued with people being strongly urged enter the New Year strictly abiding by the new tier 4 level of restrictions that came in to force on Boxing Day. Tier 4 is the highest alert level in the national four-tier system, and it means that Oxfordshire residents must stay at home, except for a limited number of purposes. These include essential work that cannot be done from home, buying food, taking exercise, or getting medical treatment. In tier 4, you cannot meet other people socially indoors, unless you live with them or are part of a support bubble. The latest data shows that the virus is continuing to spread rapidly in the county. The weekly rate currently stands at 338.2 per 100,000. The rise is particularly concerning among the over 60s, where cases are continuing to rise in all parts of the county. Hospital admissions are increasing rapidly as a result.

RIVER LEVELS IN OXFORDSHIRE AND GRITTING UPDATES

Heavy rain over Christmas means that high river levels remain in Oxfordshire even though drier and much colder weather has predominated since December 27. Motorists are advised not to attempt to drive through any remaining floodwater as they run the risk of becoming stranded. There is also advice to take care on roads in freezing temperatures and when there is fog. Flood water is not clean and not suitable for children to play in. There might be hidden hazards under the water such as manhole covers that have lifted. Anyone who has been in flood water should wash their hands at the soonest opportunity. OCC has produced a [flooding toolkit](#) which provides advice and support for residents and businesses. It gives information on preparing for instances of flooding. If members of the public need sandbags they should dial 101 or if a life-threatening situation arises dial 999.

SCAMMERS TARGET RESIDENTS WITH PROMISE OF COVID VACCINE

Residents are urged to be on their guard against scammers using the promise of a coronavirus vaccine to con them out of money. Criminals across the country are contacting people out of the blue with offers of a coronavirus vaccination. These approaches have been made by text or from a recorded voice message on the telephone. In each case the recipient is required to respond by clicking a link in the text message or by pressing 1 when receiving the call. They are then asked to give personal information, as well as financial details to book their vaccination. However, these are scams, with criminals exploiting the pandemic to attempt to steal personal details and people's money.

WINTER SUPPORT ROLLED OUT FOR STRUGGLING FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

Families and individuals struggling with finances or needing help because of COVID-19 this winter can now access support provided by Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, district councils and voluntary and community organisations. Oxfordshire councils have received £1.37 million from the government's new [COVID-19 Winter Grant Scheme](#) to run local support schemes for those in greatest need. They are working closely together to identify residents requiring urgent assistance within the rules of the scheme and the most effective ways of delivering support. This includes working with local Citizens Advice services to continue and expand support already put in place during the autumn. For anyone needing support this winter, Good Food Oxford's [food map](#) provides practical information to help find and access information about services such as foodbanks, community kitchens and food surplus cafes. It covers the whole of Oxfordshire.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON

VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS (VAS)

On driving through the village, I saw that the poles and the VAS heads are now installed, but don't appear to be working. Please advise me if you need me to intervene on this matter.

DEER KILLED ON A4130 NETTLEBED TO BIX

I have investigated the issue in the past and continue to receive emails about it. I share the concerns about the sad death of these animals but, regrettably, there is nothing OCC can do. Suggestions I receive include:

Fencing. This is the responsibility of the landowner and the council cannot compel them to fence their land.

Signage. There are existing signs (last refurbished in May) and they have been deemed to be adequate by OCC officers. The parish council would have to pay for more signs if they were supportive of the idea (I previously raised this issue at the last 'physical' parish council meeting in March).

Speeding enforcement. This is a matter for the police and beyond the remit of OCC.

Speed limit. The area does not meet national criteria for a reduction.

HENLEY HGV BAN

As the PC is aware, Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak, Henley's representative at OCC, is campaigning for an HGV ban in Henley. I have much sympathy with his objectives but my concern is that HGVs will simply be deflected along the B481 or elsewhere if this occurs. When the Bix duals were being resurfaced a few years ago and HGVs were unable to use them, the increase in HGV traffic along the B481 impacted on parishes along the road. Councillor Gawrysiak has acknowledged this concern. I have seen his virtual presentation and am somewhat reassured, although I still have questions about the feasibility of his ANPR/HGV register proposals; I therefore abstained on his motion at SODC Full Council meeting in December. I will do the same if it comes to OCC Full Council before my concerns are fully assuaged.