

Oxford Association of Local Councils with Oxfordshire County Council Training Day

June 27th, 2023

Introduction by Martin Reeves CEO of OCC

Key points:

- Parish councils are important. We need to reset, re-imagine some of the relationships/ keen on partnerships
 - OCC is stuck in some areas/lack of decisiveness
 - OCC is fascinated with verticals and are dominated by such structures. There is value in cross discussions – big area that needs change
 - His view of the county is that it is fascinating with significant deprivation alongside brilliance. There needs to be a focus on economic and social well-being
 - Re-think the above. Can we have a Charter?
 - There needs to be touch points and contact on specific issues
 - Commitment to a timely response
 - PC need further engagement. They need to feel part of the solution.
1. Oxfordshire History Centre
 - Records are deposited here (ecclesiastical records were kept at the Bodleian)
 - Parish remains the owner of the records
 - Also have county newspapers and magazines on microfilm, can ask to use them and even request that they find something.
 - Parish records go back to 1894
 - Visit website for details:
 - www.oxfordshire.gov.uk , search for Oxford History Centre
 - Ideas: search maps, try a heritage search for a parish
 2. Oxfordshire Emergency Planning
 - Overview of Emergency Planning with a description of how the service is delivered, who is in charge and who to contact. Some of the areas covered are:
 - Fire
 - Building evacuation
 - Severe weather
 - Flooding

- Heavy snow and extreme cold
 - High winds
 - Hot weather
 - Infectious diseases
 - Loss of water and power
 - Security incidents
- a. Household Emergency Plans
 - there is a booklet with this information which could prove invaluable
 - note green and white bottle to be stored in fridge with sticker on door for prescription details in case evacuation is fast
 - b. Village Plan
 - Some villages have developed Emergency Plans with named persons to contact. These plans must be reviewed every three years
 - c. Who To Contact
 - Impressive list
 - d. Talks to communities always available (WI had one several years ago and it was excellent)

Takeaway – are we up to date on the vulnerable and are they on the appropriate lists for door-to-door care ie. In case of utility failure in cold weather

Note: KIT

3. Highways

Countryside Introduction

- This team keep the countryside records and maps all routes
- All public rights of way are highways
- Can find map for your area
- There are thousands of unrecorded rights of ways and if we have any -get them recorded and the service is about to be stopped *****claim ancient routes (could be a factor in protecting them.**

Town & Village Green and Common Land

- Major registration in 1960s and 70s
- Note rights of owners, renewed every twenty years (slide to come)
- Note the following:
 1. Maps: oxfordshirecountycouncil.gov.uk/prwd
 2. Green space discussion – get clarification
 3. Note ‘Trust for Oxfordshire Environment’ (TOE)
 4. Note: ‘Countryside Access Management System (CAM). Not great

5. Use: countryside@oxfordshire.gov.uk
6. Use: 'What3words'

Highways. Keith.stenning@oxfordshire.gov.uk Network Management Team

- Agree that there are time lags and communication issues
- When you can't find your way through it contact Keith Stenning
- Use your OCC Councillor to lobby for attention – thank you Nigel Simpson!!!!

Headlines:

- Drayton Open Day – come and see all the equipment and learn how repairs are made and road crews work (Deddington later in the year)
 - You'll want to see the Dragon Patcher
 - Still are a number of people working from home
- a. Verge and vegetation management – new policy *one mow per year. Decision based on biodiversity with advice from Plant Life. There are issues around where the contractor cuts as new maps for cutting may not be used.

Quote from website: “...earlier this year we updated our maintenance policy to prioritise biodiversity where possible. This new approach means that all roadside verges in Oxfordshire (rural and urban) will be **cut once a year**. Wildlife refuges will be cut in rotation every five years.

This approach does not compromise safety, and we will trim areas that impede driver visibility more regularly if necessary.

Our partner councils often follow the same approach in the areas they look after, although some may decide to mow more regularly depending on their own landscaping policy.

We have worked with Oxford University on [guidelines](#) to help partners tackle the biodiversity crisis”

Note: Excellent poster. Please contact biodiversity@ouce.ox.ac.uk if you would like a high-resolution version of this poster to use.

<https://www.biodiversity.ox.ac.uk/publications/urban-meadow-and-verge-guidelines-poster/>

- b. 20 mph. (this is really regarding villages coming under the three-year programme of rolling out 20mph to all villages that want it.
- There is communication with village councils before any decision or signage is made

- This is a case-by-case programme and there will be some areas where OCC makes decision
 - Expected outcomes? Better air quality and safety
 - Recommend 'Speedwatch' as a speed awareness scheme
 - Issues around legally maintaining 20 mph. The police do not presently have the resources to do this. But Thames Valley is increasing the number of police on the ground quite considerably.
 - Speedwatch camera is recognised by 9 police forces in the country and speeders are held to account
 - Thames Valley Police do NOT recognise the camera – **this is a lobby point****
 - “people who speed in the community live in the community” – result of a study on speeding
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The day was highly informative but did indicate that OCC is under-resourced and need to improve communication

Diane Bohm Chair

June 27th, 2023



Martin Reeves

Dr Martin Reeves has been named as the new Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council.

He will take over from Interim Chief Executive, Stephen Chandler, who has been in post since February 2022, when the process of ending the partnership between Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council began.

Martin Reeves joins from Coventry City Council where he has been Chief Executive since 2009, with responsibility for overseeing 4,500 employees, a £750 million revenue budget and a £250m capital programme. From 2008 - 2009 he was chief executive of Bedfordshire County Council, after serving as assistant chief executive there from 2006 - 2008.

Martin Reeves said: “The time is right for a new challenge, and I am proud to be remaining in local government, which is an area that makes such a positive difference to so many lives.

“I have worked with so many great people in Coventry and been given the opportunity to deliver major change as well as innovative programmes that have transformed the way we deliver services to our residents.

“Similar challenges and opportunities lie ahead in Oxfordshire – a county full of ideas, innovation, inspiration, and an ambition to deliver.

“Oxfordshire has internationally recognised universities and high-tech institutions, a thriving economy, and vibrant rural and urban communities, but it also faces challenges including a growing and ageing population, rising demand for housing and vital services, such as adult social care. The county also contains 10 of the most deprived wards in England.

“I look forward to working hard with not only new colleagues at the county council to tackle these issues, but crucially with partners, residents and Oxfordshire’s wide and active communities to make the county the very best place it can be.”

Martin Reeves has also served as chief executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority and head of paid service (2016 - 2017), where he was responsible for the authority being given the power to choose its first directly elected mayor for the West Midlands.

His previous experience in local government includes roles at Westminster City, Waltham Forest and Reigate and Banstead councils, following a career in academia prior to 2000.

The appointment was made by Oxfordshire County Council’s Remuneration Committee, which is made up of a cross-party panel of elected members, following a recruitment process. The appointment is subject to formal approval at a meeting with all county councillors on 13 December.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, said: “We are delighted to welcome Martin as our new chief executive. He brings with him a wealth of experience in local government, and we believe he is the right person to take the council forward and enable us to deliver the administration’s ambitious priorities.