



Monday 6th March 2023

Monthly Parish Update

Vale of White Horse District Councillors

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Sarah Medley

Hello from Hayleigh and Sarah

Hello! We have been busy this past month with various council and community events. At the latest council meeting, Hayleigh asked about the timescales and funding for the proposed new GP facility on Great Western Park – see below for details. Hayleigh successfully proposed an amendment to the council's budget for the coming year: to double the funding for the [Climate Action Fund](#) and to increase the scope of the eligibility criteria so that more community groups can access this funding. The Climate Action Fund exists to support local projects that help to tackle climate change – see the [council grants webpage](#) for more information.

We are delighted by the news that the Harwellian Club, Sustainable Harwell, Blewbury Parish Council and Sustainable Blewbury have all received grants from the Climate Action Fund for their fantastic projects: solar panels, community car sharing, planting wildflowers and a community woodland! We attended the recent launch event for Sustainable Blewbury's nature reserve and Quaker woodland. It was great to see the progress that has been made so far with this brilliant project; what a treasure it will be for future generations.

We use these monthly updates to keep you updated on our activities and general council news. We also post regularly on our councillor Facebook Page: [Cllrs Hayleigh & Sarah - Blewbury & Harwell](#). Please 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.

Community Support

[Household Support Fund closed but help is still available](#)

The council recognises that many residents are struggling due to cost-of-living pressures and although the Household Support Fund has now closed, support is still available through the councils' Community Hub team who offer a wide range of advice, including information on free or affordable food banks and council tax support. The Community Hub Team can also help to signpost people for debt advice and other cost-of-living support and provide information on housing support as well as guidance on how people can look after their mental health and wellbeing. Anyone in need of support can contact our Community Hub team during office hours on 01235 422600 or they can email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Warm Spaces

A reminder that there are several community warm spaces available locally, providing a welcome space for all, with free refreshments and activities for children. The [Didcot Wave](#) and Abingdon [White Horse](#) Leisure Centres are offering warm spaces open to all, both leisure centre members and non-members alike, from 11.30am to 3pm Monday to Friday. These spaces offer a warm welcome, comfortable seating, free tea, coffee & biscuits as well as the opportunity to charge your phone, use the free Wi-Fi and have a hot shower. The websites <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/> and <https://warmspaces.org/> have online maps of warm spaces offered locally in Didcot and the surrounding villages.

Support for Ukraine

It is now over a year since the devastating war in Ukraine started. Thank you to all of the residents who have been hosting families in the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The council's [support for Ukraine](#) webpage continues to provide information and guidance for Ukrainian nationals and their hosts.

Local News

Didcot & Villages Healthcare

At the latest council meeting in February, Hayleigh raised a question about the timescales and funding for the proposed new GP facility on Great Western Park. Specifically, why the Vale of White Horse district council cannot deliver the healthcare centre itself, and when can we expect an update on the progress of the facility. This was answered as follows:

- The council cannot deliver the healthcare facility as this is the responsibility of the local NHS - previously called the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), now the new Integrated Care Board (ICB).
- The council is currently holding the funds for the facility, which were provided by the developers of GWP. They are ready to transfer these funds as soon as the other parties involved are ready.
- The other parties are the ICB, the developers building the healthcare centre, and Woodlands Medical Centre.
- The involvement of four different parties has added to the complexity of the project, however progress is being made and a public update is expected in March.

As your local councillors, we are all too aware of the urgency of this issue and we have been doing everything we can to push for progress on the GWP health centre. We are in regular contact with the ICB and we have personally invited them to come to a public meeting, which we are happy to organise, to provide an update for residents. We will let you know any details on this as soon as we hear from the ICB.

Valley Park Update

Hayleigh and Sarah: this section of our report provides an overview of the current live planning applications for Valley Park. There are often several live applications relating to the development, however those labelled 'RM' i.e. 'Reserved Matters' are typically the most noteworthy as they request planning permission for specific parcels of housing on the development. Residents can provide comments on these applications. Applications labelled as 'DIS' i.e. 'Discharge' relate to specific conditions from the outline planning permission and are not usually open for public consultation. The current live planning applications for Valley Park are listed below along with an update on the status of each provided by the Vale planning officers:

New Application

[P23/V0432/FUL](#) – temporary construction access from the A4130

This application has just been received. The consultation period is open until 16 March 2023. In its covering letter the applicant's agent explains that:

- The purpose of the proposal is to allow construction vehicles to access the development independent to, and avoiding conflict with, other areas of the development, construction traffic and domestic vehicles using the A4130.
- The access will operate under a left in/left out arrangement.
- It is expected that there will be up to five HGV deliveries per day at the peak of construction.
- The temporary access is proposed to operate for a period of up to two years

P22/V0604/RM – infrastructure for Persimmon and Taylor Wimpey first phases

This application remains in abeyance awaiting the submission of amended plans following which reconsultation will occur.

P22/V0907/RM – 161 dwellings

This application is not acceptable to officers and Persimmon has been advised to withdraw it. I understand it will be withdrawn before Persimmon submit a new application.

