

December/New Year report

Since May I've logged 93 enquiries under the Council's enquiry system. As of 11 December, 14 remain outstanding; a learning point from this relatively new system is that some have had a response and been 'closed', but before the requested action has been agreed.

We await with trepidation the announcement of the Government's financial settlement for Oxfordshire, due on 17 or 18 December.

Library Friends

Following a recent meeting with Friends of Deddington Library I'm pursuing plans for the capacity improvements funded by Section 106 contributions. I've also asked the Deputy Leader (who has libraries in his portfolio) to help Friends groups by

Planning and related issues

The [interim report of the Oxford Growth Commission](#) was published by the Government on 15 December. At a first reading, it will receive a mixed response. It talks of increasing housebuilding totals even further above existing levels, while not mentioning the 11,000 homes currently with planning permission but unbuilt across Cherwell. More locally, it notes the need to consider cumulative impacts and what are described as 'potential clashes'.

Movement & Place Plan – now due March

It was clear that a lot more work needed to be done for the Bicester & Mid-Cherwell Movement & Place Plan. This will now go to Cabinet in March. I'm talking to officers about an additional liaison event, possibly in late January.

Meet our new gritters!

30 new gritters for salting roads across the county over the winter season have been named. Radiospread, Alfred the Grit, Agatha Gritstie, Prof Stephen Thawking and Snowy Beauchamp [my favourite] are amongst the names chosen. Deddington Primary School has a gritter in its name too. You can [read more here](#).

Shaping the future of our fire and rescue service

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue has a consultation on a set of proposals for improving safety, efficiency and resilience of the service. This consultation closes on 20 January. I'm a member of the joint consultative committee with the Fire Brigades Union; I've spoken to firefighters from a number of stations and Please offer your feedback here: <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrs-consultation>

Carers Phone Friends

This is a new service from Carers Oxfordshire to support unpaid carers by connecting them with trained volunteers who understand the challenges of caring. Please promote this service across your networks. You can find out more, make referrals or volunteer here:

<https://www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk/carers-phone-friends/> or by calling 01295 234 850

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

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