

Blewbury Parish Council

Clerk to the Council
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MINUTES of the meeting of the

Parish Council held on **Wednesday 17th September 2025** at 7.00 pm in the Melland Room at the Blewbury Clubhouse.

In attendance:

Cllr. Dermot Mathias (Chair)
Cllr. Anne Millman
Cllr. Julia Saunders
Cllr. Shelia Austin
Cllr. Mark Shayler
Cllr. Andy Evason
Cllr. Andrew Calder
Iain Wood: Lengthman
Parish Clerk: Michelle Taylor
District Councillor: Hayleigh Gascoigne
County Councillor: Rebekah Fletcher
6 x Members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Robinson sent apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Shayler raised an interest in item: 15.1-Approval of August payments.

3. Public Participation

Two members of the public raised concerns on how previous planning applications have been acted upon by Blewbury Parish Council, outlining three endorsements they had received over the past two years, all of which were concluded as unnecessary.

They felt they had not had the support from the Parish Council during this time, raising the question of; 'What is an important community asset'.

Planning Matters

4. Planning Updates

4.1. Planning Applications – for review and comments

- [P25/V1413/FUL](#) Carramores Church Road Blewbury Didcot OX11 9PY

Proposal: Conversion of existing outbuilding to separate, one bedroom, private dwelling.

Blewbury Parish Council has no objections to this application, but the Parish Council would like to see a condition imposed to prevent future development on this site via the suspension of usual permitted development rights.

- [P25/V1227/LB](#) New Inn Cottage London Road Blewbury Didcot OX11 9PD

Proposal: Extension to allow more headroom in bedroom. The eaves would be converted into gable end roof with conservation Velux windows.

Blewbury Parish Council has no objections to this application.

- [P25/V1281/LDP](#) Pembroke Westbrook Street Blewbury Didcot OX11 9QB

Proposal: Convert attached garage to accommodation, including insertion of rooflights.

Blewbury Parish Council has no objections to this application.

- [P25/V1831/LDP](#) Granary House London Road Blewbury Didcot OX11 9PF

Determine whether installation window W1 on drawing 0223MJA/100 will constitute 'Material Commencement' of the works covered by Planning Applications P23/V2066/HH and P23/V2067/LB.

Blewbury Parish Council has no objections to this application.

- [P25/V1792/HH](#) May Cottage London Road Blewbury Didcot OX11 9PD

Replace existing shed with shed of similar size but to include a veranda and pent roof.

Blewbury Parish Council has no objections to this application.

4.2. Planning Decisions from Vale of White Horse DC – **for information only**

- [P25/V1281/LDP](#) Certificate of Lawful use or Development
Convert attached garage to accommodation.
At, Pembroke Westbrook Street Blewbury Didcot OX11 9QB
- [P25/V1235/LDP](#) Refusal of Certificate of Lawful use or Development
Installation of an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point.
At, The Cottage South Street Blewbury Didcot OX11 9PR
- [P25/V0953/FUL](#) Refusal of Planning Permission
Proposed self-build single-storey (with rooms in the roof) detached one and half-bedroom dwelling. (Amended plan and additional information received 11 August 2025).

Reports & Updates

5. County Councillor- Cllr Rebekah Fletcher. Reports from both August and September were received and circulated to Council. **Appendix 1 & 2 (BPC Website)**

6. District Councillor - Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne. September report received and circulated to Council. **Appendix 3 (BPC Website)** Cllr Gascoigne announced she had met with Cllr. Austin at Ladycroft Park, Blewbury, to investigate the ongoing issues with the new electricity supply to the park, along with the continued flooding issues, both of which are still ongoing.

7. Action Points

See **Appendix 4** for update on actions.

- To continue to pursue Trinity Management for Chailey Gardens playground repairs
- Add note to asset register outlining the process for replacement of old benches in the village from donors

8. Lengthman's Report – Iain Wood

8.1 ROSPA findings with Red high-risk score-ROSPA -Report received circulated to Council. Iain outlined the findings from the report and highlighted the following:
Play Space: -

- Access Arch- Timber decayed (15) right hand leg-Needs replacing immediately.
- Zip Wire platform -Timber decayed (15) Replace.
- Skate Ramp- End of Life (15) Remove immediately.
- Trim Trail and KAP-OK

-Iain and Cllr. Shayler will meet with ROSPA on Monday the 15th of September 2025 to accompany the inspector on his walk around of the play equipment to discuss the issues raised from the inspection and set a course of action moving forward.

