

## BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held remotely via an e-conference system on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7.30 pm.

In attendance: - Cllrs C Lakeland (Chair/CL), M Penington (MP), V Humphries (VH), P Kilroe (PK), J Gibson (JG), M Blythe (MB), M Jacobs (MJ). E Cooper (Clerk/EC), County Cllr M Fox-Davies, District Cllr S Medley.

1. Apologies for absence  
D Hollick, Cllr H Gascoigne
2. Declarations of interests relating to this meeting  
None declared.
3. County Councillor's report (see Appendix B below)  
In addition, Cllr F-D confirmed that Grove Station was on the radar and could be justified by 2028. Cllr F\_D also stated that he was hoping to create a transport advisory group from his group of villages for a more single approach to transport concerns.  
In response to questions regarding the Chilton Road closure in Upton, Cllr F-D said this was part of the Active Travel focus for cyclists/pedestrians & was accelerated due to the Covid-19 situation.
4. District Councillor's report (see Appendix C below)  
CL asked that pressure be put on the Vale to respond to the government's 'Planning for the Future' white paper for genuine money to be made available to provide for affordable housing. SM to feedback.  
LI confirmed that Blewbury Good Neighbours required no funding.  
SM confirmed that a new building for South & Vale offices would be at Didcot Gateway and not at the previous Crowmarsh site.  
HG confirmed via SM that she was till looking in to the format of the planning response form.
5. Lengthman's report (see Appendix A below)  
CL asked for a note of thanks to be recorded for David Hollick for his help and work on the Clubhouse in recent weeks, which was over and above his usual duties.
6. Open Forum  
No members of the public were present.
7. Minutes of the previous meeting  
Minutes of the BPC meeting from 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were agreed to be a true representation by those who attended that meeting.
8. Outstanding Actions from previous meetings and any matters arising  
Confirm whether actions are cleared, carried forward or cancelled.

No.	Actions from October meeting	When By
1.	LI to forward draft response on Planning White Paper to all.	Actioned
2.	Clerk to pursue Lloyds Bank regarding charges & new signatory requirements	Nov meeting
3.	Clerk to make agreed amends to Risk Assess doc & issue for final comment.	Nov meeting
4.	CL to spk BG re VH CCTV operation & notices	Nov meeting
5.	MS to source quote re Coffin Way repairs.	Actioned

6.	Clerk to confirm date of BPC Finance Committee meeting (16.12.20)	Actioned
7.	MP to write a response re the Modification Order to add a Bridleway & Upgrade part of Blewbury Footpath no.19 to a Bridleway between Boham's Road & White Shoot, Blewbury.	Nov meeting
8.	CL to speak to the S106 contact regarding any future spend.	Nov meeting
9.	All councillors to consider CIL spend.	Nov meeting
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions from September meeting</b>	<b>When By</b>
5.	MB to speak to Mr Kauntz re the stalled progress of a cycle path along Coffin Way	Oct meeting c'fwd
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions from July meeting</b>	<b>When By</b>
6.	MJ to write to Hayleigh Gascoigne on the use of pesticides etc.	Sept meeting C'fwd
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions from March 2020 meeting</b>	<b>When</b>
4.	VH to look at remedial work required at KAP.	C'fwd until further notice
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions arising from February 2020 Meeting</b>	<b>When</b>
13.	CL to explore alternative environmentally friendly electricity suppliers for the Clubhouse/Melland Room and Scout Hut.	C'fwd until further notice

## 9. Planning Consultations & Other Planning Matters

### 9.1 Planning committee report

#### 9.1.1 Update on the planning policies available to the Council.

LI gave an explanation of planning policies available to the council & how they should be used: - NDP policies first, then material considerations.

#### 9.1.2 Council's response to Planning for the future white paper – deadline 29.10.20.

LI is working on a draft council response & will forward to all.

### 9.2 Responses to current consultations

#### 9.2.1 P20/V2270/HH 3Chailey Gardens, Blewbury

Two storey rear extension, conversion of part of garage in to habitable room, insertion of new window to side elevation of main house & internal alterations.

Deadline 15.10.20

Council voted no objections to this consultation.

#### 9.2.2 P20/V2389/FUL Land off Hollow Way, Upton

Construction of a new digestate storage lagoon, perimeter soil bund, hard surface turning pad & security fencing.

