

# BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES of the Blewbury Parish Council Meeting held in the Melland Room on Wednesday 12th February 2020 at 7.30 pm.

**In attendance:** - Cllrs C Lakeland (Chair/CL), V Humphries (VH), J Gibson (JG), M Shayler (MS), M Penington (MP), M Jacobs (MJ), L Inglis (LI). Miss E Cooper (Clerk/EC), Mr D Hollick (Lengthman/DH).

1. Apologies for absence  
District councillors S Medley and H Gascoigne.
2. Declarations of interests relating to this meeting  
None declared.
3. County Councillor's report  
Cllr Mike Fox-Davies presented his report (see Appendix B below).  
Cllr MF-D remarked in particular that a single OCC officer would coordinate A417 concerns through a number of villages.  
The councillors expressed their concerns at the lack of OCC responses to its various enquiries and made the statement that infrastructure is needed for the existing population, not 'future'.  
LI asked for a new contact for cycle ways as no response had been received for some time on the proposed cycle way between Blewbury & Upton (Coffin Way).
4. District Councillor's report (see Appendix C below)
5. Lengthman's report (see Appendix A below)
6. Open Forum  
No members of the public were present.
7. Nominations for vacant councillor post and vote accordingly  
Two nominations were received for the vacant councillor post. Councillors will arrange to meet with the nominees, with a decision being made at the March meeting.
8. Approve previous minutes  
The minutes of the BPC meeting on 15.01.19 were agreed and signed off with no changes.
9. Outstanding Actions from previous meetings and any matters arising  
Confirm whether actions are cleared, carried forward or cancelled.

No.	Actions arising from February 2020 Meeting	When
1.	MF-D to identify Cycleway representative at County for a response to cycleway Blewbury/Upton queries	March meeting
2.	MF-D To confirm parameters of speedwatch/village signs etc to VH	March meeting
3.	To write letter to Secretary of State Jenrick re takeover of SODC local plan	JG/LI
4.	Forward A.McEwan-James correspondence re BOAT to M-FD	JG
5.	All to consider questions for Beeswax representative for March Meeting & forward to Clerk	Week before March meeting

6.	Clerk to work out Blewshed proportion of electricity usage & inform Blewshed for payment	March meeting
7.	Clerk to respond to requestor re siting of new bench on pound.	March meeting.
8.	Clerk to confirm to internal auditor agreement for 3-year deal	Actioned 17.2.20
9.	CL to write to Alex Musson re Bulletin entry on poo bags.	Actioned 16.2.20
10.	Clerk to respond to Didcot Garden Town sounding board email	Response 19.2.20
11.	CL to write acceptance letter to Complete Tree Services re village tree survey.	Actioned 13.2.20
12.	Clerk to pursue Santander/Lloyds switching process	March meeting
13.	CL to explore alternative environmentally friendly electricity suppliers for the Clubhouse/Melland Room and Scout Hut.	March meeting
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions arising from January 2020 Meeting</b>	<b>When</b>
3.	Clerk to write to A McEwan-James re update on Chailey gardens	Chased 17.2.20
9.	Clerk to create PC profile on social media (FB/BVS)	March meeting
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions arising from December 2019 Meeting</b>	<b>When</b>
1.	Bus stops along Bessels Way – Clerk to chase OCC. Email MF-D 19.2.20	March meeting
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions Arising from October Meeting</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
1	Is funding available for Community Action Groups, working on (for example) climate emergency initiatives. Clerk email to Cllr MF-D 19.02.20	March meeting
5	CL also asked the S106 representative if ‘football’ allocated money could be used for football activities at the school.	C’fwd

## 10. Planning & Housing

### 10.1 To receive the planning committee report

Nothing to report over and above the planning consultations below.

### 10.2 To approve responses to current applications

P20/V0100/FUL Churn Stables, Bohams Road, Blewbury

Retention of 7 x self-contained equestrian workers accommodation units and biomass boiler.

Deadline noon 10.02.20. BPC returned no objections 5.2.20

### 10.3 P20/V0161/FUL Land adjacent to The Nurseries, London Road, Blewbury

Revised design for already permitted new dwelling

Deadline noon 14.02.20. BPC returned no objections.