8.2 Barrier work for TTF and Tennis club car park is scheduled to start on the Monday the 15th of September 25.

8.3 Iain announced the police have now removed the stolen motorbike from trees behind the Tennis courts.

8.4 Water Bore hole inspection and maintenance schedule being investigated. The Clerk announced an appointment had been arranged for an inspection next week.

9. Asset Register Update (AC)

Cllr Calder announced he had met with the Clerk to discuss moving forward with updating the asset register.

Clubs and Societies

10. History Group (AM)

10.1 To consider Archive Storage at the Clubhouse.

Cllr. Millman announced the History Group are interested in using the clubhouse changing rooms for their archive storage, just in the interim, until a permanent solution has been found.

It was agreed by Council to draw up a temporary term agreement between the Parish Council and the History Group to be reviewed annually, giving three month's notice if required.

11. Tennis Club (AM)

11.1 Lease Update.

Cllr. Millman announced the lease is now ready to be updated. Council agreed to authorise Cllr. Mathias and Cllr. Millman to update the Tennis Club lease with the suggested amendments.

11.2 Update on proposed gravel path-Melland Room Car Park.

Cllr. Millman outlined the proposals for the new path, which was now far more than what was originally discussed. It was agreed by Council that the option for shrub planting in the area go ahead, making use of the climate action fund of £503.

12. Traffic & Safety

12.1 SID Contract Renewal. Following recommendations from Cllr. Robinson, that had been circulated to all council members prior to the meeting, and reports received from the Community Speed Watch members, Cllr. Calder announced the costing of the insurance renewal were extremely high and would not be beneficial at this time. It was agreed by Council not to renew the SID insurance contract.

12.2 Proposed Speed Limit reductions on the A417. Cllr. Millman announced this was an informal Consultation to local parish councils. It was agreed by Council to respond with recommendations to look at the junctions off the A417 and to highlight wider issues regarding speed limits. Cllr. Millman to circulate a draft response.

13. Environment (AM)

13.1 To receive an update on Flooding and Drainage. Cllr. Millman announced three updates: London Road A417, progress has been made checking water levels and ingress through into the Ashbrook Estate. VOWH has now teamed up with OCC on two projects with regards to the water levels. Church End flood relief scheme, levels have now been taken in areas of concern. Watts Lane, concerns were raised on the water way and bank. Clerk to contact Environment Agency to investigate. It was reported that having watered the 800 trees at Quacker Wood, we had lost around 20% to 25% due to the drought, which was a lot less than the average 50% that contractors have found in other woodlands.

Administrative Items

14. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved for the meeting held on the 17th of July and signed by the Chairman. It was agreed by Council to approve the minutes of the July meeting and for the Chairman to sign as a correct record.

15. Finance

15.1. The August payments were approved, as shown in **Appendix 5**.

15.2. To approve bank reconciliations: -

- April 2025
- May 2025
- June 2025
- July 2025
- August 2025

Bank reconciliation from APRIL 2025-AUGUST 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman. It was noted by Council that following a review by Cllr. Robinson and the new Clerk, anomalies were found in previous bank reconciliations from April 2025.

16. Parish Council Insurance Renewal (AC)

To approve the proposed renewal for 2025-26. Cllr. Calder reported a meeting had taken place with the insurance broker, along with the Clerk to discuss the insurance renewal for the Parish Council, of which is due to commence on the 13th of October 2025. The broker is sorting quotations for consideration. It was agreed by Council due to the timing of the renewal that authorisation be given to the finance committee and the Clerk to renew up to a value of £30,000 per annum and report back at the next full council meeting.

17. To Receive an update on final costings for repairs on Cob Wall. Cllr. Saunders reported the Cob Wall repairs are near completion and the invoice for works carried out is in line with the original quotation as agreed by Council. Cllr. Saunders also announced an appeal to residents would be in the Blewbury bulletin to brush leaves from the cob walls around the village to reduce deterioration.

18. Parish Council Email Account

To consider moving email addresses to gov.uk domain. It was agreed by Council for the Clerk to investigate the process and timings of the transfer and report back at the next full council meeting.

Projects & Ongoing Matters

19. Skatepark Tenders

To receive an update from Skatepark Working Group. Cllr. Evason and Cllr. Calder announced the Skate Park Tender is still in progress and should be ready to upload to the tender.gov.uk website for bidding in the next couple of weeks.

20. Armillary Sphere – Play Close (MS, JS)

To receive an update on The Sphere. It was announced the Armillary Sphere installation is now complete.

