

BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 11th May 2022 at 7.00 pm in the Melland Room at the Blewbury Clubhouse.

In attendance: - Cllrs D Mathias (DM), J Gibson (JG), M Blythe (MB), C Burrow (CB), M Penington (MP), L Inglis (LI), V Humphries (VH), M Shayler (MS). Also attending E Cooper (Clerk/EC).

1. To elect a Chairman
D Mathias was nominated as Chairman & accepted. This was seconded & all were in favour. Cllr Mathias will therefore continue as Chairman of the Council.
2. To elect a Vice-Chairman
L Inglis was nominated as Vice-Chairman & accepted. This was seconded & all were in favour. Cllr Inglis will therefore continue as Vice-Chairman of the Council.
3. To complete Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms
Cllrs Mathias & Inglis completed their Acceptance of Office forms.
4. To complete Register of Members Interests forms
Cllrs Mathias & Inglis declared no changes to their previous register of interests.
5. To receive apologies for absence
County Cllr S Povolotsky, District Cllrs S Medley & H Gascoigne, Cllr L Robinson & Lengthman D Hollick.
6. To record any declarations of interests relating to this meeting
None declared.
7. To receive the County Councillor's report (see Appendix C below)
7.1 Information on different traffic calming measures & costs (SP)
As SP was not present, this will be carried forward to the next meeting.
8. To receive District Councillor's report (see Appendix D below)
9. To receive the Lengthman's report (see Appendix B below)
10. To receive a report from the PCSO
No report this month.
11. Open Forum
To receive representations from members of the public if present.
None present.
12. To approve previous minutes & report on any matters arising

Minutes of the BPC meeting held on 13th April 2022

JG requested an amendment to item 14.2.1. She agreed to speak to DH, but not the originator.

However, a communication still needed to go to the originator. Council agreed.

Otherwise minutes accepted as a true record.

13. To hear the Planning Committee Report & Ratify/Agree Planning Responses

13.1 To agree the council's response to the following consultations

13.1.1 P22/V0901/FUL Blewbury Methodist Church, Chapel Lane, Blewbury

Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 3 (materials), 4 (car parking), 5 (boundary details) on application P19.V1421/FUL

Deadline 20.05.22

Council agreed to object with comments.

13.1.2 P22/V0974/FUL (site of former) Westbrook Farm, Westbrook St, Blewbury

Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 3 (materials), 4 (surface water drainage), 5 (landscaping scheme), 7 (wildlife bird boxes), 9 (parking), 10 (slab levels), 11 (contamination) on application P16/V0192/FUL

Deadline 20.05.22

Council agreed to object with comments.

13.2 To note planning permissions received during the month

13.3.1 P22/V0185/LB Abners, Church Road, Blewbury

LB consent 14.04.22

13.3.2 P21/V2536/HH Amend no.1 & P21/V2538/LB Amend no.1 Borlase, South St, Blewbury

Planning permission & LB consent 20.04.22

14. To hear an update on Finance & Administration

14.1 To receive any updates on planned expenditure from contributions held

14.1.1 CIL funds held £15,273.28.

Clerk was asked to confirm what reserve last year's KAP spend was taken from CIL reserve funds?

Clerk's note: - The KAP refurb cost of £4752 is to come out of CIL reserve funds.

14.1.2 Footpath closure fund £2250

Following a request from UCAB, Council unanimously agreed to a donation of £2000. LI to submit a donation request on behalf of ReST.

14.2 To hear all other financial updates

14.2.1 End of month reconciliation sent in advance of the meeting to the Chairman. This was agreed & signed at the meeting.

14.2.2 Lloyds Bank account funds as of 30.04.22 were £148,314.31 (inc. £42,552.80 village hall refurb funds). Net funds available £105,761.51.

14.2.2.1 Village Hall Refurbishment update

Final invoices expected:-

- Invoice from MD for £14,652.52 + VAT (outstanding since December)
- Invoice from MD for £10,633.55 +VAT (retention)
- Final invoice from Ridge for £250 + VAT

- Invoice from Avonlea electrical contractors for around £500
This just leaves the remaining grant from the Vale, which S White of the VH Refurb Committee has applied for & should be in the range £9,000 - £10,000.

