

# BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7.00 pm in the Melland Room at the Blewbury Clubhouse.

In attendance: - Cllrs D Mathias (Chairman/DM), J Gibson (JG), L Inglis (LI), M Penington (MP), L Robinson (LR), M Blythe (MB), M Shayler (MS), C Burrow (CB), V Humphries (VH). E Cooper (Clerk/EC). District Cllr S Medley (SM).

1. To receive apologies for absence  
D Hollick, S Povolotsky
2. To record any declarations of interests relating to this meeting  
CB on PTA/Village event.
4. To receive the County Councillor's report (see Appendix C below)
5. To receive District Councillor's report (see Appendix D below)
6. To receive the Lengthman's report (see Appendix B below)
7. To receive a report from the PCSO  
No incidents of note to report (as of 18.4.22).
8. Open Forum  
M Jacobs (MJ) joined the meeting to update the Council on the findings of the Speed Watch group. MJ explained the traffic problems pre the introduction of Speed Watch, how the traffic had increased & now there were 3 years' worth of data. Speeds of 40/50mph are regularly recorded through the village & occasionally higher. MJ suggested traffic calming measures that could be introduced. Council agreed that if provided, a summary of each month's findings could be included in the meeting minutes. Further discussion on traffic calming measures deferred to the May meeting.
9. To approve previous minutes & report on any matters arising  
  
Minutes of the BPC meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
Council unanimously agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting,
10. To hear the Planning Committee Report & Ratify/Agree Planning Responses
  - 10.1 To agree the council's response to the following consultations
    - 10.1.1 P22/V0669/FUL Rumseys Barn, London Road, Blewbury  
Demolition of existing garage & swimming pool building; construction of new dwelling.  
Deadline 16.04.22  
BPC agreed no objections to this consultation.
  - 10.2 To ratify any planning responses made during the month: -
    - 10.2.1 P22/V00579/HH Upstones, Berry Lane, Blewbury  
Proposed ground floor rear & side extensions.

Deadline 05.04.22  
BPC agreed no objections 05.04.22

10.2.2 P22/V0412/FUL Winterbrook Farm, Blewbury

Retrospective planning permission for change of use from agricultural land to dog walking field, small shelter & erection of fencing.

Deadline 12.04.22

BPC agreed no objections 05.04.22 with comment.

10.2.3 P22/V0538/HH Thatcher Cottage, Church Road, Blewbury

Proposed extension & upgrade to 'Thatcher Cottage' & replacement garden room/studio. Work to involve the demolition of an existing conservatory, garage & garden workshop.

Deadline 21.04.22

BPC agreed no objections 05.04.22

10.2.4 P22/V0664/LDE Millbrook Cottage, Berry Lane, Blewbury

Certificate of LDE for the use of garden attached to Millbrook Cottage on the north & south banks of the Millbrook stream. To be accepted as a residential use under Land Use Class C3.

Deadline 21.04.22

BPC returned no comments 05.04.22

10.3 To note planning permissions received during the month

10.3.1 P22/V0216/HH Milward, Westbrook St, Blewbury

Planning permission 30.03.22

10.3.2 P22/V0071/HH & P22/V0072/LB Laurences, Nottingham Fee, Blewbury.

Planning permission 06.03.22

10.3.3 P22/V0339/LB Naylesbridge Cottage, Church Road, Blewbury

LB consent 11.05.22

10.3.4 P22/V0340/HH The Lintols, Church Road, Blewbury

Planning permission 07.04.22

11. To hear an update on Finance & Administration

11.1 To receive any updates on planned expenditure from contributions held on CIL / SBBR.

CIL funds held £15,273.28. DM to speak to CB re village artwork commission from CIL funds.  
SBBR funds held £0.

KAP reserve fund £1000 following donation from BVS (Comedy Night)

11.2 To hear all other financial updates

11.2.1 End of month reconciliation sent in advance of the meeting to the Chairman.

Signed by the Chairman at the meeting.

11.2.2 Lloyds Bank account funds as of 31.03.22 were £121,004.13 (inc. £42,552.80 village hall refurb funds). Net funds available £78,451.33.

11.2.3 Clubhouse finances update

As at 31.03.22: Receipts £8,170. Payments (all areas) £15,018.67.