Cllr. Mathias (Chairman) announced the exclusion of press and public item part 2 of the agenda, now be moved to commence from the Chairmans report-All agreed.

Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

21. Chairman's Report

For information only – any additional updates.

21.1 Sharing role of Chairman. Cllr. Mathias (Chair) announced four names had been put forward to share the duties of Chairman. Council members to arrange a meeting to discuss the details of the role and report back at the next full parish council meeting.

21.2 Parish Council meeting dates-To refer back to the second Wednesday of the month. **This item was deferred, to be discussed at the next meeting.**

21.3 Parish Councillor Vacancy. Cllr. Mathias (Chair) announced four applicants have applied for the current two Parish Councillor vacancies, of which have been circulated to council members. It was agreed by council that all candidates will be interviewed by two members of the council Cllr. Millman and Cllr. Saunders and recommendations will be put forward at the next full council meeting.

21.4 Didcot Town Council Neighbourhood Plan participation. Council agreed to participate in the Didcot Town Council Neighbourhood Plan and for Cllr. Millman to respond due to her involvement in the last consultation.

22. Councillors' Reports

No further updates from Parish Councillors.

23. Future Agenda Items

- Neighbourhood Plan Review – (following adoption of OCC Local Plan) - October
- To investigate a permanent repair to Clubhouse Roof following Cricket Season – October
- EV Charges at Blewbury Village Hall
- Parish Councillor vacancy
- Blewbury Parish Council Insurance Renewal Update
- Sharing Role of Chairman
- Cob Wall General Maintenance
- Borehole Update-Clubhouse
- Borehole Request-Croquet Club
- Moving email addresses to gov.uk domain
- Parish Council meeting dates

PART 2

Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted- **Moved forward to item 21 following agreement by Council.**

24. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 15th of October 2025

Appendix 4

Actions from this Meeting, table 1

Item	Action	Ownership
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to pursue Trinity Management for Chailey Gardens playground repairs 	Clerk to chase and Cllrs to send in pictures of faulty equipment
7	Add note on asset register outlining the process for replacement of old benches in the village from donors	Cllr. Calder/Clerk
10.1	To draw up a temporary term agreement between the Parish Council and the History Group for storage at the clubhouse.	Clerk/Cllr. Millman
11.1	To update the Tennis Club lease with suggested amendments by Council.	Clerk/Cllr. Millman
11.2	To draw down the Climate Action funding for use to purchase shrubs for the path in the Melland room car park.	Cllr. Millman
12.2	Proposed Speed Limit reductions on the A417-To respond with recommendations agreed by Council.	Cllr. Millman
13.1	To contact the Environment Agency with regards to the water way and bank at Watts Lane.	Clerk
18	To investigate the process and timings of the transfer current Gmail addresses to Gov.uk	Clerk

Outstanding Actions from previous meetings - table 2

Item	Mtg	Action	Ownership	Update on action from July meeting
13	April	Repair to Zip Wire	Iain /Mark	In Progress
9.2	April	Blind spot mirror	Andy Evason	Completed

8	April	Clubhouse, meter installation	Lee and Andy Evason	Awaiting a date to install meter from Octopus
10.2	May	Play equipment future Maintenance Budget Plan	Clerk/Mark/Iain	Completed
10.1	May	TTF Sign replacement	Clerk	In Progress
17	May	Update Asset Register	Andrew/Clerk	Reviewed-In Progress
9	June	Research suitable designs and practices from other halls for ashtrays	Clerk	Action: to buy metal bucket and sand
10.2	June	Contact RoSPA regarding equipment height inspection concerns	Completed	In Progress
8.1	July	To order 2 x signs – no overnighters	Clerk/Iain	In Progress
8.3	July	To order new clubhouse signage- Stone engraving	Clerk/Iain/Mark	Contact local suppliers for quotations
8.4	July	To consider replacing old bench		Action: Clerk/Iain to investigate and list old benches within the village that are due to be replaced
8.5	July	Ash Tree Hazard on Footpath 24		Action: Clerk to investigate the ownership of the tree