[P22/V2744/RM](#) – 246 dwellings

This application has not progressed since the previous update. Following officers' review of the application, Taylor Wimpey has been given an opportunity to provide more information, clarify issues, address consultee comments and revise the scheme. Amended plans are expected and re-consultation is likely on

receipt. Unless the Harwell Parish Council withdraws its objections on review of an amended scheme, this application is likely to be taken to planning committee for a decision.

P22/V2338/DIS – Housing delivery document (HDD)

This has been approved.

P22/V2407/DIS – Phasing plan

This has been approved.

P22/V2624/DIS – Surface and foul water drainage

This application has not progressed since the previous update. We have requested cross sections for the proposed swales and attenuation basins and asked the applicant to address the Vale drainage engineer comments together with demonstrating that the drainage scheme can be accommodated with other proposed infrastructure e.g. footways and cycle ways and meet the Strategic Design Code expectations.

P22/V2798/DIS – Framework Plan

This application has not progressed since the previous update. This application does not address all matters required by the Framework Plan condition of the outline permission. For example there are no details of materials proposed, visitor parking or strategic drainage details. The Framework plan basically shows layouts for the first phases of Persimmon's and Taylor Wimpey's developments which officers are not wholly satisfied with. The applicants have been asked to address officer comments and revised details are awaited.

Climate & Environment News

[Improvements to be made to cycle and walking routes in Didcot](#)

People living in Didcot and surrounding areas can have their say on the future of cycle routes and walkways in a new consultation launched this week. The consultation will identify improvements that can be made to cycling and walking as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in Didcot.

The aim of this consultation is to gather feedback from people living in the area about the cycle and walking routes they know, to provide better links between Didcot, surrounding villages and new developments to improve connectivity for residents and businesses.

The deadline for feedback on this consultation is 11.59pm on Sunday 19 March and details can be found on the [Didcot Garden Town latest news page](#) of the South Oxfordshire District Council website.

[EV charging has doubled in first six months of the council scheme](#)

The installation of Electric Vehicle chargers at its car parks has seen charging volumes double in its first six months. In June last year 62 EV chargers were installed across five of the council's car parks in Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage as part of the county-wide [Park and Charge scheme](#).

Council News

[Water companies told to forget the reservoir and focus on fixing leaks](#)

Plans for the future of water supplies in the South East, including a giant reservoir between Abingdon, Steventon and East Hanney, have been strongly criticised by Vale of White Horse District Council. Vale of White Horse District Council has published [its response](#) to the recent Water Resources South East (WRSE) public consultation, outlining numerous concerns it has with [the draft 'Best Value Regional Plan'](#), including the potentially serious impact on the environment and the Vale's aim to become a carbon neutral district.

The district council says that the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) should be removed from the plan and is urging water companies and regulators to instead carry out further research into other water resource schemes and to focus efforts on fixing leaks and improving water efficiency.

£2 million boost for community and neighbourhood facilities

Seven projects which will help increase life chances and support local businesses will benefit from £2 million in government funding. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have been allocated £1 million each from the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund to provide better community and neighbourhood facilities and improve public open spaces to help increase the health and wellbeing of residents.

Vale's budget for 2023/24 protects frontline services, funds future-proof projects for climate and communities and helps with the cost-of-living

Careful financial management means Vale of White Horse District Council can continue providing support for local people affected by the cost-of-living crisis and can secure investment in reducing the carbon impact of council-owned buildings like leisure centres. Councillors voted unanimously to approve a budget for 2023/4 that shows a financial position that continues to improve considerably.

Hundreds use new website to help shape districts' future

A new interactive website helped ensure communities had their say on the future of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. The website was created by the two district councils to ask people their thoughts on their Joint Local Plan. The plan will help guide the councils when deciding on new housing and job up until 2041, as well as set policies to address climate change, environmental protection and ensure accessible community services for residents.

"Living wall" will bring more sustainable council HQ to life

A green wall up to four storeys high made from living plants will be the eye-catching centrepiece of plans for South Oxfordshire District Council's new headquarters in Didcot. The council has continued to develop plans for its new headquarters in Didcot as progress has been made with the detailed design, with the aim of ensuring a more sustainable building, reducing its carbon impact, and helping the council meet its targets to become carbon neutral and more financially responsible.

Free training for food businesses

Food businesses with lower hygiene ratings have the chance to receive free training which could help to improve their standards.

The online course, which would normally cost businesses £35 per person, is available for free to staff who handle food in premises such as cafes and restaurants. The training covers topics such as the law, food handling, food safety hazards, storage and refrigeration, cooking and reheating and food premises.

Businesses that are new to the food industry are also welcome to take part.

To find out more, businesses should email env.health@southandvale.gov.uk

Street parties for the Kings' Coronation

As you will no doubt be aware, the Coronation of King Charles III takes place on Saturday 6 May.

We're expecting there to be lots of official events and street parties taking place across the country and residents can now apply for a temporary road closure.

To ensure you get your permission in time for the big day, you'll need to get your applications in by **Friday 31 March**. There's more information on how to apply **on the Vale website**.