

LAYLA MORAN MP

Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Oxford West & Abingdon

www.LaylaMoran.com

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
and Councillor Susan Brown
Oxford City Council
Town Hall
St Aldate's
Oxford
OX1 1BX

Our Ref: GG/LM83636
23rd July 2026

Dear Caroline Green and Councillor Brown,

RE: Grandpont Nature Park Footpath Closures: Request for Review & Clarification

We are writing regarding the planned closure of footpaths through Grandpont Nature Park associated with the Oxpens Bridge project.

Following Network Rail's announcement on 22 July that the reopening of Botley Road will be delayed by a further 4-6 weeks, we have been contacted by a number of residents expressing concern about the timing and impact of these closures. We understand similar concerns have also been raised directly with Oxford City Council.

The routes through Grandpont Nature Park are not merely recreational footpaths. During the prolonged closure of Botley Road they have become an important walking and cycling corridor between west Oxford and the city centre, carrying significant numbers of commuters, residents, families, cyclists and other active travel users.

We have also heard concerns from residents regarding the apparent lack of advance communication before closure notices appeared on site. The signage referring to a closure period of 56 weeks understandably caused alarm, while subsequent commentary online has suggested the works may be completed significantly earlier, which has led to considerable confusion.

Residents have also raised particular concerns about the suitability of the diversion route during the winter months, especially for cyclists, wheelchair users, people using mobility aids, parents with buggies and those commuting to work. The routes are regularly used by children travelling between Grandpont and local schools, including Matthew Arnold School and The Swan School, as well as by families travelling to and from the city centre and St Ebbe's.

We would therefore be grateful if the Council could review the current approach and provide clarification on the following points:

- Whether, in light of the latest delay to Botley Road reopening and the cumulative impact on residents, the timing of the Grandpont Nature Park closures could be reconsidered.
- Why both riverside routes are now proposed to close simultaneously, when residents had previously understood that one route would remain open while works were undertaken on the other.

- What assessment has been undertaken of current usage levels on the affected routes, including their role in supporting journeys to schools, workplaces, the city centre and local amenities, and how this informed the decision to close both routes simultaneously.
- What measures are planned to ensure the signed diversion route provides a safe, accessible and practical alternative throughout the closure period.
- What steps the Council is taking to improve communication with residents regarding the closures, including providing clear information about the anticipated duration of the works, key milestones, and any opportunities to reduce the period of disruption should works be completed ahead of schedule.

Given the substantial disruption local residents have experienced over recent years as a result of the Botley Road works, we hope the Council will carefully consider action to maintain access and minimise inconvenience.

We would be grateful for your response, which we will share with residents who have contacted us regarding this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Layla Moran MP

Member of Parliament for Oxford West and Abingdon

Councillor Gareth Epps

Cabinet Member for Transport
Oxfordshire County Council