Deadline 23.10.20

Council voted no objections to this consultation.

### 9.3 Planning permissions received during the month

P20/V1452/HH amendment 2. Garden House garage (map change). Planning permission 11.09.20.

P20/V1933/HH Church End House. Planning permission 21.9.20.

P20/V1985/LB Blewbury Mill. Planning consent granted 6.10.20.

10. Finance & Administration

10.1 Updates on contributions planned expenditure (S106, CIL, CPF, SBRR)

CL to speak to the S106 contact regarding any future spend.

All councillors to consider CIL spend.

Agreed c£5k left of SBRR. This will be spent on remaining work at the Clubhouse.

10.2 Update on Lloyds Bank

Bank charges commenced in August 2020 (£7.80pm)

The Clerk reported that bank charges were now being made, despite previous agreement that no charges would be made before February 2021. Council asked that this be pursued with Lloyds.

New mandate to change signatories sent Lloyds 23.09.20

The Clerk confirmed that the mandate had been received by Lloyds Bank as one new signatory was now confirmed. Clerk to chase other signatory details which had not been received.

10.3 Approve end of month reconciliations for Lloyds & Barclays banks

Sent in advance of the meeting to the Chairman. Agreed & to be signed at a later date.

10.4 Ratify Council's acceptance by email of the following quotes: -

10.4.1 T A Hale & Son to fix the operation of the Velux windows in the Clubhouse (£3829.60 inc VAT)

10.4.2 Town&Country Electrical Ltd to supply & fit convector heaters in the Clubhouse (£890 +VAT)

Council agreed unanimously to accept the above quotes.

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

Council agreed to include approval for an additional invoice to be paid: -

Howard Enterprises – Clubhouse Redecorating £710.

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>Description / Power to spend</b>	<b>Amount</b>
E Cooper / D Hollick	Clerk & Lengthman's salary and expenses for September (LGA1972 s112(2))	£1600.74
NEST	Clerk's pension DD September (LGPSR2013 (SI2013/2356))	£71.33
HMRC	PAYE Clerk & Lengthman payment September (LGA1972 s112(2))	£324.83
Biffa Waste Services Ltd	Waste services DD September (LGA1972 s137)	£110.16
BT	Clubhouse line rental DD September (LGA1972 s137(electricity))	£35.04
PWLB	PW497831 DD (PWLA1965)	£4575.00
BVHEMC	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter PO Grant (LG(FP)A 1963 s5)	£300.00
Whitehorse Horticulture	One cut of Churchyard, Pound & Playclose September (HA1980 S96)	£200.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£7217.10</b>

<b>Major Receipts</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
24.09.20	Burial	£285.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£285.00</b>

<b>Barclays Bank Payments</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
	Ridge and Partners – TBC. Clerk's note: - No invoice was received from Ridge.	£0
<b>Total</b>		<b>£0</b>

10.6 Agree any amendments to the following Council documents: -

10.6.1 To ratify Financial Regulations

As per resolution passed in September meeting & issue of updated Financial Regulations on 24 September 2020.

Council agreed to ratify Financial Regulations as updated in September 2020.

10.6.2 Risk Management update (under review June 20)

Council agreed that final amendments be made & circulated to all for agreement.

11. Village hall refurbishment

Update on the Village Hall Refurbishment. CL reported that Ridge had issued a Certificate of Final Build, while minor work was still being carried out. Any remaining work would now probably be carried out by a local contractor.

Resurfacing of the car park was expected to take place over half term (w/b 26/10).

CL to speak to BG regarding CCTV operation & notices.

All work expected to be finished in November, although the opening & use of the hall was subject to further consideration.

12. Recreation Ground / Clubhouse

12.1 To discuss the transition of Clubhouse management from CIC to the Parish Council

CL reported that all redecoration, deep cleaning & repair work were complete. Quotes for repairing the Velux windows & heating were approved above.

Mr S Barrett was looking in to the finalisation of transfer of the Clubhouse from the CIC to the PC, following the surrender of the lease in August.

12.2 Ratify the setting up of a Working Group

MP, PK, JG & CL agreed to form a working group to oversee the transition to manage transition and a sound working practice for the re-opening of the Clubhouse & all its functions.