### 10.4 P20/V0191/HH Ashdown House, Berry Lane, Blewbury

Erection of a powder coated aluminium lead-to glasshouse sited on a dwarf wall in keeping with existing brickwork within the property.

Deadline noon 15.02.20. BPC returned no objections.

### 10.5 P19/V1951/HH Green Bushes, Westbrook Street, Blewbury

Amendment no. 1 – proposed oak frame extension & associated minor works

Deadline noon 20.02.20. BPC returned no objections.

10.6 P19/V1952/LB Green Bushes, Westbrook Street, Blewbury

Listed building consent

Deadline noon 20.02.20. BPC returned no objections.

10.7 P19/V3002/FUL Linnets, South Street, Blewbury

Change of use from garage to a separate residential dwelling. The property will still also be a double garage (alteration to garage approved under P17/V1001/HH).

Deadline noon 25.2.20

BPC voted unanimously to object to this consultation on the grounds of the planning history of the garage as it was not built in accordance with the original planning permission granted and therefore has bypassed the usual democratic planning channels.

## 11. Finance & Administration

11.1 To receive an update on CIL or S106 contributions and approve planned expenditure.

11.1.1 Skate park refurbishment update.

Work was completed on 12.2.20.

11.1.2 Any other updates if available

None

11.2 Update on financial arrangements

11.2.1 Online banking – change of bank update

Switch process initiated, but was not completed by the time of the meeting Clerk to pursue.

11.3 Approve payments to be made under ancillary powers and within budgeted amounts

All payments approved by two signatories.

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>Description / Power to spend</b>	<b>Amount</b>
E Cooper / D Hollick	Clerk & Lengthman's salary and expenses for January	£928.90
NEST	Clerk's pension DD January	£69.43
HMRC	PAYE Clerk & Lengthman payment January	£208.00
Biffa Waste Services Ltd	Waste services DD January	£67.92
BT	Clubhouse line rental DD January	£33.00
Came & Co	Additional insurance VH refurbishment – paid 17.1.20 to be ratified	£168.00
SSE	Scout hut electricity 8.2.20	£73.50
Broxap	New bin for KAP area	£192.00
DFAME	Melland room booking BPC January – paid 29.1.20 to be ratified	£20.00
DFAME	Melland room booking Autumn Leaves January – paid 30.1.20 to be ratified	£40.00
Community First Oxfordshire	Membership 1.4.20 – 31.3.21	£70.00
OALC	Training course – Charitable Trusts and PCs	£108.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1978.75</b>

<b>Major Receipts Dec 2019</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Paid in to Lloyds bank 9.1.20	M&J Didcock - Memorial	£105.00
Paid in to Lloyds bank 30.1.20	Midcounties Co-op – Memorial	£75.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£180.00</b>

<b>Barclays Bank Payments</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
27.1.20	Ridge continued professional services inc. post-contract administration & project management for the village hall refurbishment	£3,900.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£3,900.00</b>

11.4 Sign off end of month reconciliations for Lloyds/Santander & Barclays banks  
Signed by Clerk and Chair.

11.5 Confirm the appointment of IAC as internal auditors for 2019/2020  
The council agreed unanimously to accept the 3-year proposal from IAC for internal auditing services.

## 12. Village hall refurbishment

CL spoke on behalf of the Village Hall Refurb Committee. Noting that the removal of asbestos was complete and stripping out work was proceeding. Additional jobs such as tiling and attention to the car park will be added to the list of proposed additional works. Also, that a schedule of payments would be made available in the near future,

together with a meeting to discuss same.

CL also noted that an additional insurance payment was made specifically to cover the period of refurbishment. This will require extending if refurbishment work is extended beyond 6<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

## 13. Recreation Ground / Clubhouse

### 13.1 Update on the recreation ground (TFF / Cricket pitch / Car Parks)

DH confirmed all was well in these areas and that the skate park refurb was completed on 12.2.20.

### 13.2 Update on the Clubhouse

A trial of a central booking system initially on behalf of the VHEMC, but extended to include the Clubhouse, will take place in the near future.

Alternative electricity suppliers are to be explored with a view to reducing costs and using more environmentally conscious providers.