11.2.4 To agree areas of spend for footpath closure fund (c£2500)

Council discussed how these funds should be spent. Council agreed unanimously that a £250 donation be made to the PTA towards the organisation of the village jubilee event. Council further agreed that it would consider an application from the ReST charity for a portion of these funds at the next meeting.

11.3 To hear all other administrative updates

11.3.1 2021-22 Audit

11.3.1.1 Asset List review

DM to review the final asset list.

11.3.1.2 Audit progression

The Clerk reported that the end of year finances were out for scrutiny with DM & LR. Audit Documents would be sent to the IA before the end of the month.

11.4 To agree authorisers for this month's payments

DM / LI

11.5 To approve payments to be made under the general power of competence and within budgeted amounts.

Council approved all payments, with the addition of the PWL repayment in April (DD), & payments to Walters Electrical for completed work, & the CAB donation as agreed in January.

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
E Cooper / D Hollick / E Holroyd	Clerk, Lengthman & Hall Administrator salaries & expenses for March	£2043.37
<b>NEST DD</b>	Clerk's pension March	£78.67
HMRC	PAYE Clerk, Lengthman, Hall Admin March	£371.66
Biffa Waste Services Ltd <b>DD</b>	Waste services April	£131.34
<b>BT DD</b>	Clubhouse line rental April	£37.20
Scottish Power <b>DD</b> (01.03.22)	Clubhouse electricity	£266.00
J Newman	Clubhouse cleaning	£162.00
OPFA	Annual Membership 1.4.22 – 31.3.23	£45.00
Dorian ATA Crone	Conservation area appraisal	£5443.00
VHEMC	Post office grant Q1 (£300+£100 for Q4 21/22)	£400.00
Winterbrook Farm	Allotment rent	£300.00
St Michael's Church	Allotment rent	£300.00
Walters Electrical	Installation of Melland Room heaters	£547.00
PWL 29.04.22	Repayment 497831	£4417.50
Oxfordshire CAB	Donation	£500.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£15042.74</b>

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
01.03.22	Sale of old Melland Room tables	£45.00
04.03.22	BlewShed Scout Hut electricity share	£61.92
22.03.22	Surman & Horwood cemetery fees	£210.00
23.03.22	M&J Didcock cemetery fees	£285.00
28.03.22	VHEMC HEH salary refund	£1379.21
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,981.13</b>

12. To receive an update from VHEMC & on the Village Hall Refurbishment

12.1 VHEMC update (DM)

DM continues to investigate the legal aspects of the relationship between the village hall & the Council.

12.2 Village Hall refurbishment update (DM)

No update this month.

13. To receive an update on the all things relating to the operation of the Clubhouse & the recreation ground

13.1 Clubhouse (MP)

13.1.1 Water Heaters

MP presented the 3 options for installing water heaters made by 2 contractors. He recommended the 3-phase power instantaneous system. Although more expensive to install, MP stated this was the most sound option for the future. Council unanimously agreed to proceed with Waters Edge. Clerk to organise.

13.1.2 Hand Dryers

Council agreed to go ahead with the purchase of 2 x Turboforce hand dryers at c£119ea.

13.1.3 Defibrillator

13.1.3.1 MP stated the Tennis Club has requested a defib unit in the area & would be happy to raise funds. The football club had previously applied to the FA, but as they do not own any part of the site, they are unable to receive funding. Council agreed in principle to consider 'licence to occupy' which would enable funding. MP to find out exactly what 'licence to occupy' would mean to the Council. Council agreed a defib unit should be sited at the Clubhouse.

13.1.3.2 VH agreed to take the lead on potential new sites in the village for defib units.

Clerk to obtain details of the village hall defib unit & arrange its re-registration & servicing as appropriate.

13.1.4 Any other updates regarding the Clubhouse

13.1.4.1 HEH reported via email that the Melland Room bookings continue as normal.

13.1.4.2 MP had analysed receipt & payments for the Clubhouse in the last 12 months. He reported that the Clubhouse was close to break even. MP also recorded thanks to JG, HEH, EC & DH for their work on the Clubhouse operations. MP also stated that now new heaters were installed, the Melland room would be more environmentally sustainable & recommended Council sell off plant room equipment that is no longer in use.

13.2 Recreation ground (DH/MP)

MP reported that the recent football tournament went well in all aspects.