12.3 Update on the Ticklers Folly Field recreation ground and car park

JG asked about the mound of burnable material at TFF as there would be no bonfire & fireworks display this year. CL replied that this material would be burnt under safe conditions.

12.4 Update on the Clubhouse (inc. cricket pitch, Melland room & car park)

The Melland room bar licence expires in February 2021 & the council stated their preference not to renew. CL to write to current holder to confirm. JG to speak to BG re the cost of licences per person or per event. Working group to recommend way forward by February 2021.

It was noted that there may be Cricket Club activity for the next season.

13. Risk Management

13.1 Update on village play spaces (TFF / KAP) relating to risk

Council acknowledged that nothing much could be done regarding the door & broken glass that was dumped in the TFF play area & cleared by the Lengthman.

13.2 Updates on Management of Risk

No other updates.

13.3 Update on Compliance

No update this month.

13.4 Proposal on the future storage of the Council's historic documentation

As part of CiLCA, the Clerk had produced a case for removing historic PC documentation to a secure document location. This was agreed by Council.

14. Update on any issues relating to the Environment
  - 14.1 Update on the condition of the Cleve noticeboard  
JG reported that the artwork for a new noticeboard was still being worked on.
  - 14.2 Update on the annual gravel laying on village footpaths  
Council was in general agreement that gravel laying would not take place this year. JG requested a small amount of gravel on Footpath 24 between Dibleys & Bessels Lea.
  - 14.3 Update from Sustainable Blewbury  
None available.
  - 14.4 Update on the OGB & ONPA  
LI confirmed no update for OGB. An ONPA meeting took place on 10<sup>th</sup> October. Information from this meeting will feed in to the white paper response.
  
15. Update on any issues relating to Footways, Footpaths, rights of way and open spaces
  - 15.1 Update on Coffin Way / Cycle Path  
MS to source a quote from a contractor on immediate repair work required.
  - 15.2 Update on any other issues relating to the above  
No other updates.
  
16. Update on any issues relating to roads, road safety and public transport
  - 16.1 Conditions of local roads and decide on any course of action
    - 16.1.1 Chilton Road closure in Upton village  
MB expressed his concerns regarding this road closure. The Council largely understood the circumstances which had driven the closure and would not be making any representations.
  - 16.2 Update on the Blewbury Speed Watch group  
No update available.
  
17. Correspondence – To consider items circulated/requiring a reply/consultation
  - 17.1 Application for Definitive Map Modification Order to add a Bridleway & Upgrade part of Blewbury. Footpath no.19 to a Bridleway between Boham's Road & White Shoot, Blewbury.  
Letter from OCC dated 24.09.20 refers.  
Councillors who had knowledge of this footpath for many years and had responded to the application expressed their dissatisfaction at the result and the misrepresentation of views given.  
MP to write a response.
  
18. To set the date of the next meeting of the Council
  - 18.1 Full council meeting Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm via an e-conference system.
  - 18.2 Date of the next Financial Committee meeting  
Members of the Finance Committee agreed the meeting should be in December. Clerk to confirm date.
  - 18.3 Dates of meetings for the Council in 2021  
Sent to Council ahead of the meeting & agreed.

The meeting finished at 9.34pm.

## Appendix A

### LENGTHMAN'S REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2020

This month has seen a slow down of grass growth so cutting has been more infrequent. The hedge cutting has been completed for the year. All equipment is in good order and I will be starting to put some of them to bed for the winter after servicing them. The No Parking sign has been put up at the Recreation Ground Car Park with yellow lines painted denoting no parking areas and also a Disabled Parking Bay installed. I have also done a few jobs in the Clubhouse to get it into a better shape for re-opening. David

## Appendix B

### REPORT BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL OCTOBER 2020

#### FROM CLLR MIKE FOX-DAVIES

##### Oxfordshire update

In the seven days up to 2 October, there has been a total of **361 confirmed** COVID-19 cases in Oxfordshire. This is an increase from 152 new cases in the previous week and is equivalent to a weekly rate of new cases of **52.2** per 100,000 residents.

In Oxford there were 155 confirmed cases, significantly up from the 68 confirmed cases in the previous week. This means the weekly rate for Oxford currently stands at 101.7 cases per 100,000 population.