Appendix 5

Finance August 2025				
svn	Inv Date	PAYMENTS TO APPROVE IN MEETING	Payee	Amount
116	31.07.2025	Hire of Dumper - (M Shayler) TTF	Didcot Plant Hire	295.60
117	10.07.2025	Clearing and Repairs to TTF	Shayler Concrete Pumping Ltd	307.71
118	30.07.2025	One Cut- Blewbury Churchyard	J.J Woodage	200.00
119	29.07.2025	Annual Inspections-Kids At Play, Play Space Adventures	ROSPA	510.00
120	06.08.2025	Lawnmower Parts	Lawncare Ltd	73.56
PAID: Salaries for July Month, Paid on 01.08.2025				
100	01.07.2025	July Cleaning Clubhouse	Jayne Newman	216.00
103	01.08.2025	Kim Lloyd, July	Kim Lloyd	1,474.23
102	01.08.2025	Expenses, Working from home allowance, July	Kim Lloyd	26.00
96	01.08.2025	Village Hall and Clubhouse Administrator Salary, July	Helen Evi Holroyd	1,045.85
97	01.08.2025	Expenses, Working from home allowance, July	Helen Evi Holroyd	26.00
98	01.08.2025	Work Diary £3/suggestion book for CH £1	Helen Evi Holroyd	4.00
101	01.08.2025	Lengthman Service Salary, July	Iain Wood	1,044.03
99	01.08.2025	Employer/ee Tax/Ni Contributions for July	HMRC	1,205.44
104	01.08.2025	Payroll, July	SME Accounting Services Ltd	20.00
PAID: Direct Debits/Standing Order				
95	01.08.2025	Octopus Energy-Ref: 38KQSQY PAID 01.08.2025	Octopus Energy	49.18
105	04.08.2025	BT Group PLC-Internet (Clubhouse)	Bt Group PLC	39.77
114	26.08.2025	Biffa Waste Services-Wheelie Bin Waste Collection	Biffa	165.26
115	28.08.2025	SSE Energy-06.05.25-06.08.25	SSE Energy	363.38
PAID: Since previous meeting				
106	12.08.2025	3X Paint Brushes-Painting Materials	Amazon	14.88
107	13.08.2025	Cif Cream Cleaner-Cleaning Materials Clubhouse	Amazon	7.49
108	13.08.2025	VIM Powder-Clubhouse White Table Cleaner	Amazon	19.98
109	13.08.2025	2x Ronseal 5L Paint-TTF -PlaySpace Fence	Amazon	22.30
110	19.08.2025	Gallagher- Tractor Insurance	Gallagher	172.50
112	26.08.2025	Electric Kettle-Clubhouse	Amazon	14.52
113	26.08.2025	Door Stops x4 For Clubhouse	Amazon	17.48
Total Expenditure				7,335.16
RECEIPTS				
19	31.08.2025	Lloyds Deposit Account Interest for August	Lloyds	346.44
16	06.08.2025	Amillary work, hire of dumper/Quacker Wood Groundswork	Sustainable Blewbury	316.60
18	29.08.2025	Right of Burial and Interment	Chadwicks	260.00
17	28.05.2025	Memorial Headstone	Oxfordshire Memorials	95.00
Total Income				1,018.04

Appendix 1

County Councillor report -Date: August 2025

Author: Cllr Rebekah Fletcher

Parishes: Blewbury, Chilton, Harwell, Upton, Western Valley

Contact details: rebekah.fletcher@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Dear Parish Councillors and residents,

Last month I mentioned my membership of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), where we scrutinise policy and performance, and challenge decisions made by the council that affect vulnerable adults in our communities. I have now also attended two Education and Young People OSC meetings as a substitute. It is no secret that there are areas in our Special Educational Needs provision that have been heavily criticised and need marked improvement. I have done my best to provide fair and just critique at these meetings, to influence future policy and improve experience for young people and their families as they navigate education services, including SEND provision, and care services. After the last meeting, I was asked by one of the Young co-opted members if I would consider joining the committee as a permanent member. After some consideration of whether I have capacity to take on an additional responsibility, I have agreed to take over the position from another councillor. I will continue to press for a formal review into how we manage co-production – working with parents and young people to co-create processes and guidance that meet their needs, not just the bare minimum required.

I have already been in contact with many caregivers who have had difficult experiences with our SEND services; it's part of my role to take your concerns forward, and it's an area I feel very passionately about, so if this affects you, please do get in touch with me by email.

You can also keep updated on my activity via Facebook at www.facebook.com/CllrBekahFletcher

Best wishes

Bekah

Transport update

A note that there are a lot of roadworks planned in the coming months. I will note only those where some delay is possible or likely, but for information there are also water and gasworks planned in Harwell, Chilton and Blewbury that should have no impact on transport.

Grove Road, Harwell

Residents will no doubt have experienced the absolute chaos caused by the Grove Road closure. I am working with officers to ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent similar disruption by future contractors. I am extremely sorry that the works were so poorly managed, and have made my feelings clear both to the company concerned and to Council Officers.