## 14. Risk Management

### 14.1 Update on village play spaces (TFF / KAP)

DH confirmed that all was well in these areas.

### 14.2 Update on Compliance

The Clerk confirmed an annual fee request had been received from the ICO which was too late for the agenda. Clerk's note:- after investigation, no fee was payable.

VH confirmed that a standard charge for producing copies of parish documents was c15p per page.

### 14.3 The council agreed in the absence of further quotes for the survey of village trees, to accept the quote from Complete Tree Services, for work to be carried out in early Spring.

## 15. Update on any issues relating to the Environment

### 15.1 Report on any recent Sustainable Blewbury meeting

The next SB meeting is on 4<sup>th</sup> March

### 15.2 Update on the OGB & ONPA

A list of OGB meetings for the year is included in the District Councillor's update (Appendix C

below). LI stated that the intention was for ONPA to feed in to future strategic plans of SODC/VOWH and the neighbourhood planning teams.

15.3 To receive an update on the Cleve

Two meetings had taken place with a riparian owner and environmental specialists.

16. Update on any issues relating to Footways, Footpaths, rights of way and open spaces

16.1 Update on the fence encroachment on footpath 24

An 'Alleged Breach' notice dated 12.2.20 had been received from the Vale regarding the 'change of use' from public footpath to residential garden.

16.2 Update on any other issues relating to the above

Bridus Way / Chailey Gardens access footpath (BOAT). Had been raised with Arthur McEwan-James, but no response. Information to be forwarded to Cllr MF-D.

17. Update on any issues relating to roads, road safety and public transport

17.1 Conditions of local roads and decide on any course of action

17.1.1 Traffic Regulation Notice 6.1.20

Road closure cancelled. Work to be completed under two-way traffic lights (notice dated 3.2.20 refers)

17.2 Update on the Blewbury Speed Watch group

A meeting was arranged for 17.2.20 with the PCSO to discuss signage, equipment and training.

18. Correspondence – To consider items circulated/requiring a reply/consultations

18.1 Oxfordshire Rural Services Survey (Community First Oxfordshire)

CL responded to this.

18.2 Request for bench installation on the Pound (email 7.1.20 refers)

The council agreed to the siting of a further bench on the Pound. CL to confirm position of bench. Clerk to respond to requestor.

19. To set the date of the next meeting of the PC

Parish Council meeting Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, 7.30pm in the Melland Room.

Annual Parish meeting Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, 7pm for 7.30pm start in the Manor Barn.

The meeting finished at 9.05pm.

## APPENDIX A

### LENGHTMAN'S REPORT - JANUARY 2020

No action on grass cutting, which is no surprise.

Repairs have been done to the roof section of the bandstand at TFF and the smaller picnic table.

The new waste bin has been installed at the KAP play area and the old one removed and disposed of.

Work on the skate park refurbishment should have been completed by the next meeting. Rob Steele is due to start on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb.

Everything else is in order.

David

## APPENDIX B

### REPORT TO BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL FEBRUARY 2020 FROM CLLR MIKE FOX-DAVIES

#### **County council budget offers Oxfordshire residents new investment in social services, schools and roads**

Proposals for an "investment budget" to reduce neglect, ill-health and social isolation will be considered by councillors when Oxfordshire County Council sets its budget on Tuesday 11 February, following resident and business consultation.

The proposals include community support for vulnerable people so they can live independently for longer, and more help for struggling families to reduce the chances of children having to go into care.

Funding for children and adult social services would increase by £30 million next year, including an extra £8.1 million from the government. This money is needed to support an increase in adult social care needs for both older and disabled people, as well as the increasing number of child protection cases, which has grown in line with national trends.

The budget proposals also include investment in infrastructure across the county, such as an extra £50 million for new and existing schools over ten years. Most of the funding comes from housing developers to meet the need for more pupil places in Oxfordshire.

The county council proposes to spend £30 million in 2020/21 from its capital budget on repairs to roads, bridges, drainage and footways across Oxfordshire's towns and villages, with major schemes scheduled in Banbury, Abingdon and Witney.