The significant increase in confirmed cases in Oxfordshire, must be considered in the context that numbers have risen all over the nation following the technical glitch in recording cases at national level. There are other parts of the country with cases that are in the 300-500 cases per 100,000 range. That's well above Oxford and Oxfordshire generally.

Area Name	Cases in 7 days up to 2/10/20	Weekly rate per 100,000 pop	Change from previous week	Weekly Rate Alert Status
Cherwell 59		39.2	increase	amber
Oxford South	155	101.7	increase	red
Oxfordshire 52		36.6	increase	amber
Vale of White Horse 59		43.4	increase	amber
West Oxfordshire 36		32.5	increase	amber
Oxfordshire 361		52.2	increase	red

##### Data correct as at 4pm on 7 October.

Please note that 7-day incidence rates fluctuate daily. To show a consistent picture, the county council website (which this data is drawn from) reports on the nationally available data for the week ending Friday. It is currently updated weekly by Wednesday morning, at which time the data is less subject to change

##### New NHS COVID-19 app

The new NHS COVID-19 app is **now live** in England and Wales. This is part of the NHS Test and Trace service, which will be used alongside traditional contact tracing to help trace individuals who may have come into contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus. The app

allows people to check into venues by scanning a QR code. It also provides them with an alert if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive and helps them check if they have symptoms and book a test.

It is now a **legal requirement** for all designated venues to display an official NHS QR poster. Designated venues include:

- Hospitality services, including pubs, bars, restaurants and cafés
- Tourism and leisure services, including gyms, swimming pools, hotels, museums, cinemas and theme parks
- Close contact services, including hairdressers and barbers
- Facilities provided by Local Authorities for the public, including town halls and civic centres for events, community centres, libraries and children's centres

### **New test and trace support payment scheme for people on low incomes**

Last weekend Government announced a **new payment of £500** to support low income earners who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been directed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. These payments align with the new legal duty on self-isolation coming into force from 28 September and are an essential to ensuring the test and trace system has the highest impact – it is something local government has been requesting for some time.

The payments will be administered by the **four district councils and Oxford City Council**, who are working at pace to ensure this entirely new service is in place by the **mandated date of 12 October** (with back-payments to 28 September).

### **Safe Return to Schools**

Since the start of September, a group of officers from education, school transport, active travel and public health have been meeting on a daily basis to promote safe travel to and from school and effective social distancing at the school gate. This group has addressed congestion problems that have been reported at drop-off and pick-up times at specific schools, undertaking site visits to advise schools on what measures can be taken in the short term and potentially longer term through 'school streets' interventions. It has also been promoting messages through the schools and more widely in social media encouraging children and parents to either walk or cycle to school, or where this is not possible to 'park and stride' the last 10 minutes of their journey.

Where school transport providers have reported problems with children not wearing face coverings on buses, officers have contacted specific schools to reinforce the need to follow coronavirus guidance, as well as asking all schools to use their school newsletters to remind parents of the importance of their children wearing face coverings.

### **Oxfordshire libraries reopen electric goods recycling points at some sites**

It is great news that residents will once again be able to recycle certain electrical goods at some county libraries from **Monday 28 September**. In the same way library users can drop off returned books into crates at the library entrance, an extra crate will now be provided for library users to donate their unwanted electrical items.

The service, funded by Valpak, will be available at the following libraries:

- Banbury Bicester
- Blackbird Leys Cowley
- Oxfordshire County Library (Oxford)
- Witney

### **Active Travel update**

It is frustrating we are yet to receive confirmation from the Department for Transport (DfT) around the amount of funding we will receive for the five schemes we bid for under tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel fund. This week Cllr Yvonne Constance, Cabinet Member for Environment, wrote to the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Transport, asking the department to accelerate the announcements. While we wait for news, our teams are continuing to work hard to develop implementation plans as the money must be spent this financial year.

### **Oxfordshire Smokefree Sidelines**

Through the brand new Oxfordshire Smokefree Sidelines programme, we are joining forces with local football organisations and Active Oxfordshire to raise awareness of the impact of

smoking. This work is part of Oxfordshire's Tobacco Control Strategy, which outlines a vision for being England's first smoke-free county. We're aiming for less than one in 20 adults to still be smoking by 2025 – five years sooner than aimed for in the Government's national Tobacco Control Plan for England.