14. To receive an update on all aspects of TFF & car park

- 14.1 Play areas upgrades update (LR/DH)  
Work commences 25<sup>th</sup> April. LR to ensure a site visit is carried out prior to work commencing.
- 14.2 Any other updates – Play areas/TFF/Car Park
- 14.2.1 A request had been received to accommodate Duke of Edinburgh award participants in work on the BMX track. Council agreed this may not be the most appropriate area to accommodate. JG suggested KAP may be a better area. JG to speak to DH & the originator of the request.
- 14.2.2 A request had been received to improve the skate ramp with ‘skate lite’. MS reported that this would be expensive & advised council to continue with the usual annual inspection.
15. To receive an update on Risk Management & Compliance
- 15.1 Any update or information on risk management & compliance (VH)  
None this month.
- 15.2 Cemetery paths other (EC)  
MS agreed to look at work involved in reinstating smaller paths in cemetery.
16. To receive an update on issues relating to the Environment
- 16.1 Information from Sustainable Blewbury (CB)  
CB reported that SB are to sign a lease with Thames Water regarding their disused plant on the path leading from Heather Way. Thames Water are to plant hedge rows which SB will then maintain.  
MB asked if a right of way could be established & would write to CB in her SB capacity.  
LI suggested hedges could be planted on the side of the concrete path. MB to speak to Mr Kauntz.
- 16.2 Any other environmental issues  
CB offered to update the ‘cutting back of verges’ notice.
17. To receive an update on any issues relating to Footways, Footpaths, rights of way and open spaces
- 17.1 To receive an update on the pending tree work at the Cleeve (MP) & Cemetery (EC)  
Cemetery tree work scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> May.
- 17.2 Play Close Footpaths (JG)  
JG to hand over to LI to speak to R Paige of the PCC re funds available to bringing footpaths up to spec. JG, CB, LI,  
MS all expressed an interest in this work. Council acknowledged that contractors would need to be engaged to carry out the work.
- 17.3 Footpath gravelling  
JG suggested that gravelling of footpaths takes place earlier in the year than at the usual post leaf clearing exercise in November. To raise again at May meeting.
18. To receive an update on any outstanding consultations
19. To agree the format of the Annual Parish Meeting  
Annual Parish meeting is booked for Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.  
This meeting is will be held jointly with the BVS & will follow the VHEMC AGM.
20. To agree the date/venue of the next meeting(s) of the Council  
Next full council meeting will be the annual meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00pm in the Melland Room.

The meeting finished at 9pm.

## Appendix A

<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions from April meeting</b>	<b>When By</b>
1.	Clerk to order 2 x Turboforce hand driers for Clubhouse	ASAP
2.	MS to revisit the work required to reinstate the smaller cemetery paths	May meeting
3.	MB/CB to establish if rights of way are/can be established around Thames Water land on footpath to Hagbourne	May meeting
4.	LI to speak to R Paige of PCC re play close footpaths	May meeting
5.	CB to write new guidelines on cutting back hedges & vegetation around the village	ASAP
6.	DM to speak to CB re village artwork & progress	ASAP
7.	Clerk to provide details of CIL spend guidelines	ASAP
8.	Clerk to contact contractors regarding water heaters	ASAP
9.	VH to provide details of optimum sites for defib units	May meeting
10.	MP to provide details of what a 'License to Occupy' means	ASAP
11.	LR to arrange site visit with playground contractor	ASAP
12.	JG to speak to DH & the originator of request for DoEA re potential work	ASAP
13.	MB to spk Mr Kauntz re potential for hedge planting alongside concrete path	May meeting
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions from March meeting</b>	<b>When By</b>
1.	HG to provide an update on the process for Vale conservation area appraisal to ensure no delays for BPC submission.	C'fwd
<b>No.</b>	<b>Actions from February meeting</b>	<b>When By</b>
7.	MB & CB to discuss Frying Pan Wood improved accessibility	Actioned
9.	CB to gain understanding of PC hedges within village	TBA

## Appendix B - Lengthman's Report – March 2022

Very little to report.

Grass cutting has started up as the weather gets a bit warmer.

All grass areas are in quite good condition except for one or two muddy patches.

Equipment and buildings are all good.

Play areas are mostly in good fettle except for TFF areas awaiting mat repair.

Clubhouse has had the new heaters fitted and outside lights mended.

# Weekly update for councillors: 11 April

## Hendreds & Harwell Division

This week, I can update you on the **Homes for Ukraine scheme**, including providing an attached briefing on the process we are following to support the scheme and who does what. We also announce our new library service that is offering **support to local businesses**.