14.3 To hear all other administrative updates

14.3.1 2021-22 Audit update

14.3.1.1 To agree & sign off Accounting Statements

Accounting statements were sent to Council ahead of the meeting. All statements were agreed & relevant documents signed by the Clerk & Chair.

14.3.1.2 Internal Audit progression

The internal auditors continue to ask for more documentation, which is being provided. No feedback received as yet.

14.3.1.3 Asset list review update

DM had reviewed the asset list & was satisfied with the asset values given.

14.3.2 To discuss the formation of a Council HR Committee

14.3.2.1 Council agreed to form an HR committee with 3 members; DM, CB & LI.

14.3.2.2 Change to Clerk's hours – DM has consulted Council ahead of the meeting & it was unanimously agreed to increase the Clerk's hour to 65, with effect from 1 April 2022.

14.4 To agree authorisers for this month's payments

JG & DM.

14.5 To approve payments to be made under the general power of competence and within budgeted amounts: -

PAYEE	Description	Amount
E Cooper/D Hollick/ E Holroyd	Clerk, Lengthman & Hall Administrator salaries & expenses for April	£2146.98
NEST DD 6.5.22	Clerk's pension April	£85.01
HMRC	PAYE Clerk, Lengthman, Hall Admin April	£365.86
Biffa Waste Services Ltd DD	Waste services May	£105.07
BT DD 9.5.22	Clubhouse line rental May	£40.66
Scottish Power DD 01.05.22	Clubhouse electricity	£300.00
J Newman	Clubhouse cleaning	£216.00
SSE DD	Scout Hut electricity	£119.85
Blewbury School PTA	Big Jubilee Event contribution (paid to be ratified)	£250.00
White Horse Horticulture	Pound, playclose, church mow March (paid to be ratified)	£200.00
White Horse Horticulture	Pound, playclose, church mow April	£200.00
Intelligent Facility Solutions	Clubhouse hand dryers x 2 (paid to be ratified)	£274.80
ONPA	Membership (paid to be ratified)	£50.00
Gallagher	Tractor insurance (paid to be ratified)	£134.78
L Robinson	Expenses	£32.16
Waters Edge	Water heater installation at clubhouse	£1932.00

	Total	£6453.17
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Receipts	Description	Amount
VHEMC	Clubhouse receipts (4 th quarter 21-22)	£2246.50
BVS Comedy Night	KAP donation	£1000.00
VoWHDC	Precept first half	£37500.00
Marenga	Footpath closure payment	£2500.00
Monumental Masons	Harland memorial fee	£50.00
	Total	£43,296.50

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

15.1 VHEMC update (DM)

DM continues to investigate the matter of joint usage.

15.2 Village Hall refurbishment update (DM)

Final snags to be carried out on Friday 13th May.

The VHEMC has asked Sustainable Blewbury to propose planting & maintenance options for the green area outside the village hall.

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

16.1 Clubhouse (MP)

16.1.1 Water Heaters / Hand dryers / Defibrillator

16.1.1.1 A new water heater has been installed in the plant room & all redundant equipment removed. The electrician was unable to reconnect the system immediately & this will be carried out in the near future.

16.1.1.2 Two new hand dryers are in & working.

16.1.1.3 VH reported on his investigations into defib units for the village. Council agreed that the one provided by the FA, through the Amazons football club, should be installed on the side of the building. A qualified electrician, arranged by the football club, will carry out the installation.

16.1.2 Cricket club fees & revised agreement for 2022

16.1.2.1 Fees as proposed in email from MP to Council 19.4.22

Council unanimously agreed to the fees as proposed.

16.1.2.2 Revised agreement

MP was asked to obtain a changing room cupboard key from the cricket club & to include this in the agreement. Council did not agree to the sole use of the small fridges in the kitchen & storage area.

16.1.3 Any other updates on any aspect of the Clubhouse

16.1.3.1 Monthly report received from the Hall Administrator.

16.1.3.2 Clerk confirmed that outdoor furniture had not been ordered as this had stalled following information from CB on environmental considerations. Council unanimously agreed to order tables as previously identified by JG. MB agreed to lend 12 chairs for use with the tables.