Bessels Way, Blewbury

5th - 7th August, telephone pole replacement on verge. Two-way signals, delays possible.

Bohams Road, Blewbury

18th August – 1st September, civils work (Openreach). Please note, the road will be CLOSED to traffic.

A34 – diversions

From 5th – 8th September National Highways will be repairing the A34 Northbound Chieveley Chilton. The diversion route is convoluted and I would strongly recommend avoiding. Delays are likely.

Please continue to report any highway defects on www.fixmystreet.com.

Consultations

Closing 3rd August: Oxford temporary congestion charge for cars

OCC is looking to introduce an interim version of the bus filters scheme, while Botley Road remains closed. This is designed to make bus travel quicker and has been called for by the two main bus companies. It will also allow easier access for those who need it, such as healthcare workers, blue badge holders, traders and carers. Oxfordshire residents would get several day permits, and beyond these, a £5 congestion charge would apply to cars. A local Citizen's Assembly on our transport system was heavily in favour of measures to reduce congestion, with 88% supporting a "car-free city centre" and 74% explicitly supporting a congestion charge.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/congestion-charge>

Closing 11th August: Household waste recycling centre consultation.

OCC is reviewing its HWRC opening hours, van and trailer permits, reuse and recycle policies, all with a view to reducing the amount of household waste we throw away. If you regularly use our local HWRC, please fill in the survey at

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hwrc-consultation>

Other news and information

The Oxfordshire Way – this is our adult social care strategy and it's very close to my heart. Our aim is to help people live fulfilling, healthy lives for as long as possible. It has a strong community focus and is worth a read:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/adult-socialcare/oxfordshire-way>.

Unpaid Carers' CoBee Morning – Tuesday 19th August. I've been to this myself, and I really recommend it for those able to join. A low-stakes, casual chance to meet other local carers and have a chat. You can just drop on the third Tuesday of the month.

Libraries Summer Reading Challenge – until 6th September, children can join in with the summer reading challenge at Didcot Library. This year's theme is Story Garden, celebrating the connection between nature and storytelling. Participants will need to be members of Oxfordshire Libraries (but it's free to join!) and can collect stickers for each book they read. Mini challenge also available for under-4s.

Councillor queries

Recent queries I've raised on behalf of residents and Parish Councils include:

Ticket description	Status	Outcome/latest information
Church Hill road markings	COMPLETE	Some confusion over this; I was advised this would happen end of May but Church Hill white lines were missed. Completed early July
Tramic calming Harwell village	IN PROGRESS	The S278 has now been signed by developer and returned after very lengthy delay. Date to be confirmed asap (potentially October-ish)
Chilton bus stop placement	IN PROGRESS	Happy to advise, PC to own costs. Brochure supplied to PC
GWP adoption	ONGOING	Spine roads adoption currently stuck in negotiations between Leap Utilities, SODC and Taylor Wimpey. We can't adopt any estate roads until the spine roads are adopted.
Blewbury road safety	AWAITING RESPONSE	Requested briefing on proposed crossing at Savages and other tramic calming measures. Chased.
Broken drain cover on Bessels Way Blewbury	IN PROGRESS	Deadline for completion 13th August

Harwell roadworks	IN PROGRESS	Substantial back and forth on the contractors undertaking works on Grove Road. They are not our preferred suppliers and considerable problems have arisen - several meetings with omicers and contractors to discuss
Road safety issues on A417	AWAITING RESPONSE	Requested briefing on previous requests for crossing on Reading Road
Comin Way cycle path	AWAITING RESPONSE	Requested briefing on previous work re: footpath/potential cycle route between Blewbury and Upton

Appendix 2

County Councillor report -Date: September 2025

Author: Cllr Rebekah Fletcher

Parishes: Blewbury, Chilton, Harwell, Upton, Western Valley
 Contact details: rebekah.fletcher@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Dear Parish Councillors and residents,

Summer is usually quite quiet for council work as many officers and councillors are taking leave during school holidays. This has regrettably led to delays in progressing my enquiries over the last month. I was, however, able to support the Parish Council in Chilton at a meeting with our trees officer to discuss maintenance and safety issues. If I'm available, I'm always happy to support councils and residents at officer meetings, if you think Councillor advocacy would help.

We are back in full swing now and I'm able to push a little bit harder to get remaining enquiries picked up. Top of my agenda for this month is traffic calming, for both Blewbury and Harwell, and I'm looking forward to getting officers out onsite to see the issues we're facing.