New funding of £3 million per year is proposed to improve local road safety and accessibility, including new pedestrian crossings, improved junctions and better bus stop facilities. These measures are designed to encourage walking and cycling as part of the council's commitment to improving air quality and active lifestyles.

Responding to climate change features prominently across budget proposals, including support for sustainable travel such as improving park and ride services on the A40, and the replacement of over 50,000 streetlights with energy-efficient LEDs. However all budget proposals have to consider the climate change agenda and how the county council will meet its carbon neutral target by 2030.

## **New online waste information tool launched to help boost recycling rates**

A new online tool has been launched by the council to help tackle the main issue inhibiting residents doing better at recycling; information. The new tool called Waste Wizard offers comprehensive information on what can and cannot be recycled, where to deposit it or if it can be repurposed or donated.

Waste Wizard uses postcodes and allows residents to identify what to do with a huge range of household objects and materials to avoid them being disposed of based on location. It works across all areas of the county, irrespective of district. It aims to inform residents of where and how to get some objects repaired or donated as well as recycled at local authority sites or from the kerbside.

Oxfordshire has a commanding lead position in England for recycling with over 58 per cent of all waste is reused, composted or recycled in compared to the national rate of 45 per cent. The rationale for Waste Wizard is to drive this rate up further. It aims to cut the contamination in kerbside recycling collection bins (currently 10%) as well as informing residents about the many items (especially food) that are erroneously deposited in the general waste bin.

## **Go ahead for full business case for project to reduce congestion into and around Oxford**

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council cabinets have approved plans to develop a detailed business case for a project to reduce congestion on routes into and around Oxford, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

The aim of “Connecting Oxford” is to make a real improvement to journey times for commuters, other travellers and quality of life for residents and visitors, including improved air quality.

This will be done by reducing the number of cars travelling into and around the city and encouraging more people to travel by buses, walking and cycling. The business plan was informed by a survey run in autumn 2019 on an outline of possible proposals. Over 3000 responses were received from residents, employers and other major city organisations including the NHS and universities.

The plans include:

- Three new bus gates at Worcester Street, Thames Street and St Cross Road/South Parks Road to reduce the number of motor vehicle trips which pass through the city centre
- In the eastern arc of Oxford, an area that covers north, east and south-east Oxford inside the ring road
- A Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) is proposed across the eastern arc,
- Benefits to employers and staff include sustainable travel improvements and parking management; discounts on bus fares, park & ride buses and parking and discounts on bike purchases

Revenue from the WPL will also provide a locally controlled source of funding to be used for new and improved bus services as well as funding for additional Park & Ride capacity and better walking and cycling routes. There will also be a significant and rapid expansion of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) across Oxford, including nine new CPZ areas.

## **Patients urged to help the NHS help them this winter**

Winter is traditionally the busiest time of year for the NHS, and we are supporting our NHS partners to remind residents to only use Emergency Departments in Oxford and Banbury in an emergency.

A considerable effort has been made to promote a range of alternative options available for non-emergency situations to ensure residents receive the appropriate care needed and save an unnecessary trip to the Emergency Department. Advice to residents in Oxfordshire includes:

- **Self-care** is the best choice for minor illnesses and injuries – a range of common winter ailments can be treated at home with a well-stocked medicine cabinet. Having a winter plan – such as keeping stocked up on medicines, keeping your home warm, and looking out for neighbours – can also be beneficial.
- **Local pharmacies** can advise on conditions such as coughs, headaches, upset stomachs, and skin conditions, as well as advise on stopping coughs and colds from getting worse.
- **NHS 111** has call handlers who can help you choose the right health services for your needs, as well as a website. NHS 111 can put you in touch with a clinician, a GP, book you an appointment at your nearest minor injuries unit.
- **Minor injuries units** can treat deep cuts, small burns, sprains, sports injuries, and infected wounds. To find out your nearest MIU please visit the Oxford Health website.
- **Your local GP** may offer extended opening hours into the evening or at the weekend.
- Only attend Emergency Departments when there is a **genuine emergency**, such as loss of consciousness, suspected heart attack or stroke, severe breathing difficulties, or severe bleeding that cannot be stopped

#### **Winter booklet offers advice to older people**

Age UK Oxfordshire has joined forces with local partners to provide advice to older people on staying healthy and well during the winter. The aim is to provide older people with health, well-being and lifestyle advice that supports them during the winter months – when they are susceptible to flu, coughs and colds.