16.1.3.3 JG reported that the recreation ground car park litter bin was always full. JG will research a replacement bin & its collection.

16.1.3.4 It was also reported that rubbish was left after the filming crew had left the area. DM to speak to his contact regarding a clean-up.

16.2 Recreation ground (DH/MP)

No other updates.

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

17.1 Play areas upgrades update (LR/DH)

Play Area Matting upgrade

The contractor had not completed the job or followed the original work agreement. The contractor had agreed to return to site & finish the work. The contractor has also highlighted some timbers that need attention & potentially replacing. The contractor was asked to inspect all timbers & report accordingly. This unfortunately means that the play area will be fenced off & out of use for longer than originally intended.

Clerk to contact the annual inspection contractor for a second opinion.

DM had organised a turf watering rota as necessary.

MS to provide a lockable cover over the standpipe, as this had been vandalised.

17.2 Any other updates – Play areas/TFF/Car Park

None.

18. To receive an update on Risk Management & Compliance

18.1 Speed Watch update

Latest data from the Speed Watch team provided in advance of the meeting. See Appendix E below.

18.2 Any update or information on risk management & compliance (VH)

VH confirmed that the defib unit at the village hall was out of warranty & no longer manufactured. Council unanimously agreed to its replacement. VH presented his proposal for a maximum of 4 defib units across the village at a cost of c£2k each. Two councillors expressed concern at health & safety overload & thought a maximum of 3 would suffice; village hall, clubhouse & potentially the Blueberry. VH to speak to the Blueberry manager. VH also to look at potential funding. Council agreed to a maximum of 3 units. It was also noted that once installed, the units should be replaced every 10 years & together with yearly maintenance, this would need to be written in to the budget.

19. To receive an update on issues relating to the Environment

19.1 Information from Sustainable Blewbury (CB)

CB gave an update on the consequences of ‘no mow May’. Whilst the Council was supporting this, CB would talk to DH regarding what should or should not be cut.

19.2 Any other environmental issues

CB asked that everyone read & comment on her ‘Sustainable Procurement’ policy idea as detailed in her email dated 11.5.22. This will be discussed further at the June meeting.

20. To receive an update on any issues relating to Footways, Footpaths, rights of way and open spaces

20.1 To receive an update on the pending tree work at the Cleeve (MP) & Cemetery (EC)

Cemetery tree work scheduled for 23rd May.

20.2 Play Close Footpaths (LI)

MS reported that a contractor would be examining the footpaths on 12th May & a quotation would initially go to the PCC.

20.3 Footpath gravelling

JG had previously suggested that this activity should take place in the spring & not late autumn as in previous years. MS agreed to identify which footpaths need more gravel. All agreed that the work would take place on Friday 20th May at 6pm. MS will confirm supply of gravel & hire of dumper.

Clerk's note work successfully carried out on Friday 20th May.

21. To receive an update on any outstanding consultations

21.1 EV charge points

Clerk to complete.

21.2 Proposed Disabled Persons Parking Places (email to Council 21.4.22 refers).

Clerk to complete.

22. 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 8th June at 7.00pm in the Melland Room.

The meeting finished at 9pm.

Appendix A

No.	Actions from April meeting	When By
1.	Clerk to check KAP spend in reserves.	Actioned
2.	Clerk to inform UCAB re donation.	Actioned
3.	JG to research bigger bin(s) for use in the Clubhouse area	Actioned
4.	DM to speak to film contact re rubbish clearance in area of filming.	June meeting
5.	Clerk to complete surveys on EV charge points & disabled parking spaces	June meeting
6.	Clerk to send latest BT bill to MP	Actioned
6.1	MP to look in to the Clubhouse BT bill	June meeting
7.	LI to provide ReST proposal to Council for consideration	June meeting
8.	Clerk to spk Rynat re TFF play area inspection	Actioned
9.	MS to build lockable cover over TFF standpipe.	ASAP
10.	Clerk to outdoor order tables specified for Clubhouse	In progress
11.	Defibs – VH to look in to funding & spk Blueberry	ASAP
12.	Clerk to provide CB with grass cutting information	ASAP
13.	All to consider information provided by CB on 11.5.22 re Sustainable Procurement	June meeting
14.	MS to confirm to all which footpaths need gravelling, + dumper hire before Friday 20 th	Before Fri 20/5
No.	Actions from April meeting	When By
2.	MS to revisit the work required to reinstate the smaller cemetery paths	C'fwd
13.	MB to spk Mr Kauntz re potential for hedge planting alongside concrete path	C'fwd
No.	Actions from March meeting	When By
3.	DM to meet B Shaw (UPC Chairman) re Coffin Way	C'fwd