Locally we have a **Rowstock Relief** meeting today with Parish Councillors, and a debriefing from the officer now in charge. We also have the formation of a CAG (councillor action group) around **HIF1 scheme**, and I am pleased to say the final seeding of the verge at A417 East to West Hendred is done, and we now eagerly await nature to do her thing!

I've started to get alerts around the starting of **Valley Park** schemes coming online, I have reached out to officers who have assured me much of this is very premature, and I will keep inputting as needed.

Only a few weeks until the final survey on **Steventon Bridge**, and who knows what the final outcomes will be, and I am pleased to be assisting with the start up of the **Steventon Speedwatch** and am always thankful to the wonderful **Harwell Speedwatch** group for their open arms and help!

**Right to reply** – last week at **Full Council** there was a motion I tabled (again) to help our trans community. We have members of the trans and non-binary community in our division, as well as in the county, in fact around 1% of our population is thought to identify as Trans or Non Binary. I have come under extreme criticism about my motion, and its got nastily political, as it has in the national media. I've been accused of not representing my division, which for the reasons above, I have been. Motions at Full Council are about setting the agenda, policy and processes of the county as a whole, cabinet questions, cabinet member decisions and other meetings give us a chance to challenge and represent our diverse communities in speeches and tabling agenda items. It's a councillors duty I feel to be a champion and ally in all we do, for all our communities in our divisions. If you read a newspaper, go onto the internet, or even turn on the news you may have well seen many headlines about transpeople lately, there is in fact more headlines than any other subject, and its been like that for a while! Its fine not to know much about trans people and non binary, lots of people don't. But it is important for us all to know the myths and misconceptions and how many of them are repeated consistently in the media, and this makes it harder when

it comes to many of the issues this community faces. I would be more than happy to discuss this issue with any councillor that would like to, because for me the trans rights movement is based on the same ideals as other liberation movements, including women's rights, racial equality and disability rights movements. **Freedom from limits** and stereotypes placed on these communities by society and importantly freedom from interpersonal and incited violence. I would like to address some fiction in the national press as a result of this motion and the fact it will cost a 'Six Figure sum' to have gender neutral and accessible toilets. This is unfounded and fabricated, as the outcomes of this motion have to come to cabinet anyway, and we already have a network of disabled toilets in every council building, which are gender neutral, we just need to ensure they are **accessible** to all.

**Vegan Food** – we committed as a council to only serving plant based food at council events / meetings, this is to reduce our carbon impact but also to set a tone of change, we all have to make some changes in order to reduce impact of the climate emergency, especially with the latest IPCC report warning we may hit a 3.2 degree rise globally which will change the way we live and potential extinction events. At Full Council have 7 meetings a year, and we are provided with a working lunch. Now, when I represented this at cabinet I suggested that 'working lunch' should be written out of the constitution. However our lunch did make national headlines, again thanks to party politics (must be campaigning season). I can confirm there is a significant cost saving per head on this menu from the previous meat menu of £5 per head. There are no plans for other events inside county hall at present, and so all at debate here is our lunches. Any excess is distributed to reduce waste, and senior staff and leaders are also invited to join us for lunch so we can network and chat through issues locally. There is much I could say about the press piece and councillors going to the pub and having maybe a beer / wine with that lunch, then returning to chambers?? Wasn't so long ago that the previous administration had a licensed bar for such meetings and reduced cost 'drinks'.

The buffet in question was sourced from a grocers / shop in Woodstock, and was fresh and supported local businesses. There was criticism about some of the fruit on the menu, which many of us have made feedback that out of season we could have fruit from food waste, in fact my amendment did mention food waste options! But this type of party politics does detract from all the positive changes happening at County Hall. I guess the 'petty side' of politics is one I will always struggle with.

### **Finally...**

With COVID-19 cases remaining high across the county, impacting on healthcare and many other services, please continue to **encourage residents to be cautious, careful and aware**. You can read more below from Ansaf Azhar, Director of Public Health. The latest **vaccination programme update** from the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) integrated care system is attached.



# Supporting Ukraine

Our work to support the government's [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#) continues as part of a joint system-wide team across Oxfordshire.

Our customer services centre team is making first contact phonecalls to hosts, and letters are being distributed to both hosts and guests outlining next steps. In partnership with the city and district councils, accommodation and safeguarding checks are taking place to ensure guests are safe and supported. Home visits to issue support payments of £200 to Ukrainian nationals have also started today.

