

Parish Report: May 2026

Dear Parishes

Happy spring! This is a slightly shorter version as I've been busy with local elections – but the campaigning has given me a great excuse to spend time all over the ward and report some blocked drains and potholes in between leafleting. It's also been good to see some of the surface dressing work being carried out on some of the roads in the area, which should extend the life of the roads.

I was also delighted that removal of the illegal waste near Kidlington has finally begun to be cleared – although I was sadly unable to go to the snazzy kick-off event with the Minister as they don't make PPE for babies! Clearance is on track to complete by late summer.

I am also still reporting potholes as I go around. Including lying down in one to demonstrate the size. There are moments when I really do question my life choices!

Lastly, I've been made aware that I included an incorrect link to the 'schemes map' showing planned highways schemes in my last report. The correct link is here: https://oxfordshire.highway-iams.uk/Live/PBLC_ANON/PIP/?cg=scheme

All the best

Laura

What I've been working on:

Drains: a few drains have been missed in the pass through, including a number in Charlton and about half of Piddington. A few others were not cleared properly so have filled quickly. I have reported a very large number of these on fix my street and chased up some other reports. Please let me know if there are blocked drains in your area and I'll chase them up.

Fly Tipping: I have reported a large number of fly tips and chased removal directly with CDC – they have a significant backlog at the moment but I will continue to chase, and please let me know if there are sites in your parish. A review of the tip booking system will be carried out including the impact on the household recycling centres as well as on fly tipping – my suspicion is that this is likely to be driven by the clampdown on trader abuse of the tips rather than by individuals, but the review will tell us more.

Islip Bridge: Closure has been confirmed from Monday 6th July to Friday 28th August. The H5 bus will continue to run. I am pushing for parking on the Wheatley Road side of the bridge to enable people travelling from the Noke direction to park and walk into Islip to access services such as the GP and the school, and for

flexibility to allow farmers to cross to bring harvest in. Please let me know if you have other issues to raise.

Spare Seats: I have been made aware that Oxfordshire is withdrawing access to the Spare Seats scheme for some families in this area as the vehicles are not compliant with disability law. I am trying to get more information on why other options were not pursued, such as procuring new vehicles that are compliant.

A41 Cycle Lane: the cycle lane has been proposed to be on the far side of the A41, due to a veteran tree blocking the preferred route on the Otmoor side. I am pushing for either a review of this decision or, more likely, mitigations to make the new cycle lane more accessible for Otmoor residents, such as improvements to the bridleway next to Wendlebury to allow cyclists to cross via the signal-controlled crossing.

In County Hall: I attended Place Scrutiny Committee where I asked about support to rural public transport, in particular highlighting the 'mini-Switzerland' pilot being carried out in the peak district. This focuses on aligning bus and train timetables to enable more people to use public transport (incredibly, until recently it was illegal to do this due to competition law) and if it succeeds it could be an exciting model to explore in other rural areas.

Road and Right of Way Closures

Roads:

09/05/2026-10/05/2026(04:00-18:00): the slip road to Weston-on-the-Green and the B430 will be closed on 9th and 10th May for Surface Sealing Works

06/07/2026-28/08/2026: Islip Bridge closed for structural repairs

Footpaths and Bridleways:

Footpath Closure in Hampton Gay and Poyle/Kidlington: The footpath running from the Islip Road to Bicester Road is closed until further notice due to the illegal landfill

Footpath closure: Footpath between Merton and Fencott/Murcott closed until October 2026 due to an unsafe bridge across the River Ray

County Council Business

(note: there is less information than usual due to the pre-election period)

Fire and rescue: It was announced that the majority of plans will be dropped and the county will invest in reinvigorating the volunteer firefighting service. While it remains likely that changes will be needed in future, the consultation responses have provided useful feedback that will enable public views and, critically, ideas, to be proactively considered at an early stage.

Special Educational Needs: Oxfordshire's special educational needs improvement notice was lifted, reflecting progress in the service. While we clearly aren't there yet, we're pleased that things are going in the right direction and that progress has been recognised.

County Hall: with the sale of County Hall meaning we will be moving out by the end of the year, temporary office space has been secured at Midland House, West Way, Botley.

EV Chargers: 1,500 new public EV chargers are to be installed across Oxfordshire thanks to £4 million of funding from central government.

East West Rail: the final consultation for East West Rail is ongoing – you can find out more at: eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/east-west-rail-announces-details-of-final-consultation