Full Council is on 9th September and I have had two questions accepted relating to SEND issues – I will be able to provide updates on these at parish council meetings this month.

Pubs of the Parishes

On 11th October (subject to the weather), I'm planning on doing a walk across the division with stops at local drinkeries. We'll be starting at The Station Garden, then stopping at The White Hart, The Harwellian, The Crown at Chilton, The George at Upton, The Red Lion in Blewbury and finishing at The Blueberry. If you would like to join me, either for a chat in your local, or for a walk in between them, please follow my Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CllrBekahFletcher for updates nearer the time.

Best wishes

Bekah

Transport update

There are a lot of roadworks planned in the coming months. I will note only those where some delay is possible or likely, but for information there are also water and gasworks planned in Harwell, Chilton and Blewbury that should have no impact on transport.

Wantage Road, Harwell

10th-16th September, halfway between the Rowstock Garage and East Hendred for utility works. Delays are likely.

London Road, Blewbury

15th-19th September, there will be two-way signals for gas utility works. Delays are likely.

Reading Road, Harwell

22nd-29th September, there will be multi-way signals by the junction with The Winnaway for utility works. Delays possible.

Bessels Way, Blewbury

30th September – 7th October, there will be priority working for gas utility works. Delays are likely.

Bohams Road, Blewbury

1st-2nd October, the road will be CLOSED for highway improvement works.

Orchard Way, Harwell

2nd-9th October, for gas works. Traffic management is priority working, but delays are possible.

A34

Overnight only, on Sunday 28th and Monday 29th September (9pm-6am), the A34 will be closed Southbound Milton-Chilton.

Please continue to report any highway defects on www.fixmystreet.com.

Other news and information

Mobile digital twin – The council is investing money into a new data capture project designed to pinpoint areas of poor/no mobile coverage and provide informed solutions. The end goal is better mobile signal throughout Oxfordshire. You can read more at

<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=39581>

Councillor Priority Fund – All County Councillors have access to a pot of funding to support local community projects. Applications are open from now until November 2026. All parish councils and community groups or charities are welcome to submit applications – the minimum grant is £500, and there are rules regarding eligibility of applicants and projects. You can read more at

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/communities/councillor-priority-fund>

Councillor queries

Recent queries I've raised on behalf of residents and Parish Councils include:

Ticket description	Status	Outcome/latest information
Traffic calming Harwell village	IN PROGRESS	The S278 has now been signed by developer and returned after very lengthy delay. Date to be confirmed asap (potentially October-ish)
Chilton bus stop placement	HANDED OVER	Brochure supplied to PC and put in touch with correct officer to take forward
GWP adoption	ONGOING	Spine roads adoption currently stuck in negotiations between Leap Utilities, SODC and Taylor Wimpey. We can't adopt any estate roads until the spine roads are adopted. I have further requested a briefing on what the obstacles are to adoption.
Blewbury road safety	IN PROGRESS	Requested briefing on proposed crossing at Savages and other traffic calming measures. Chased for a walkabout; the funding for wig wags expired so am pushing for reinstatement.

Broken drain cover on Bessels Way Blewbury	COMPLETE	Deadline for completion 13th August
Harwell roadworks	IN PROGRESS	Substantial back and forth on the contractors undertaking works on Grove Road. They are not our preferred suppliers and considerable problems have arisen - several meetings with officers and contractors to discuss. An investigation into the incident is underway
Harwell roadworks - repairs	IN PROGRESS	Further to the above, contractor vehicles damaged a manhole cover outside the High Street shops – this has been reported for repair and will also be followed up with the contractor
Road safety issues on A417	IN PROGRESS	Requested briefing on previous requests for crossing on Reading Road – a walkabout is being organised
Coffin Way cycle path	AWAITING RESPONSE	Requested briefing on previous work re: footpath/potential cycle route between Blewbury and Upton – relevant officer on leave
Steventon Lights/HIF 1 clash	AWAITING RESPONSE	Have asked for briefing on the mitigations being put in place against the potential increase in traffic through Harwell as a result of the works, and on whether we could bring forward the construction of a cycle path on Cow Lane to link Harwell to the A4130.
Harwell PC footpath right of way	IN PROGRESS	Asked for advice on how to support a request for Public Right of Way; meeting to be arranged with the correct officer
Bramble Lane broken manhole cover GWP	HANDED OVER	Passed to Taylor Wimpey as an urgent fix, and followed up with officers to ensure it happens
Thames Water road closures	RESPONSE RECEIVED, FOLLOWED UP	Complained about two “emergency” road closures preventing bus access, where TW seem to be deliberately avoiding normal planning process, and warned of another possible risk on Townsend, to avoid similar closure in future. Additionally reported to MP and followed up with Thames Water directly. Response highly unsatisfactory, will reply to that effect but unlikely to be able to change policy
D2A complaint	IN PROGRESS	Escalated resident complaint about Discharge to assess service from Didcot Community Hospital – followed up with officers
Chilton Main St traffic calming	AWAITING RESPONSE	Have asked about Vehicle activated speed signs and other potential measures
Library subscriptions	AWAITING RESPONSE	Query on when and why subscriptions via local libraries were removed