Many of you have asked to understand a little more about the process locally and who does what across the county, district and city councils. You have also asked us where to direct people for help and support. We have outlined that in the attached briefing, for councillor use only.

To help summarise, for any queries on visa applications, this is managed by the Home Office and UK Visas and Immigration. Information on the application process is available on [gov.uk](#) and those involved in the application process can also call 24/7 for free: + 44 808 164 8810 (0808 164 8810 if you're in the UK). You can also signpost to the [Homes for Ukraine](#) scheme and to the [frequently asked questions](#) on [gov.uk](#).

Our dedicated webpages [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine](#) (centrally hosted on behalf of the joint team) are being kept up to date as we learn more from government and as we learn from implementing the above process.

If you receive any queries from sponsors you can directly signpost to [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukrainesponsor](#) or for Ukrainian guests [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukraineguest](#). Queries that cannot be easily answered by signposting can be directed towards the county council's customer services centre team:

- **Oxfordshire Ukraine helpline:** +44 1865 966444 / 01865 966 444 (opening hours: 8.45am - 5pm, Monday to Friday. Closed weekends and bank holidays).
- **Email:** [ukraineresponse@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ukraineresponse@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

We will use any insight gathered from these queries to further build content on our webpages. We will continue to keep you updated on our progress.

## COVID-19

## Latest statistics

At 1 April, the weekly case rate for Oxfordshire was 927.4 per 100,000. You can view the latest figures on our [COVID-19 dashboard](#).

## Public health advice: be cautious, careful and aware

The health and social care system is being severely impacted by the current rates of infection, as well as service delivery across different sectors. We have shared [further guidance for residents in our news story](#), including advice from our Director for Public Health, Ansaf Azhar, who said:

“As society has continued to open up, COVID cases have risen throughout the country and Oxfordshire has followed that trend. It has largely been due to the BA.2 variant, a version of Omicron that’s more transmissible but isn’t leading to worse outcomes.

“However, **it is causing significant challenges for hospitals and care homes and can still lead to severe outcomes for clinically vulnerable**. Free testing may have ended for the vast majority of people but that doesn’t mean we should let down our guard.”

## Communications campaigns

We are continuing to reinforce the ‘be cautious and considerate’ message in our communications, alongside changes to testing. We are also supporting our NHS partners in sharing messages about vaccinations and boosters.

# Partnership with Cherwell

The county and Cherwell District Council joint officer transition working group met again on Monday to discuss service reviews for a number of joint teams as part of the first phase of decoupling our services. These teams include climate, healthy place shaping, internal audit, counter-fraud, health and safety and executive support. We will keep you updated with developments.

# Latest news

- [New library service provides insight and resources for businesses](#)
- [Fire and rescue service launches recruitment campaign for on-call firefighters](#)

- [Easter holiday activities available to Oxfordshire children](#)
- [Oxfordshire's fourth 20mph pilot scheme is unveiled](#)
- [Chief Constable's Commendation for Claire Wallis, Children's Practitioner](#)

## Consultation and engagement activities

We are currently running three main consultations. Please **encourage your constituents to have their say** by sharing the relevant links. For details of all other live consultations visit [Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#).

Consultation	Link to consultation	Closing date
Oxfordshire's overarching domestic abuse strategy consultation 2021 - 2024	<a href="#">Let's Talk Oxfordshire</a>	12 April
'Be supported' survey 2022	Let's Talk Oxfordshire	24 April

## Council meetings and information

### Upcoming meetings

There are no meetings scheduled next week.

### Availability

Please note, I am taking some time off over Easter, from 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> April, please note there is no HEG Community Larder in East Hendred on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Also I am away 22-25<sup>th</sup> April. Please do still send me emails and if urgent drop me a 'whats app' to my mobile – 07939 912997, as wont be in a reception area.

**Deadlines for members' questions to Cabinet, do let me know if you want anything highlighting.**

The next three deadlines for me to submit are:

- Friday 22 April 2022, 9am
- Friday 20 May 2022, 9am

- Friday 17 June 2022, 9am

I did submit a question around Childcare at the recent full council meeting last week, the answer even made it into the national press...its [here on Page 28](#) onwards.