Football clubs taking part will be supported to help adults be a role model for children and young people by not smoking while watching training or matches - seven out of ten smokers start before they are 18 years old.

### **Park and Charge project update**

In 2021 the council is looking to install up to 300 new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in council-owned car parks across Oxfordshire. These would provide convenient overnight EV charging hubs in neighbourhoods where residents have a lack of off-street parking, as well as greatly enhancing the provision of EV charging available for visitors and commuters in Oxfordshire. The Park and Charge project is funded by Innovate UK and is a collaboration between Oxfordshire County Council (working with district councils), SSE, Oxford University and local businesses Zeta Group and Urban Integrated.

As well as installing this much-needed infrastructure, we are looking to launch an education and awareness campaign and a series of events to help encourage the uptake of EVs in Oxfordshire. Next week we will publish a survey to ask Oxfordshire residents and interested parties about their knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of EVs and EV charging to help inform this campaign.

### **Free electric blanket testing - reminder**

With a countywide failure rate of 17 per cent, please encourage residents in your division to take up the opportunity of a free electric blanket test over the next few weeks. This service is provided by Oxfordshire Trading Standards and Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and supported by district council colleagues.

Residents can book an electric blanket test by calling **01865 895999** (Option 1) or emailing: [communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

### **Self-employment income support scheme**

Eligible self-employed people whose livelihoods have been affected by coronavirus can claim a second and final grant worth 70 per cent of their average monthly trading profits. The second stage of the scheme closes on **19 October 2020** and more information on eligibility and how to apply can be found [here](#).

### **Sources of advice for business**

The Government's Business Support web pages set out the coronavirus support available to businesses such as loan schemes designed to support UK businesses that are losing revenue and seeing their cashflow disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. It also provides information about the Government's **Kickstart Scheme**

## **Appendix C**

### **NHS Track and Trace App**

Protect your loved ones with the official NHS COVID-19 contact tracing app for England and Wales. It's the fastest way of knowing when you're at risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). The quicker you know, the quicker you can alert your loved ones, and your community. The more of us that use it, the better we can control coronavirus.

It has a venue 'check-in' feature – where you scan a QR code on display at any places you visit like pubs and restaurants. This provides you with a digital diary and can send you alerts if you have visited a venue where you may have come into contact with coronavirus.

Users must be over 16 to have the app and own a smartphone that has Bluetooth. The app will be used alongside traditional contact tracing, in case your phone is not compatible.

Here's [a video explaining more](#) – you can also head over to [the NHS website](#) for more info.

### **Community Hub and local community group success**

Since March, the council has been regularly highlighting the excellent work carried out by both our Community Hub and our fantastic local volunteer groups and town and parish councils. This work has been recognised by our colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council, who have [issued this press release](#) that features case studies from two



residents in our districts - Emily and Joseph - who both made contact with our South and Vale Community Hub and subsequently received vital direct support from their local community groups or parish council. Fantastic work by all involved.

## Funding still available for volunteer groups and organisations to help vulnerable residents affected by Covid-19

Funding is still available from the government's emergency assistance fund, for local authorities to use to support groups who are helping people who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. The Vale of White Horse District Council has been allocated £43,077, which will be used to support local charities and community organisations that are delivering essential services to vulnerable residents in Vale of White Horse impacted by COVID-19. Proposals must satisfy one or both of the funding priorities:

- meet the immediate needs of a significant number of residents who are struggling to afford food and/or essentials.
- provide advice and information to a significant number of economically disadvantaged residents, to help them access longer term support they might need, such as benefits

District Councillor Report Blewbury Parish Council Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

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The scheme opened on 1 September 2020 and applications will be assessed on a rolling basis. The assessment panel will meet every two weeks. Applications are now being assessed and funding is being allocated. **The next deadline is 19 October.** We expect the money to be spent by 31 October 2020 so encourage early applications.

To apply, please read the application guidance notes before completing the online form which you can find here:

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/community-advice-and-support/grants> . If you require any further information or have any queries, please contact the Community Connector Team at [communityconnectors@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communityconnectors@southandvale.gov.uk)

## Climate and Environment

### Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

The Climate Emergency Advisory Committee met on 7th September and discussed the opportunity to enter into negotiations with the Low Carbon Hub and other Oxfordshire Councils, on a potential Power Purchase Agreement, in order to make recommendations to Cabinet.