Appendix 3

Monday 8th September 2025

Monthly Parish Update

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and

Cllr Debra Dewhurst

Vale of White Horse District Councillors

[Hello](#) from Hayleigh and
Debra

We hope you have enjoyed a wonderful summer with warm weather locally, and hopefully some time spent off work relaxing with loved ones.

In July, Vale of White Horse District Council had its full council meeting. Items on the agenda included, approving developer funding (known as S106) to be used for a community park in Steventon and a Games area in Drayton and two motions relating to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill – one about the proposed changes that will have a negative impact on democracy within planning decisions – removing some decision making power from Planning Committees and the other on changes that will remove environmental protection. We strongly believe that Planning Committees bring value and local knowledge to the planning process, and rarely slow down delivery of housing. To read more, head to the Vale website: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/governments-proposed-planning-reform-not-wanted-or-needed-says-council/>

There was a third motion expressing the Council's support for Community Energy Benefit options on Large Renewable Projects. It's clear that for more energy security and cheaper electricity, we need to have large renewable energy schemes. A way to get more local communities supporting them, they must come along prescribed benefits for those communities. We believe the Government should provide a framework for what those benefits look like – whether it's a % of the profits, options to buy shares, money towards local infrastructure or cheaper energy bills.

Finally, as councillors, we continue to push the BOB ICB to deliver its promise to provide a GP surgery at Great Western Park. To read more, head to the Vale website: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/uncategorised/councillors-reiterate-the-need-for-new-didcot-health-centre-as-soon-as-possible/>

As a reminder, council meetings are held in public and if you wish to address council or committee, you can contact Democratic Services. If you need more guidance on this, please let us know!

We use these monthly updates to keep you updated on our activities and general council news.

Please also follow us on facebook:

www.facebook.com/CllrHayleigh & www.facebook.com/Debra4BlewburyAndHarwell

Or email us:

hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Community Support

Community Hub

The Hub can offer support and direct people to help on a range of things including Cost of Living, food support, etc. If you are struggling financially or just finding life difficult, the community hub can help. Whether it's practical support or just advice, please get in touch:

- Call: 01235 422600
- Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

The office hours are 8.30am - 5pm Mon to Thurs, 8.30am-4.30pm on Fri (and closed on bank holidays).

[We're in the top ten district councils in the the UK for action on climate and nature](#)

Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils are in the top ten performing district councils in the country for taking action on climate and nature recovery, according to research by an environmental organisation. Both councils, which have just published their new joint nature and climate action plan, were rated in the top ten of the Climate Emergency UK's (CEUK) 2025 [climate action scorecard](#), a league table of the country's councils published earlier this month.

[Planned site for waste refuse vehicles](#)

The lease that the councils have at Culham, where waste vehicles are currently stored is coming to an end, and so the councils went through an exercise earlier in the year to find a new year. Great Haseley was determined to be the most suitable site. South Oxfordshire District Council has submitted a planning application for the proposed vehicle depot site.

The full plans can be viewed here:

<https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P25/S1653/FUL>

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are working on securing a long-term vehicle depot at Haseley Trading Estate (the former Ariens/Countax site) in South Oxfordshire, for parking their shared refuse collection and street cleansing service's vehicle fleet. No refuse will be kept on site.

The plan is to redevelop and retain one of the existing buildings and make improvements to the site, such as adding solar panels on the existing building, improving the screening with planting and carefully managing the adjoining woodland.

