

Report from Cllr Ian Corkin

It has been a busy and productive year with regard to County Council affairs within the village. I am very conscious of the impact growth within Bicester has on the villages that surround it. The increasing levels of traffic it brings can blight satellite villages, who often see no upside from the development and do not benefit from funding to mitigate its impacts. It is a constant campaign for me and one that I promote at every opportunity, including as a member of Cherwell District Councils planning committee. More specifically for Launton:

To support the community and PC, I have intervened in a number of Highways Issues:
The approach to the Bicester Road railway bridge was properly resurfaced rather than patched
Surface pooling of water along Blackthorn Road was addressed when OCC cleared the drains and dug out/cleared a drainage ditch at the edge of the village

A new footpath was installed by OCC (free of charge!) so users of the Hummingbird Centre could gain easier and safer access to the centre from the car park.

The junction of Blackthorn Road with the A41 is also to be remodelled. This is a work in progress, but follows an onsite meeting with Launton PC, Blackthorn PC and OCC officers.

West End remains a concern. There is an issue with Thames Water that Victoria Prentis MP is following up. I also commissioned a survey of the area and this identified a number of areas for temporary filling, but that it needs more significant patching work and I am currently awaiting an update on dates.

The HGV environmental restriction has been a positive move and there have been some prosecutions in Launton for infringements. I have forwarded information to the PC about how resident groups can help enforce this and I am happy to support any residents who are interested in getting involved.

Two Launton community schemes have benefited from grants from my Councillor Priority Fund:
Launton Church of England Primary School received a grant to help them buy the equipment necessary to invite village residents into the school to meet with the children. It is a really farsighted scheme that aims to integrate the school into the community, reduce loneliness and isolation for older residents, whilst passing on their local knowledge and skills to the children.

The second grant came out of a meeting in the village with OCC highways officers when we walked the main roads and discussed potential issues and improvements. One of those was the implementation of a 20mph zone outside of the school.

I continue to work closely with your District Councillors and I always take a special interest in Launton issues as a member of CDC planning committee. Whilst not prejudging planning applications, as a general rule I am very much against speculative and inappropriate development in our villages. We have a local plan and we are making good progress in achieving the rural allocation and we should not feel pressured to accept schemes that do not enhance the rural setting. Most recently, I spoke in opposition to the Powersun Ltd application for generation facilities on land adjacent to the Bicester Road roundabout, including the need to ensure that Launton does not simply coalesce with Bicester.

I continue to meet regularly with representatives from OCC, CDC and representatives from East/West Rail and HS2 to ensure local communities have a strong voice in these major infrastructure projects.

I continue to engage positively with Bicester Heritage as their plans for the site develop. I do not wish to prejudge any plans that may come forward, but as ever, I am keen to ensure that there are positive outcomes for local communities as a result of local developments. This includes bringing the old quarry back into public use as per the original planning obligation. As a result of a study done last year by OCC, we now know that the site has some nationally significant flora and fauna and it is unlikely that restoration to a country park would be allowed now, but rather something more sympathetic like a nature reserve. I will continue to update as plans for the quarry evolve.

I continue to deal with a range of casework for individual residents. By their nature, these are always confidential so I can not list them here, but I am always very happy to be of assistance.

Finally, keeping in touch with residents is important to me. I do this by attending community events and meetings, trying to get out and about around the patch for a pint on Friday evenings (a Councillor's lot is not an easy one 😊) and I am always very happy to discuss issues with residents if you see me. I also have an active councillor Facebook page, @cllriancorkin and my recently launched website www.iancorkin.yourcllr.com