

Eynsham Annual Parish Meeting 25 April 2017

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – 2016/17

It always seems as each year passes in the role of your County Councillor that the issues of concern repeat themselves and progress is slow. There are however some highlights but also some measures of considerable disappointment and frustration.

The Gravel situation remains critical as the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy proceeds at a stately pace to the next stage, the Inspector's Public Enquiry having produced some changes but in my view not in the most vital area. The LAA or in common terms the sharp sand and gravel excavated in Oxfordshire in every year to 2031 has been agreed by the Inspector at 1.015 tonnes; compared with a declining ten year average of 628,000 tonnes and a 2015 actual figure of 768,000 tonnes: the Plan figure is an immediate increase of 62% and 32% respectively. I believe this decision by Oxfordshire County Council to be excessive enough to make the plan unsound. You ask why- the landbank (extant permissions granted) advised is seven years and the excess detracts from the pressure to utilise secondary (recycled) rather than primary gravel. The good aspect of the Draft Plan is an attempt to equalise the geographical distribution of excavation to reflect usage. From a ten year average of 76:24 per cent of gravel dug in Oxfordshire, by the end of this Plan (2031), the 15 year statistics will show a 50:50 split between North Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire to reflect need. Current Landbank leads me to believe there is no prospect of new permissions being granted in West Oxfordshire within this plan.

I have attended the **Neighbourhood Plan** meetings (Eynsham Futures) as a spectator over the last years and am aware of the volume of work and expertise that has accompanied the Plan. I must just hope that significant notice is taken of the completed Plan and the rationale behind it; in this way the Local West Oxfordshire Plan will be all the stronger.

Local Highway issues have been as always foremost in my deliberations and many will know of my concerns about the effectiveness of the current A40 'improvements'. I continue to believe that this issue is fundamental and I will continue to endorse a complete solution as soon as possible.

The plans to double the size of Eynsham by 2031 are concerning as I do not foresee the infrastructure being in place or even planned to ensure services are conducive to habitation. Some of you will know that I remain very unhappy both about the use of Thornbury Road as a conduit for all the traffic to the 160 plus new houses approved to the west of Witney Road and the translation of an access road from the A40 to a western bypass joining up with the B4449- the latter because it will be used as a rat run to the A415 to the detriment of peace in the rest of the Lower Windrush area and will accentuate the existing traffic problems in Sutton.

My views on Unitary have been published in the March edition of Eynsham News page 12.

I have received support from your Parish Council and local residents for which I thank you all and continue to liaise effectively with your District Councillors.

I would be happy to answer any of your questions and discuss extant concerns about the future of this historic village. Many thanks.

CHARLES MATHEW – tel: 01865 882205, email: charles.mathew@oxfordshire.gov.uk