A Power Purchase Agreement, or PPA, could be an element, along with a broad portfolio of projects, to help achieve the council's carbon neutral target.

The first priority, from our climate emergency one-year work programme, is that we will aim to reduce energy use from our operations, and to install renewable technologies on site. These actions alone are unlikely to bring our carbon emissions to zero, so further options need to be considered. A PPA is a mechanism for matching zero carbon electricity generation at a new renewable energy asset with the council's energy use. It then allows us to declare zero carbon emissions for the contracted energy. If a new renewable energy asset is in South Oxfordshire, this also has additional local benefits, so entering into discussions with other Oxfordshire Councils and other external parties to identify the opportunities available is beneficial.

The committee agreed with the recommendation that PPA should be explored, with added wording to include parish councils and town councils.

Read the full minutes of the CEAC [here](#).

### Air Quality Campaign

To mark Clean Air Day today (Thursday 8 October) South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have launched a new campaign to encourage people to use less polluting means of transport, such as walking and cycling, for local journeys. Since March many of us have changed where we work and how far we travel. This has resulted in fewer miles driven, especially at peak times. With less congestion at peak times there has been less air pollution.... considerably less air pollution according to the analysis carried out by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils' Air Quality team.

The government's requests that to help control the pandemic people should work at home, if possible, has reduced the number of people commuting to offices across our districts. For example, according to a recent survey of the councils' staff, those who responded have saved an average of 110 miles per person per week (by no longer commuting to the office in Milton Park and other council sites). The councils' Air Quality team hope that this change in habit for the daily commute might translate into people looking at alternative, pollution free travel methods

(i.e. walking or cycling) for local journeys.

## Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy 2020-2025

Brief overview of the strategy:

- Minimum standards shared across Oxfordshire for EV charging infrastructure
- A common approach to managing EV charging in local authority car parks
- Agreed targets for the provision of EV charging across Oxfordshire
- A common framework of options for residents without off-street parking

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Our next milestone in the development of the strategy will be for the draft EV infrastructure strategy to be presented to the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee in December.

For more information contact our representative on the county's working group: Cllr Catherine Webber, who is now the Vale's cabinet member for Climate Emergency and Environment. Residents can provide their views on electric vehicles in the County Council's consultation, which closes on **23<sup>rd</sup> October**:

[https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Park\\_and\\_Charge/consultationHome](https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Park_and_Charge/consultationHome)

## Business Support

### Discretionary Business Grants scheme now closed

The government's initial business rates grant funding programme has now come to an end. Over the course of the programme, we supported nearly 3,300 businesses in South and Vale with over £42 million from government funding intended for small business, retail, and hospitality and leisure organisations affected by the pandemic in our districts. We've resolved all outstanding queries from eligible businesses. In the Vale, £17,025,000 was awarded to 1,350 businesses.

### Support for businesses required to close due to local lockdowns or targeted restrictions

Businesses forced to close temporarily due to local Covid-19 lockdowns or targeted restrictions can now apply for some financial assistance to support them during their closure.

Businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000 would be able to apply for £1,500 for every three-week period they are required to close. Businesses with a rateable value under £51,000 would be able to apply for £1,000 for every three-week period they are required to close.

**Please note - this support only becomes available when a local lockdown or targeted restrictions has been put in place, of which there are none currently in the Vale of White Horse.**

To qualify, businesses must be on our records as the ratepayer on the first full day of a local lockdown.

There's more information about the scheme, including eligibility criteria on our [website](#).

The eligibility criteria may vary between local lockdowns, depending on the specific restrictions, for example cafes or restaurants could be forced to provide takeaway services only.

## Local News

### Planners' Fast Tracking of UK's Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre

#### Supercharges

#### Delivery

The Vale of White Horse District Council has granted planning permission for the highly specialist facility that will house the UK's Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC).

VMIC, a not for profit organisation based at Harwell Campus, will provide the country's first bespoke strategic vaccine development and manufacturing capability. In an unusual move, the district council allowed construction of the facility to begin whilst simultaneously processing the planning application because of the critical nature of the facility and the role it will play in manufacturing vaccines for COVID-19 and beyond.