### **Access to public meetings**

Links to view public meetings can be found on the [meeting details](#) page on our website. You can easily import meeting dates to your google calendar by clicking on the link 'download meeting dates or papers' on the [meeting calendar page](#) of our website.

## **And finally...**

For the latest news and information from the council, check your emails regularly and [keep an eye on our website](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) and [sign up for our residents' newsletter](#), Your Oxfordshire.

With best wishes,

*Sally*

**Sally Povolotsky FRSA**

County Councillor for Hendreds and Harwell Division

## **Appendix B**

### **Monday 11th April 2022 - Monthly Parish Update**

Vale of White Horse District Councillors

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Sarah Medley

Hello! We have several important updates this month, starting with the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The local councils are working to provide extensive [support for Ukrainian refugees](#), and there is information available for residents looking to sponsor or provide help in other ways – more details below.

## Financial Support Helplines

With rising energy prices and the cost of living increasing, it is a difficult time for many residents. Anyone who is struggling financially can contact Citizens Advice on 0808 278 7907, Vale Community Impact on 01235 765348 or the council's own community support hub – details below.

## £150 Council Tax Rebate

Residents will soon receive a [£150 council tax rebate](#) to help with rising energy bills – note that this does not need to be paid back. The government has announced that [most households in council tax bands A-D will be eligible for the rebate](#) however, contrary to some reports, **the 'rebate' will not be taken off people's council tax bills** when they are issued.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are putting arrangements in place to make a separate payment to households as soon as possible. Here's how the payments will be made:

- **If a household pays their council tax by direct debit** – they should be able to receive the £150 directly into their bank account. South and Vale are hoping to start making these payments by the end of April.
- **If a household is not on direct debit** – it will take longer to make these payments as the councils will need to write to them to confirm their bank details.

To ensure the councils can carry out this work as quickly as possible, they are asking people not to contact them to chase the 'rebate' payment.

## Community Support

The Community Support Hub, originally set up by the council in 2020 in response to the pandemic, is still available for anyone in need of help: if you have COVID-19, or if you are struggling financially, or if you are just finding life difficult due to the pandemic. Whether it's practical support or just advice, get in touch. Call: 01235 422 600 (Mon to Thurs 8.30-5pm and Fridays 8.30-4.30pm) or visit [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub).

## Didcot Healthcare Update

A reminder that we have invited the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide an **update for the public on the Didcot healthcare provision at the Great Western Park Residents' Association Meeting at 8pm on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May**. The meeting will be held in a hybrid in-person and online format, at Boundary Park Sports Pavilion and on Zoom. Please keep an eye on the [GWP Residents' Association website](#) for more details, and note that this meeting will also be their AGM, for anyone wishing to volunteer with this excellent community organisation.

*We use these monthly updates to keep you updated on our activities, general council news and any COVID-19 developments. We also post regularly on our councillor Facebook Page: [Cllrs Hayleigh Gascoigne & Sarah Medley](#) Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any issues or concerns, either via Facebook message or email: [hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) and [sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).*

## Vale and South Oxfordshire councils step up to support Ukrainian refugees

Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils are redeploying staff from across the councils to ensure Ukrainian refugees moving to the districts get the support and help they need. The government has published a [welcome pack for arriving refugees](#) to signpost people to the help that is available, including advice about accessing universal credit and job support. The councils' joint team will be supplementing this with local information as well as providing clear signposts to help and support online.

The county council's website [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukrainesupport](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukrainesupport) is being used as the central host for this information. [Sponsor information](#) has been published on this site along with local information for

Ukrainian guests. South and Vale's website will signpost people to these pages. The government has also published a set of [frequently asked questions](#) for sponsors and individuals applying to the scheme.

There is a lot of joint work underway between the councils. The county council's customer services team has started to make first contact phone calls to hosts and letters will begin to be distributed as part of this process outlining next steps for hosts and guests. In partnership, councils (including us) have begun initiating the accommodation and safeguarding checks required. However, it is important to also recognise that as we activate our plans, our approach and processes will evolve and improve as we get more detailed information from government.

