



Oxfordshire Green Party

**City Budget Speech, given on 19 Feb 2018, by  
Green Party representative for Carfax, Cllr  
Ruthi Brandt**

I'd like to highlight four points from our budget amendment – the restoration and installation of water fountains in the city, the redirection of funds from paving over green verges, to improving them and upgrading their benefits to the community, the new community climate fund we're suggesting and an increase in the Salix Plus fund

Each of these points – if implemented – will contribute to a more resilient city and a more thriving community in the face of the challenges we know are coming our way because of climate change.

Access to clean, safe drinking water is a basic right, and I don't think I need to convince anyone here about the importance of reducing single use plastic. Water bottles, and other soft drinks are a big proportion of that. But it is more than that - this is also an opportunity to help support the Sugar Smart campaign, as access to free water means people are less likely to buy sugary drinks. And it will also help our residents save money. This is especially important as summers become hotter and drier – people need access to safe, free water when they are going about their business on a hot day.

As more and more evidence is gathered about the importance of green areas to the wellbeing of people – both physical and mental – as well as their importance in mitigating flooding, which we know will become more frequent, it is simply madness to start paving over such spaces – we should be doing the opposite – creating new green areas, not paving over existing ones. Especially if we do that for the benefit of a very specific subsection of the community, namely – car owners. What about the rest of the community? We propose that instead of eliminating these crucial spots, we invest in them, and turn them into a