Under normal circumstances, planning approval and construction for a new development of this scale would take years, with construction beginning only when planning permission had been granted. Due to COVID-19, and VMIC's national and international significance, Vale of White Horse District Council took a different approach and fasttracked

the application process, meaning that much of the planning work taking place behind the scenes was carried out simultaneously to construction work.

Collaboration was key to securing the fast-tracked planning permission. Council officers significantly increased the number of meetings they would typically hold for this size of project with all the major stakeholders including VMIC, Harwell Campus Management (project managers), Carter Jonas (the planning consultant), Glencar Construction (main construction company) and the agency funding VMIC, UK Research and Innovation. Greater contact with statutory consultees, the local parish council and the ward councillor ensured consultation processes were adhered to and queries were responded to swiftly.

For the full press release [see the Vale website](#).

## Didcot Gateway – the home of the new South and Vale district council offices

Didcot will be the home of the new offices for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils in a move that will help to secure a more sustainable future for the councils, both economically and environmentally.

The district councils will move into a new building that's proposed for the Didcot Gateway site opposite Didcot Parkway Station. The site is close to the centre of the town that sits on the border between the districts.

The councils need new headquarters following a five-year story that began in January 2015 when their shared headquarters in Crowmarsh Gifford were destroyed in an arson attack. After spending a few years in temporary offices at Milton Park, South Oxfordshire District Council revealed early designs for new headquarters at Crowmarsh in February this year. Shortly after unveiling these plans, the country went into lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw nearly all of the councils' staff move to working at home full time.

Like many organisations around the world, the move to home working demonstrated to the councils that they could work successfully with most of their staff working in a more flexible and remote manner. However, the councils have learned over the past six months that there is still a need to have some office space for certain activities and for staff who are unable to work from home for practical, personal or well-being reasons. The councils have therefore reviewed their office requirements and concluded they need smaller offices than they previously had planned for. As the plans are very much in the initial stages of development, it's too early to give a firm date for the new offices, but the councils are working towards a date in Spring 2023.

Determining the future of the Crowmarsh Gifford site together with the local community remains a priority.

For the full press release [see the Vale website](#).

## Council Matters

### Full council

Full Council met on 7<sup>th</sup> October, virtually over Microsoft Teams and the full agenda can be seen [here](#).

One of the main topics for discussion were the Council's finances and the interim budget, due to the situation with COVID, which has placed a lot of pressure on the Local Authority.

A motion about the publication by Government of the White Paper, 'Planning for the Future', was debated and discussed, and the council resolved to:

- Take part in the consultation in the planning proposals, and to make representations against the proposals in the areas outlined in this motion.
- Write to both of its Members of Parliament explaining the position of Council on these proposals, urging them to support the intentions of this motion by objecting, where necessary to those proposals, and for any reply from them to be placed on the council's website.
- Highlight its concerns over these proposals with the public and local residents.

Cllr Sarah Medley submitted the following question in advance to Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure.

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*At the full Council meeting in July, we highlighted the concerns of many residents in Harwell and Didcot regarding the cycle accessibility and safety of the proposed design of the B4493 roundabout as part of the plans for the Valley Park development. We have since been raising this issue with the relevant decision-makers at all levels, including calling meetings with Vale and County Council officers and the local county councillor, and we are pleased to see that the roundabout design is now being reviewed. However, this is just one of many aspects of the Valley Park proposals which are less than optimal with regards to sustainability and active travel. Can we be assured that the Valley Park development will be built to safely accommodate and encourage cyclists, and that it will follow the garden principles*

*that guide the development of Didcot?*

Written answer received:

The current outline planning application is being assessed by officers in accordance with the recently adopted Local Plan 2031, in particular Core Policies; 15 (Spatial Strategy for SE Vale sub-area), 16b (Didcot Garden Town), 35 (Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking), 37 (Design and Local distinctiveness) and 38 (Design Strategies for Strategic and Major development sites). These policies guide new development and so reflects the garden town principles and connecting places. In addition, officers have been liaising with and continue to liaise with the developers, OCC highways officers and the Ward Members on these matters and I am pleased to see that some reviews have taken place. The application will be considered and determined by the planning committee.

## Corporate plan

The Vale's new Corporate Plan will go to cabinet, and a special meeting of council on 22nd October.

