

**Annual Report**  
**Cllr Ian Corkin**  
**April 2023**

My intention is to attend as many annual meetings as possible, but I do have some additional caring commitments now, so please accept my apologies if I am unable to.

This year marks 20 years involvement for me in local politics, firstly at parish level, then district and county. It has been an exceptionally enjoyable time, but with a big birthday looming I have decided to step down from CDC this year but will remain as a county councillor for the next two years. It has not been an easy decision, but it is as important to know when to go as when to stand and I know I'm leaving the ward in very good hands with Patrick and Barry, who I would like to thank for their support and friendship.

**Cherwell District Council**

It has been another busy year at CDC, where in addition to representing Fringford & Heyford Ward, I have also served as both Deputy Leader and executive member for regeneration and economy.

Planning remains the most active area. Protecting the villages from inappropriate development has always been a priority, although as we know, that is not always possible once the Planning Inspectorate get involved. At the moment there are emerging applications for some large distribution sheds at junction 10 of the M40 and incredibly a rail freight interchange between Ardley and Middleton Stoney. Both are progressing very slowly, and National Highways have a holding directive on the Jnc10 proposals while much more modelling is done on traffic impacts. In the end, it seems likely that they will all be called in by the Planning Inspectorate so they can assess the impacts in the round, but it needs watching very closely going forward.

EWR and HS2 also continue their slow and impactful progress across the area, not just in the area of construction, but also in the wider area via the huge numbers of HGV's required to feed the build out.

Graven Hill continues to progress well, with circa 500 occupations and 1M sqft of commercial space exchanged on. The new primary school opens in September, and good progress is being made on sports facilities, a nursery and a new extra care facility for older residents. As the number of occupations increases there is more interest in the retail premises, with a dentist being the latest to sign up. Graven Hill continues to make an appropriate financial return to the council as it offers people an alternative to the larger house builders that are active in the area.

As lead member for regeneration and economy I have set in train a wide-ranging consultation for Banbury that will build on the excellent investment at Castle Quay and Waterside, delivering a new masterplan for the wider town centre and setting the direction of travel for how people want to live, work and play in Banbury for the next 30 years.

In Bicester I was able to secure £4.25M in the April 23 budget to drive the transformation of the market square and surrounding area. Bicester's future is incredibly bright, especially as EW Rail opens up eastern links to Milton Keynes and beyond, but we need to make sure that the centre of the town is transformed into a really interesting destination for residents and visitors. Transforming the market square is the first part of that, and I believe it will be a catalyst to a rich public/private partnership. This will all be done with the community rather than to them, so everyone will have the opportunity to feed into what they want "their Bicester" to look like in the coming months.

Of course, this all assumes that the Conservatives still control CDC after the local elections at the beginning of May. Last November an independent review by the Local Government Association heralded CDC as a “leader of place, with big ambitions and a track record of delivering.” By contrast, the Lib/Lab/Green coalition in Oxfordshire is a total fiasco of anti-business, anti-farming, right-on chaos and they intend to do the same in Cherwell if they can cobble together a coalition on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Oxfordshire County Council**

The situation remains very difficult at County Hall. It continues to haemorrhage staff and its ableist fixation on all things bike is to the exclusion of its substantive responsibilities in adult social care and children’s services. The highways network has never been more dilapidated (although it found £15,000 to resurface its own small car park), but it could still find £3M in the budget to plant trees. Twice to my knowledge it has done this on private land without the prior consent of the owner; once on someone’s front lawn and astonishingly a single tree in 200 acres of private woodland! Parents of children with special educational needs & disabilities have marched in protest in Oxford at their disgraceful treatment, likewise business owners who have seen their businesses destroyed by the hated low traffic neighbourhoods have taken to the streets, as have farmers who rightly pointed out that their Vegan only policy of catering favoured flown in kiwi fruits and avocado’s over locally grown produce. The introduction of number plate recognition cameras in Oxford in the small zero emission zone has raised £700, 000 in fines in 12 months and motorists can expect to see similar schemes and fines rolled out across the county. There is a sensible way of encouraging more sustainable forms of transport, but this is not it. They are also withdrawing the school transport “spare seats scheme” for many pupils in the county. Up to 235 children are affected this year, but and as many as 1,384 students could be impacted in the medium term. They will tell you this is a cost saving as they rationalise home to school transport, but it has much more to do with their ideological dislike of parental choice. They have recently issued an apology to parents and admitted they handled notifications badly. They are not, however, backing down on their withdrawal policy. Likewise, a number of very unsuitable walking routes have recently been reclassified as suitable (not necessarily “safe”, which they tell me is “not their responsibility”, “that is down to parents”!) and free school transport has been withdrawn for those children too.

If you are able bodied, live in the city and can ride a bike, you’re probably in luck, but for the vast majority of Oxfordshire residents, particularly those with complex needs, Oxfordshire weekly becomes a less attractive place to live or invest in.

That said, I continue to represent the residents of Ploughley Division as best I can. I have worked hard to secure 106 mitigation for parishes, particularly those around Heyford Park. Working with Siemens, it has been possible to deliver Little Chesterton gated road status and additional attenuation to one of the watercourses that crosses their site. This will significantly reduce the chances of property flooding in Wendlebury once it is built. The future of a regular bus service from Heyford Park is still in discussion, with the new service due to launch in August this year. The repairs and restoration of Lower Heyford Long Bridge are finally underway, but only after OCC allowed a section of it to collapse. Work is also underway to make traffic improvements at Newton Purcell after funding was obtained from HS2. Likewise, I am seeking ways to improve the traffic situation in Launton, which has been heavily impacted by the highways work on the A41 and the configuration of the new Ploughley junction. Repairs and then resurfacing to Bicester Road is planned, as is a village wide 20mph scheme and extension of both the 20mph limit and

HGV restriction to Charbridge Lane roundabout to help reduce rat running. Work is also ongoing to secure funding for vehicle activated speed signs within the village.

This is only a snapshot of ongoing work, so please contact me directly to discuss any specific issues you may have.

Casework also remains busy, but as ever, confidential. I have also had the opportunity over the last couple of years to support local groups with small grants from my councillor priority fund as follows:

- **Upper Heyford PC**, £650: village goal posts
- **Lighthouse Shelswell**, £300: Children's Holiday Club
- **Ability Community Bus**, £500
- **Wendlebury Woodland Project**, £450: Bowlers Copse
- **Invicta National Academy**, £250: Summer school post covid catch up
- **Launton Village Players**, £452: HEPA filter
- **Ardley United Football Club**, £1500: To repair storm damage
- **Cottisford Parish Meeting**, £613: Community speed watch equipment
- **Shelswell History Festival**, £1000: Art and history festival
- **Chesterton PC**, £1000: New notice board
- **Lower Heyford Bowls Club**, £2150: New equipment repair and storage shed
- **Heyford Park Scouts**, £1550: New camping equipment
- **Little Lambs Play Group**, £180: New play equipment
- **Stoke Lyne Meeting Room**, £2690: New audio equipment
- **Chesterton Play Group**, £1540: New fence around play area

Perhaps typically, OCC have been very slow processing payments for some of the later ones, but they assure me they will all be done by the end of April. A new fund will be open in early May and I will let everyone know when it is available.

Finally, I would like to give a huge shout out to all of the volunteers and parish councillors who do so much brilliant work. You make an incredible difference to your communities and you have my heartfelt thanks.