Working in partnership with Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and Oxfordshire County Council, Age UK Oxfordshire is encouraging older people to create a personal winter plan.

### **APPENDIX C** **Blewbury Parish Council - Wednesday 12th February 2020** **Report from District Councillors**

## **Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Sarah Medley**

### **Climate Emergency Advisory Committee**

Vale of White Horse District Council's Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) met on 28 January to recommend new schemes for the council to tackle climate change. The committee recommended a one-year programme of actions to begin the journey to a carbon neutral council by 2030 and a carbon neutral district by 2045. The programme included:

- a climate impacts section in all the council's reporting and decision-making
- identifying opportunities for investment in solar energy
- identifying opportunities for energy saving in council buildings including solar energy and heat pumps
- working with interested community action groups
- a feasibility study into electric vehicle hire for residents
- a feasibility study into increasing biodiversity and tree planting
- employing a climate change lead officer

The report also looked at how the council could develop a green travel plan for officers and members, create an action plan to reduce single-use plastic and help to promote healthier lifestyle choices including encouraging walking and cycling to reduce vehicle emissions. To find out more about what the council is doing to tackle climate change visit the website pages <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/environment/climate-change>



## Proposed Vale budget to stabilise the council's long-term finances and address the climate emergency

The Vale of White Horse District Council has published its budget report for 2020/21. The budget proposes to allocate funding which supports the first in a number of steps to deal with the financial challenges the council faces, focussing on three key areas:

- tackling the climate emergency, a major priority for the council;
- working towards a new Local Plan which will work to address residents' concerns about the current plan and put the climate and local sustainability at the heart of any future development;
- addressing the council's own long-term financial situation by identifying savings that have the minimum impact on residents and businesses in the Vale, and identifying opportunities to generate additional income.

After years of cuts in government funding and continuing uncertainty over future funding, Vale of White Horse District Council is placing greater focus on the long-term future with its 2020/21 budget. Between 2011 and 2019, the Vale saw its revenue support grant funding from government reduced from £7.1million to zero. It was replaced by retained business rates and New Homes Bonus. As a result of the ending of New Homes Bonus, as signalled by government in July 2018, the council is now in an increasingly difficult financial position and could face a funding gap in excess of £6 million by 2024/25. The Vale spends less per head of population than the average for councils of its type, and so the challenges come from the reduction of income and not the council's level of spending. With reforms promised for the local government finance system and details of the replacement for the New Homes Bonus Funding also still to be confirmed it has been very challenging for councillors and officers to work towards a new budget.

The budget proposals will be voted on at the full Council meeting on 12 February. The budget report and papers can be viewed under item 15 here - <http://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=507&Mid=2695>

## Changes to support Vale residents on low income given the go ahead

More than 430 people on low income in the Vale of White Horse will receive additional support to help them pay their council tax. Following a public consultation, Vale of White Horse District Council's Cabinet has now approved the following three changes which will apply from 1 April 2020:

- The current 91.5 per cent limit and the band E restriction when calculating the council tax bill for single parents with children under age five will be removed. This will mean that qualifying residents will have their reduction calculated at 100 per cent of their council tax bill after any deductions and based on their property's actual council tax band.
- The definition of who is considered disabled and exempt will be widened to mirror Universal Credit provisions.
- Bereavement Support Payments, which are paid for a maximum of 18 months, will be disregarded as income when calculating an applicant's council tax reduction amount.

Last year, Vale of White Horse District Council carried out a review of its Council Tax Reduction scheme and then consulted the public to find out what they thought about the three changes it proposed. Each of the three proposals was supported by the respondents. You can find out more about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme or view the consultation report by visiting [whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ctrs](http://whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ctrs).

## Local News

### Cornerstone's Youth Festival

If you or someone you know have children looking for things to do during the next half term make sure you check out what's on at Cornerstone's Youth Festival from 16 to 23 February. Our arts centre is even offering 25 per cent sibling discount on all workshops! Visit the Cornerstone website to find out more and to book.