Record numbers of residents and people working in the Vale of White Horse recently responded to the survey about the district council's forthcoming new Corporate Plan. Residents provided a wide range of useful feedback and after going through the responses, the Cabinet has considered some changes to their themes including:

- Putting more emphasis on action to tackle on the Climate Emergency, given the high level of support for this theme.
- embedding a culture of continuous improvement and review of services to ensure that we continue to provide value for money
- creating a high-quality district-wide cycling/pedestrian network and publicising existing cycle and pedestrian routes through our communications channels.

## 18,700 homes urged to respond to voter registration reminder

Households in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are being urged to respond immediately if they receive a yellow reminder letter from the district council about their voter registration details. Over the summer South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils sent a 'Canvass Communication Form' to every home requiring residents to check and confirm the details of everyone over the age of 16 that lives in their property. The councils are now sending a yellow reminder form to around 18,700 homes who failed to respond and whose occupants over the age of 16 may have changed since last year. The councils are sending the reminder letters because by law they need to ensure the electoral register is up to date.

## Housing

### £8 million could be pumped into providing more affordable homes across South Oxfordshire

### and the Vale of White Horse following Cabinet meetings at the two district councils this week.

Both councils have a strong commitment to delivering genuinely affordable housing, and reports discussed by the councils' Cabinets set out the options to how to spend nearly £4 million in each district to provide a huge boost to local families looking for affordable homes in the area. This would be additional to targets that the developers are already committed to as part of their planning permissions. This council-led initiative will deliver much needed affordable housing, community-led projects and environmentally sustainable projects across the two districts.

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The funding will be secured through a variety of means such as developer contributions and through an affordable housing delivery programme. There will be criteria on how the money may be spent.

The housing industry was particularly affected by the Covid19 lockdown when construction sites closed earlier this year. During this time, the housing industry is delivering at a slower rate than before. Additional investment will ensure that momentum is kept in the delivery of much-needed affordable homes for our residents.

## Housing Land Supply – our latest position

We are required by Government to demonstrate that there will be a sufficient supply of housing land in the district. To do this, we produce an annual Housing Land Supply Statement informed by a range of information such as planning permissions, site surveys and feedback from developers. Our current Statement demonstrates the district has a 5-year housing land supply and can be accessed on [our Housing Supply statement webpage](#)

## Oxford to Cambridge Arc: a global asset and national investment priority

*Bold vision to create a global hub for innovation and green development that inspires communities worldwide*

The Oxford to Cambridge Arc, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer described as a “key economic priority” for the country, has unveiled its bold vision in a prospectus that has been submitted to Government. The Arc’s ambition is to

unlock the potential of its assets to create a world-leading innovation economy.

Click here to [download the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus](#).

The Arc is already home to nearly four million people and two million jobs which together generate over £111bn of economic output each year. Based upon determined leadership and new financial backing, forecasts show that increased productivity resulting from intensifying the Arc’s global strengths in science, technology and high value manufacturing, could double the area’s economic output to over £200bn by 2050.

Cllr Barry Wood, Chair of the Arc Leaders Group and Leader of Cherwell District Council, said: “The Arc region has a critical mass of research, high-technology expertise and innovation assets found nowhere else in the UK. Yet we are at a pivotal time, during which our nation’s economic resilience is being tested far beyond anything we’ve seen before. Working with Government we can release the potential of the Arc’s key sectors, scientific community and entrepreneurial spirit to propel our country’s response to the major national and global challenges we face.”

The prospectus asks for commitment from Government to long term investment in the area, enabling the Arc to fulfil its true potential to deliver transformational economic growth that will benefit the whole of the UK. That investment will be crucial to tackle connectivity and congestion constraints and to provide the skills that industry requires to enable the Arc to pursue its role as a leading global innovation region.

Cllr Emily Smith, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council, said: “The world leading research and development work that takes place in Oxfordshire and across that Arc region every day will play vital role in our future, from how we address the climate emergency to ensuring that we can respond quickly and effectively to situations such as Covid-19. Local leaders are now asking government for support to provide physical and social infrastructure and to support our world leading businesses and research in a way that ensures everyone living between Science Vale and the Cambridge Science park benefits - whether that is from skills of employment opportunities, quality housing, or the acceleration of sustainable transport.”