Appendix B - Lengthman's Report – APRIL 2022

Quiet month with minimal grass cutting. We really need some rain though.
TFF Play Area is now having all the maintenance work done and will be out of action for 3-4 weeks. Hopefully we get some rain soon so that the turf establishes quickly.
KAP play area is all OK.
Cemetery and the Recreation Ground are all in good condition.
Buildings and equipment are all satisfactory.

Signed by Chair

Appendix C

This week, sharing some Division news. As usual, I am updating you on progress for the Homes for Ukraine scheme and share the most recent developments in our partnership with Cherwell District Council. I have also attached the latest vaccination programme update from the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) integrated care system.

Homes for Ukraine

We are pleased to share that the system is working and in full swing across Oxfordshire to support the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. While we still have limited government guidance in some areas, in particular around grant payments, all partners across the county are working together to find solutions and put guests at the heart of any action required. The accommodation and safeguarding checks are progressing well, with the backlog of home checks almost completed, and with no significant concerns raised this week. As previously mentioned, the £200 payments to our guests to help them with immediate costs while they settle in are being made by whoever makes the first physical contact with them as part of these checks. This week, we have worked to agree that moving forward we will usually issue this payment as a pre-loaded card rather than cash, which can be used online, in shops or at a cashpoint, just like a normal debit card.

There are a number of benefits to this approach, including helping those guests who might be in more rural parts of the county purchase things they might need. They also act, in part, like a bank account, giving a little time for people to set themselves up with an account at one of the high street banks. However, we are offering our guests a choice, so if they would prefer to receive this payment as cash, they are invited to let us know. This will come into effect next week, and our communications to guests and hosts are being updated to reflect this change.

Last week, we updated you on the work we have been doing with Asylum Welcome to develop a proposal to expand the community liaison officer resource available in each district and the city. The purpose would be for this resource to coordinate, advise and refer guests to the support that is available to them, including across housing, education and health. This has now been agreed and recruitment to these posts has begun. We will share an update with councillors on who will be working in what area when we can.

On to school news, we have continued to process school place applications and are recruiting an additional admissions officer to manage demand and avoid administrative delays.

You may have also seen that the Department for Work and Pensions has laid emergency regulations so those arriving in the UK from Ukraine, as a result of the Russian invasion, can access Universal Credit and jobs support immediately. Families can therefore claim for free school meals in the usual way under the usual eligibility criteria, which requires providing a national insurance number. To reassure councillors, in Oxfordshire, we are asking all schools to provide free school meals where appropriate and not wait to receive a national insurance number. We will continue to put the needs of children first.

And as we approach half-term, we are working to identify what holiday activities could be offered for children and also activities for children waiting for a school

place.

We will keep you updated on progress.

A reminder, you can direct general Ukraine queries to:

Website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine

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

District partnership news

We are continuing to work with our district colleagues to redefine our working relationship with Cherwell. The Joint Shared Services and Personnel Committee, made up of elected councillors from both the county and district councils, met on Monday 25 April and agreed the future arrangements for several service areas currently being delivered jointly. The following future arrangements were agreed: Corporate health and safety: Joint working arrangements will end from 1 May, with postholders continuing to work for their respective employing council.

Policy and strategy: Joint working arrangements will end from 1 May, with postholders continuing to work for their respective employing council.

Joint management arrangements for the healthy place shaping team:

These joint management arrangements will end from 1 May, to enable the district council to review its overall wellbeing offer. Healthy place shaping remains a core focus for us here at Oxfordshire and we will work with all of our city and district partners, as well as those in the NHS and voluntary and community sectors, to continue to make progress in this area.