### Didcot Garden Town Project

The government announced on 14 January that South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils will be receiving £100,000 to help support Didcot Garden Town.

The Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board members discussed how the money could be spent on projects that will help to improve sustainability and connections in the town and highlight smart technology. The garden town team will ask for both Councils to accept the new funding once the award is finalised with Homes England.

The extra funding was announced by the government on the same day the district councils' Joint Scrutiny Committee met and recommended that the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board should launch three new 'sounding boards' – one

for local parishes, one for businesses based in the area and one for community representatives, as part of a new governance structure.

The aim of the 'sounding boards' is to help gather views on new projects and ensure the wishes of the different aspects of the local community are heard as the Didcot Garden Town projects are developed.

The joint scrutiny committee, of which Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne is a member, recommended the following changes to the Terms of Reference:

(i) the parish council representative on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board be chosen from the five parish councils within the Didcot Garden Town Boundary (this includes Harwell village);

(ii) the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board considers adding a voting member to increase its environmental representation

The Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board and Sounding Boards have been approved by our South and Vale Cabinets. Our next steps are to form the Sounding Boards. We will be inviting parish and town councils located within Didcot Garden Town and the wider Area of Influence to participate. All the advisory board and sound board meetings are set to be open for residents to attend.

## Vale News

### Future Homes Standard Consultation

In their response to the Government's Future Homes Standard Consultation, South Oxfordshire District Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council have agreed with the move to produce clearer standards and guidance in line with the recommendations of the Hackitt Review. Restructuring the guidance so that it is clearer about what is expected of the home builders and developers in complying with the requirements is a positive step.

However, although supportive of the intention of the targets being proposed, both Councils felt strongly that the Government should be "far more ambitious" with their targets and timescales in the move towards constructing zero carbon houses in their expectations of local authorities, housing developers and homeowners.

Last year both councils declared a Climate Change Emergency. At Vale of White Horse District Council, they are aiming for a 75% reduction in carbon emissions in the district by 2030. As such tackling climate change is at the forefront of many of their policies and decision-making processes. They also feel that it would have been helpful to have run the consultation on the future home standards on new homes, existing homes and non-domestic buildings at the same time to give a clearer overview of the changes across all buildings

Both the South and Vale Councillors felt that the 31% target being proposed by the Government is considered too low to meet climate emergency targets. It has been put to the Government that there should be universal national standard for zero carbon homes and that this would be easier to manage than individual councils having to request and evidence these zero carbon standards themselves.

On the 27th June the UK became the first major economy to pass a net zero emissions target into law. The Future Homes Standard Consultation released in October 2019 presented a proposal from government to introduce a new "Future Homes Standard" which they want to see introduced fully across country by 2025, with an immediate change to energy efficiency standards by mid to late 2020.

Across the industry it is widely known what is required for new developments. Both the South and Vale now feel it's the time to introduce higher standards and the timings currently set could be more ambitious. It is possible to be constructing zero carbon homes by 2025. The concern with only achieving a 31% CO2 reduction in 2020 is that on larger scale strategic housing sites, some of the new homes being built next year will be built to a lower standard than those constructed on the subsequent parcels of land. Therefore, across an entire development the homes will have significantly different levels of energy efficiency and running costs.

### Littering

Waste enforcement officers from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils are heading out to a series of events where they will meet the public to talk about littering. They have also put together a top ten list of excuses given to them from people caught in the act. These range from "I couldn't see a bin" to "There are no signs about not littering". There'll be no excuse about not seeing the signs as the councils have produced new banners to be put up in town centres where litter enforcement patrols are being carried out.

Officers' Top Ten excuses given by people caught littering

1. I didn't think a cigarette butt was litter
2. It was already littered so won't matter if I add some more
3. I didn't know it was against the law

4. I didn't know you could be fined for dropping litter
5. I'd have to walk all the way over to the bin
6. I keep the road sweepers in a job
7. You go and stop others first, then I will stop
8. It's bio-degradable
9. I couldn't see a bin
10. There are no signs about not littering\*

\*All of the people who gave these excuses were given a Fixed Penalty Notice and £80 fine

From 4 February officers will be out across the districts talking about the work they do tackling litter and fly-tips and how members of the public can report offences and help with investigations.

