

## **Report from District Councillor for 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

### **Boundary Commission**

The boundary Commission has been looking at the district wards in the Vale and trying to “level up” by trying to ensure that wards have more or less the same number of residents. The proposal to bring Baulking into Ridgeway Ward to add to our 7 villages was dropped as it has much closer ties with Uffington. No proposed change proposed for East Challow.

However, some changes have been made to the county divisions and my understanding is that the Challows will now be a part of West Wantage (not sure how far that extends – I suspect this side of Denchworth Road).

### **No 68 Community Bus**

I have been told by the county council transport officers that the No 68 community bus will continue after March 2025. However, OCC are also carrying out a consultation and have asked the parish councils to forward their comments and suggestions about continuation to OCC. The deadline closes on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Although the service is currently heavily subsidised by OCC residents are using it more and more frequently with the bus being full at times. Several residents from different villages have mentioned how important it is for them. I have fed these comments back to the OCC transport officers with my own request that it be continued as an important means of communication for many residents in our villages improving their quality of life.

### **Crest Nicholson Estate (Fuller’s Grove)**

This estate is being handed over from the developer to the management company, Pinnacle, although a number of trees which are clearly dead (we have had a promise of replacement but they will only replace in the winter), the mixed species hedge along the north edge and the footpath has not been planted, there remain blocked drains and the “wild flower meadow” is a mess. As has happened with the Nalder estate and is happening with the Childrey Park residents, a number of Crest residents are intending to form a residents’ association and doing something similar. The first meeting was to be the 8<sup>th</sup> and if it goes ahead I will feed back to the parish council. Ryan Moore is following up with Crest about the lights that are now working along the A417.

### **Cornhill Lane**

We have now heard from Highways that Cornhill Lane will be closed to motor traffic (excluding motorcycles with a review after a year). This is good news and is the outcome that I had hoped. There is no date for this to be done and we don’t yet know what barriers will be erected to enable pedestrians and horses to pass. We will no doubt be told in due course. OCC has carried out a consultation which needs to be completed by October 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Broadband**

We have had a number of online meetings with the OCC digital officers about the roll-out of full-fibre broadband to the villages. We are concerned that Openreach may be dragging their feet for commercial reasons. Although Airband have been chaotic there has been a big shake up in the company and OCC are optimistic that they have raised their game. They are using Childrey and West Challow as pilots to demonstrate their improved efficiency and to generate confidence in residents with a full survey and parish meetings. We will be following these pilots to see how relevant this will be to our village.

### **Flooding**

The recent downpours last month caused further huge problems in the Letcombes and water started to flood off the land opposite Mellor's. I continue to try to get assurance that we will not have a repeat of last winter's chaos from October onwards again but remain unconvinced. Admittedly the level of flooding has not been of the same order as experienced Abingdon or Didcot but our problems arise from a decades of neglect by landowners and also OCC and The Vale.

### **Road closure**

The A338 will be closed at the Ark from October 14-15<sup>th</sup>.

### **HOSC**

A meeting took place on 12<sup>th</sup> September which I attended online. Points discussed included global shortage of some medicines. Pharmacies are beginning to set up informal networks to ensure they now where all the medicines are held. Epilepsy services are woefully underfunded and understaffed and efforts are underway to improve this.

**Cllr Dr Paul Barrow**  
**Ridgeway Ward**  
**4th October 2024**