Internal audit and anti-fraud: We will continue to provide internal audit and anti-fraud services to Cherwell, with a new agreement to be put in place.

Climate action: Formal joint roles will end, with postholders continuing to work for their respective employing council. We are developing a new agreement to continue to work together to share specialist advice and support. The intention is to develop a new agreement and implement the change by the end of May.

In addition, as part of the reassignment of senior leadership accountabilities, Sukdave Ghuman's post as Head of Legal Services will revert to being a county council only role from 1 May.

We are continuing to support all colleagues affected by these changes and we will keep you updated when we have new information to share.

COVID-19

Latest statistics

At 22 April, the weekly case rate for Oxfordshire was 238.3 per 100,000. You can view the latest figures on our COVID-19 dashboard.

Vaccination update

Over four million vaccinations have now been given across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care System. Since the spring

boosters started on 21 March, 56 per cent of those eligible across the area have received their vaccination, leaving around 56,000 people who are eligible but yet to come forward and more who will become eligible in the coming weeks. You can read more in the attached update.

Communications campaigns

We are continuing to reinforce the 'be cautious and considerate' message in our communications. We are also supporting our NHS partners in sharing messages about vaccinations and boosters.

Local and County news

Relief to Rowstock - there was a good parish council engagement piece a few weeks ago, please do respond to any materials sent (especially Harwell and Steventon due to the initial location for the scheme).

HEG Community Larder - continues to be a success, and now there is a greater shift around now people using it for financial / food emergencies, which is sad indeed. However, we have a plan around expanding HEG to surrounding villages where there are concerns. We are starting this with Steventon, we have several users and volunteers who are willing to 'drop' boxes at peoples doors. Anyone can join the HEG larder from anywhere, people can join here - <https://www.sofea.uk.com/purpose-projects/community-larder/>

We do have access to some limited discretionary memberships for anyone identified in real need. HIF1 - I am on the HIF1 working CAG around issues with HIF and plans for the future. I am fully supportive of achieving outcomes for Didcot and surrounding areas to alleviate pressure of traffic, HGV and more decarbonised and sustainable travel. There is a site visit early June, and more details coming soon. If you are not aware of HIF1 there is details here - <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=23884>

20mph roll out, we now know that Blewbury, Chilton, East Hendred and Steventon are in Traunch 1 of the scheme, more details coming soon.

Valley Park - we are organising forums and meetings hoping to start soon and I am liaising with our District Colleague's on next steps. The developer is definitely running before they can walk. Harwell PC, local stakeholders and DC's will be reached out too in coming weeks. I still want mass trip reduction and am still raising internal issues on the 5 arm on the roundabout. As the VP spine is essential to HIF1 success we need to move faster than we are now, which I have raised concerns about.

Harwell Street Design for Traffic Calming and speed reduction - we are working with the Highways design team on a solution, we have some concerns over the active travel part, which HPC and I are feeding back, we clearly need another meeting, which I will sort asap.

Chilton Fields - still no land registry reports, am pestering.

Harding Vale, Steventon, several concerns raised, some fixed within days but some need liaison with SOHA and VOWH enforcement which I will attend to after the 5th May.

Ped/Cycle - reviews of the division will be this year, I look forward to working with you all on this. Blewbury to Upton Cyclepath - I hear the parishes have made progress with the land owner letters, so look forward to driving the next stages with the County soon.

Steventon Bridge - I will contact Steventon directly.

West Hendred - Crossing point is under review for A417 - liaising directly with the Parish Council
Concerns about food and fuel poverty are rising, casework around energy bill increases is not half my postbag, the District Council has advice here.

<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/covid-19/financial-support-available-for-residents-in-need-in-south-oxfordshire-and-the-vale-of-white-horse/>

Heroic firefighters honoured for their service to our communities

Twenty-two firefighters who have served Oxfordshire residents for a combined total of over 500 years have been awarded medals on behalf of The Queen in a special ceremony at Blenheim Palace. A highlight of the prestigious event involved Oxfordshire's Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Marjorie Glasgow BEM, presenting 'Her Majesty, The Queen's Long Service and Good Conduct' medals to 11 firefighters, who have each provided 20 years' service. You can read more about those who received awards in our news story.