## Local News

### Valley Park Update

The planning application for the first 'parcel' of 246 homes on Valley Park is now live and open for consultation on the [online planning portal](#) – reference P22/V0539/RM. We (Hayleigh and Sarah) know how important it is to residents that these new houses are environmentally sustainable, and we will be pushing for this in our own consultation responses. However, we encourage all residents to comment on the application to ensure that everyone's views are heard - **the deadline for consultation responses is 29<sup>th</sup> April.**

The outline planning application for the Valley Park development was approved by the council's planning committee in July 2021. This came after the decision was initially deferred in February 2021 due to the three key issues we and the local community raised at the time: lack of health care provision, inadequate cycling infrastructure and insufficient sustainability commitments. These issues were addressed through placing additional requirements on the developers when planning permission was granted.

The additional requirements were secured earlier this year via the legal agreement between the developers and the councils. The signing of this agreement means that [millions of pounds have now been secured for vital infrastructure, health provision and tackling climate change](#) as part of the planning application for Valley Park. Developers will have to provide the funds as part of an application for the homes – 35% of which will be affordable – at Valley Park near Great Western Park through what is known as Section 106. The money includes £200,000 for biodiversity improvements, four times more than applicant Taylor Wimpey originally proposed, that must be made before any development begins. There is also just under £4m for public transport, including bus shelters and bus services, to encourage sustainable travel to, from and around the site.

Following requests from Vale of White Horse District Council Planning Committee members, developers must also implement so-called 'green wave' technology to improve cyclist safety at the roundabout proposed on the B4493 Harwell / Didcot Road, as well additional cycleways to connect the site with the surrounding area. Also secured on site are allotments, sports pitches, a community centre, two primary schools and a special educational needs school, and two local centres to provide services meeting the daily needs of future occupants. £9m is secured for improving and expanding secondary school provision. The contributions will ensure the development contributes to the aims of Didcot Garden Town, which sets out how to build new homes in a well-planned and sustainable way.

### [The Vale rejects the need for gigantic new "environmentally disastrous" reservoir](#)

Plans for an enormous reservoir near Abingdon should be halted due to significant environmental concerns says the Vale of White Horse District Council in its response to Thames Water's public consultation on futureproofing water supplies in the area.

### [Women's Tour cycling race set for Oxfordshire finale](#)

The 2022 Women's Tour, Britain's biggest and longest running international women's cycling stage race, will end with a spectacular Oxfordshire finale in June. If you want to watch it, keep an eye out for further details of the Oxfordshire stage, including the full route, locations, and timetables, which will follow in due course.

## Climate & Environment News

### [Groups urged to apply now to the Vale's Climate Action Fund](#)

Communities looking to tackle climate change in the Vale are being urged to apply now for a share of a new £50,000 council grant. Applications are now open for Vale of White Horse District Council's Climate Action Fund to help local groups, with up to £5,000 on offer for individual projects. **Applications are open until noon on 25 April 2022.**

### [A glittering future for waste collections?](#)

Residents might have been lucky to spot 'Glitterball' – the name of a brightly coloured **electric** bin truck – which has been collecting recycling from households as part of a four-week trial of electric vehicles (EVs) in our area. As part of our commitment to reducing our carbon emissions, we asked Biffa to trial an EV to see if they are feasible in our districts. The information gained from the trial will inform any future contracts that we award.

### [Faringdon leisure centre will be powered by solar energy, cutting carbon emissions in the Vale](#)

A low-carbon, energy-efficient future for Faringdon Leisure Centre became a huge step closer, when work began on installing solar panels and air source heat pump technology this month. The refurbishments will significantly improve the carbon footprint of the building, and it will become the Vale's first council-owned building to be powered entirely by low-carbon and renewable energy.

### [A major milestone for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme](#)

The Environment Agency has submitted the planning application to build the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.

## Council News

### [Have your say on proposed changes for parishes in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse](#)

Residents are being asked to comment on changes put forward by parish councils in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse which could affect how their local area is run.

### [Platinum Jubilee celebrations this summer](#)

There are only a few months to go until the country celebrates the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Both councils now have a webpage dedicated to the event, as a 'one stop shop' for residents, businesses and our town and parish councils to find out what they need to do arrange an event, what events are happening locally, and what's happening nationally visit: [whitehorsedc.gov.uk/platinumjubilee](http://whitehorsedc.gov.uk/platinumjubilee).

### [ShopAppy to help local businesses](#)

We need lots of independent, local high street businesses to help the council pilot an exciting new online "marketplace" – a locally-focused app where they can sell their products online and promote their shops. To help local businesses recover from the effects of the pandemic, we've partnered with a company called [ShopAppy](#). Spread the word to retailers – it's free to join and there's no cost for the first 12 months.