**Residents can meet the team tackling littering at:**

- Wallingford Market 7 February 11am – 1pm
- Didcot at Cornerstone 21 February 11am – 1pm
- Wantage Market Place 28 February 11am – 1pm
- Abingdon Market Place 6 March 11am -1pm

### Opportunity for residents and groups to give feedback about new Crowmarsh offices

South Oxfordshire District Council's plans to move back to their site in Crowmarsh Gifford have moved a step closer after the fire that destroyed its former headquarters. South shares its staff, and therefore office space with Vale of White Horse district council.

On Thursday 13 February, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse residents, staff and councillors are all invited to an exhibition and feedback day where they can see the exciting design for the new building and to hear how their previous feedback has helped to inform its specifications. Everyone attending the event will have an opportunity to comment on the building design and have a chance to give their thoughts on a shortlist of names for the new headquarters, which were suggested by staff and councillors.

The council has committed to building a headquarters with a sustainable future at its core. This was at the heart of the design brief provided to Ridge, the council's design and project management contractor to deliver the new building. Ridge's priority has been to make the very fabric of the building sustainable – working to the principle that if you build with the right sustainable materials, the building's energy consumption is significantly reduced.

The council has had to balance the need for an exemplary sustainable building with its responsibilities to providing best value with public money. Over the course of the design and build phase of the project, the council intends to publish details of the decisions made around sustainability elements of the building along with compromises that may need to be made for cost-effectiveness – and how those compromises can be offset elsewhere.

The exhibition and feedback day is taking place at the council's current offices at **135 Milton Park, Abingdon, OX14 4SB, from 7am-7pm**. Council officers, Councillor Andrea Powell, and experts from Ridge will be in attendance to answer any questions.

Anyone unable to attend on 13 February, which will include an opportunity to comment on the building design, will have a chance to view the images and leave feedback and show a preference for the name of the new council building via this survey. This will be available from 7am on the 13 February through to midnight on Sunday 16 February.

### Oxfordshire Growth Board

**What is the Oxfordshire Growth Board?**

The Growth Board is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire (Five District Councils plus Oxfordshire County) together with key strategic partners. It was been set up to facilitate and enable joint working on economic development, strategic planning and growth. It does this by overseeing the delivery of projects that the councils of Oxfordshire are seeking to deliver collaboratively in the fields of economic development and strategic planning. It is not a decision making body.

**Review**

The Oxfordshire Growth Board recently commissioned a review to identify improvements in its operations. At the Board's request, a series of engagement activities have taken place since September 2019, seeking to gauge public, stakeholder and councillor views on the Board's work. Over 250 contributions were received across various workshops, meetings and an online survey. The consultation showed clear support for the Board's purpose in providing a

collaborative space for council leaders and partners to discuss, coordinate and plan to help improve Oxfordshire's future. The recent successes of the Board in securing substantial Government investment for much-needed infrastructure, coupled with the opportunities that future collaboration may bring, demonstrates a clear need to continue. However, a series of challenges were identified that suggest the Board could arrange itself more effectively to be more engaging, communicative and inclusive.

Many of the areas identified for improvement related to strengthening communication. Responses also highlighted the importance of planning for a sustainable and socially inclusive future for Oxfordshire, and how this might be better incorporated into the Board's role. Embedding opportunities for the Board to engage with the public in planning for the future was also a key finding from the review. The initial recommendations emerging from this work seek to respond to these issues.

Note that both the Oxfordshire Growth Board, and the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meet in public, and any member of the public can ask in advance to speak at the meeting. We would actively encourage parish councillors and members of the public to do this.

Upcoming meetings:

OGB Meeting Scrutiny Panel- 4th March 2020

OGB Meeting - 11 March 2020

OGB Meeting Scrutiny Panel - 28 May 2020

OGB Meeting - 2 June 2020

OGB Meeting Scrutiny Panel - 15 September 2020

OGB Meeting - 22 September 2020

OGB Meeting Scrutiny Panel -17 November 2020

OGB Meeting - 24 November 2020

The Scrutiny Panel usually meets at 6.30pm in Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford

For more information see the Oxfordshire Growth Board website: <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/>