County Print Finishers receive award for inclusivity

The service has been recognised with a Visibly Better award from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) for its inclusive attitude, practices and environment, all of which enable it to employ people with significant sight loss. It now has access to significant RNIB resources to support colleagues across the council who may experience sight loss at some time in their careers.

In other news:

Our fire crews issue water safety advice

County commits to enabling more trees to be planted

Consultation and engagement activities

We're currently running one major consultation for residents. Please encourage your constituents to have their say by sharing the relevant link. For details of all other live consultations visit Let's Talk Oxfordshire.

[Consultation Link](#) to [consultation Closing date](#)

A40 improvements:

[access to Witney](#)

[News article with link to planning application](#)

17 May

[Council meetings and information](#)

[Upcoming meetings](#)

There are no meeting scheduled for this week.

[Access to public meetings](#)

[Links to view public meetings](#) can be found on the [meeting details page](#) on our website.

And finally...

I went to Holland a few weeks ago for a weekend to look at cycleways and infrastructure (personal trip not county) as I wanted to understand more about where we can learn and implement, I came back with allot of videos (and saddle sore) and hope to use this to influence the Valley Park delivery Ped/Cycle - and have seen some Green Wave in reality.

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 Povolotsky FRSA
Hendreds & Harwell County Councillor

Appendix D

Monday 9th May 2022 - Monthly Parish Update

Vale of White Horse District Councillors

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Sarah Medley

Hello from Hayleigh & Sarah

We hope everyone enjoyed the extended Easter weekend, and had the opportunity for some family time, time to relax or time away – however you please! And ‘Eid Mubarak’ to those who were fasting over the month of Ramadan and celebrating Eid.

The month of April was a reasonably quiet one for council meeting, but the work of the council officers carries on and we have included the latest press releases in this update as well as some more information on how the council is supporting Ukrainian refugees, and a link to the latest planning application for a parcel of homes on Valley Park (please submit your comments!).

The next full council meeting is our AGM on 18th May. Should you wish to speak at this (or any) meeting, please email democratic services democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk by 12noon on the working day before the meeting. You can also attend meetings in person or watch the stream on YouTube – details about this are [here](#).

Hope the month of May brings everyone some sunshine and some fun as we look forward to the Queen's jubilee celebrations locally, and the start of summer.

Council tax rebate

All households living in properties which are in council tax bands A-D are entitled to a £150 payment. The government is providing this money, also known as the ‘council tax rebate’, to help people with the rising costs of energy bills with the payments being made by local councils.

The Council can pay the money directly to someone's bank account if they are the person responsible for paying council tax at the property.

A letter will be sent to all remaining eligible households (those not on direct debit, or whose bank account can't be matched to those liable for the council tax at the property) asking them to complete an online form to confirm their bank account details so they are able to receive the money. Anyone who is not able to complete the form online will be able to call a special customer service team for assistance.

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.

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.

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 and sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Vale and South Oxfordshire councils step up to support Ukrainian refugees

The system is working and in full swing across Oxfordshire to support the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Whilst, there is still limited government guidance in some areas, all partners across the county are working together to find solutions and put guests at the heart of any action required. The accommodation and safeguarding checks are progressing well, with the backlog of home checks almost completed, and with no significant concerns raised.

The government is providing funds to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities, which the councils will be the administrators of.

The county council has continued to process school place applications and is recruiting an additional admissions officer to manage demand and avoid administrative delays.

You may have also seen that the Department for Work and Pensions has laid emergency regulations so those arriving in the UK from Ukraine, as a result of the Russian invasion, can access Universal Credit and jobs support immediately. Families can therefore claim for free school meals in the usual way under the usual eligibility criteria.

And as we approach half-term, the council are working to identify what holiday activities could be offered for children and also activities for children waiting for a school place.

For more information

General Ukraine queries:

- www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine
- **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

For housing and community support in South and Vale:

- www.southoxon.gov.uk/ukraine
- www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ukraine
- **South and Vale helpline:** +44 1235 422600 / 01235 422600 (press option one). Opening hours: 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am-4.30pm Fridays, Closed weekends and bank holidays.

Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Finally, as we work hard to support the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, it's important to recognise that we are continuing to work collectively across the county to support people of all immigration status, including refugees, whatever their country of origin.

In recent years, all councils across Oxfordshire have established specific support arrangements for those from Syria and Afghanistan working together with our voluntary and community sector partners to deliver

wrap-around support for those temporarily accommodated in hotels. We will all continue to support relocating refugees and work with Thames Valley Police and other agencies to identify and prevent modern slavery.

Local News

[Valley Park Update](#)

The planning application for the first 'parcel' of 246 homes on Valley Park has now closed for consultation on the [online planning portal](#) – reference P22/V0539/RM. The decision will take at least 6 weeks as the planning officers at the Vale read all the comments submitted, and look at how the application complies to national as well as local planning policies. They may go back to the developer with changes to make, meaning the decision could take longer.

In the meantime, another planning application for a parcel of houses by Persimmon as been submitted, and can be viewed and commented on [here](#) – reference P22/V0907/RM. The deadline for a response here is **1st June**.

[Witness the thrill of elite cycling in Oxfordshire](#)

People will be able to witness the thrill of elite professional cycling when the Women's Tour returns to the Vale of White Horse on Saturday 11 June.

Following successful events in 2019 and 2021, this will be the final year that The Women's Tour will visit Oxfordshire, following a three-year partnership with race organiser SweetSpot. For 2022, the county will host the sixth and final stage of the Tour in what promises to be a spectacular finale.

On the day, you will be able to see the riders pass through Harwell and Didcot. The full timetable will be published closer to the time.

Communities across the district are being encouraged to mark the occasion – this could be as simple as lining the route to cheer the riders on, putting up bunting, flags, or cycling inspired artwork, creating a cycling themed window display or having cycling themed events.

To learn more visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/womenstour.

[New cinema nights at The Beacon](#)

New film nights will start at The Beacon from Saturday 21 May with a matinée of *Encanto* and an evening screening of *Belfast*. Later screenings include *Sing 2* and *West Side Story*. More info [here](#).

[Cornerstone's summer of fun](#)

Cornerstone's summer programme is now in full swing with a line-up of shows and activities from science extravaganzas to live blues music. With classes, workshops, and gallery exhibitions including 'Oxfordshire Artweeks: Inspired By Nature' from 3 May – there's something for everyone. More [here](#).

Climate & Environment News

[Councils to let wildflowers bloom during No Mow May](#)

Wildflowers could bloom in more public areas next month after South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils pledged their support for No Mow May.

The two councils already designate wildflower meadows which they only cut two to three times a year but this year they will trial leaving several additional areas of land uncut for No May Mow, a national campaign which encourages people to not mow gardens and public areas during May.

For more information about how the council carry out grass cutting visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/NoMowMay

For more information about No May May, visit [the Plantlife website](#).

Council News

[Didcot Garden Town](#)

A wide range of improvement projects and facilities in the Didcot Garden Town area will be prioritised to ensure climate change and pandemic recovery are tackled first.

The Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board discussed the actions set out in 2017's Delivery Plan to identify the projects they thought were the most important to bring more community improvements and assist recovery for the garden town area following the pandemic.

More information on the [Didcot Garden Town can be found here](#).

You can read the full minutes of the [Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board meeting here](#).

[Have your say on a new technology park development in Didcot Garden Town](#)

Residents and businesses can give their views on how greener commercial buildings can be built at a Didcot technology park.

Hill Farm, in Appleford and near to Didcot, is the site of a proposed Local Development Order (LDO), something that local planning authorities use to set out the overall design of a site. It also helps speed up the planning process for preferred types of development there, such as industrial buildings with energy efficient measures. This LDO design includes a data centre, waste management, a wood recycling organisation and a battery storage facility.

The formal consultation is now open until midday 25 May 2022 via [this link to the planning application page](#).

[Street naming consultation](#)

The government is asking people to comment on proposals to alter process for changing street names.

This includes replacing the current system with a single requirement for a residents' vote on any changes to street names and some changes to regulations and statutory guidance for councils. To find out more and to have your say visit [the government's consultation](#)

Appendix E – Speed Watch Report. See separate data sheet.