[Fly Tipping](#)

Vale of White Horse Council takes a strong line on fly-tipping, and has a good record of taking offenders to court and successfully prosecuting. There was a recent example of fly tipping in a A34 layby and magistrates imposed a £300 fine. If you spot a fly-tip or suspect that someone is involved in fly-tipping, please report it by visiting whitehorsedc.gov.uk/flytipping

[On the go? Please take your recyclables home!](#)

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are calling on residents to change the way they deal with litter on the go. Up to 70 per cent of the things that are put in public litter bins could be recycled if taken home. Unfortunately, once recyclables are mixed with food waste and other rubbish in litter bins they can't be recycled and must be thrown away.

This summer's Take It Home campaign is delivering a clear message: — please take your empty bottles and cans home for recycling, instead of placing them into public litter bins.

Council News

[White Horse Community Lottery gives good causes a boost in the Vale](#)

Seven charity groups across the Vale have received a total of £9,000 of unrestricted funding to support their work with local communities thanks to the White Horse Community Lottery.

[Statement regarding SESRO from Leader of the Council](#)

Cllr Bethia Thomas, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council said: “Although we were not party to the Judicial Review, we remain opposed to Thames Water’s proposal for the reservoir. We submitted our response to Thames Water’s public consultation in August 2024, reaffirming our objections.

“We will continue to urge water providers, regulators and government to listen to local voices and reject these plans. The council has urged water providers to consider all the alternative solutions more seriously before committing to this reservoir. We will continue to do everything we can within our power to ensure that the voice of our community is listened to.

“The costs of SESRO seem to be spiralling. We have continually urged water providers to consider exploring all the alternative and more cost-effective solutions seriously before committing to this reservoir. I reiterate that call today given the revelation this week that Thames Water’s reservoir faces an eye watering increase in costs – potentially up to £7.5bn!”

[Garden Town bringing social and environmental benefits to Didcot](#)

The Didcot Garden Town programme is bringing exciting new developments with a strong focus on enhancing community wellbeing and improving the local environment in Didcot and its surrounding areas.

Didcot is set to benefit from a new ‘wayfinding’ scheme to help residents and visitors find their way to sites of interest and access amenities and spaces around the Garden Town.

Significant steps are being taken to improve Didcot’s green spaces, with a nature trail already completed by the South and Vale Active Communities team in southeast Didcot.

£500,000 has been allocated to implement four green spaces which is expected to start in early 2026, with the initial focus on Ladygrove and Station Road. The project aims to improve the town’s appearance by making it greener, healthier and more connected, helping to enhance accessibility, inclusivity and biodiversity.

The community-led 'Healthy Didcot' programme is working with local agencies, including the voluntary and community sector, to address health inequalities. This programme is particularly focused on south and west Didcot, where a Community Insight Report identified the highest levels of health and wellbeing concerns.

The initiative includes efforts to enhance support for families with children and young people addressing complex needs and improving access to services, helping to address anti-social, educational and skills-related issues. The programme is working to increase resident employability through targeted skills development and enhanced access to opportunities, including exploring apprenticeship. Further funding has been obtained through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to help improve health outcomes in Didcot this financial year, which will be used to help kick-start the action plan, with support from local partners.

To learn more about the Didcot Garden Town's work:

You are invited to the Didcot Garden Town Community Update Meeting, which is a drop-in event from 2pm to 4pm on Thursday 18 September at the District Community Centre, 1 Gentian Mews, Great Western Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 6GR.

It's an opportunity to meet the Didcot Garden Town team and other organisations to hear about the latest news and updates on the health, wellbeing, sport and leisure projects and developments in the town.

Pop in anytime between 2pm and 4pm to:

- come and see what the new vibrant wayfinding signage will look like and where it will be popping up across Didcot
- have your say on what improvements you'd like to see around the town's green spaces in Station Road, Hitchcock Way, on Ladygrove and paths in south Didcot and Great Western Park
- give your ideas for exciting public art projects for Cow Lane and Edmonds Park
- discover what schools, sports and recreation and other community facilities are currently available and new facilities that will be provided in the future
- housing developers will be attending to provide information on what facilities will be built on their new developments over the next few years
- discover a wide range of healthy activities and groups there are for you to join in the local area

Didcot Gateway update

You may have seen the news articles on the [Didcot Gateway development](#).

South Oxfordshire District Council has made a decision to not progress the council office building project at Didcot Gateway in light of the government's plans to reorganise local authorities.

At the South Cabinet meeting earlier this month, members gave the green light for £10 million of funds that had originally been earmarked for the new building to be reallocated to buy new social housing. The reallocation of funds means the Didcot Gateway project has now formally been ceased. The planning permission remains in place for any future unitary council should the building be required.

We have clarified that the £2.2 million cost of Didcot Gateway which was quoted recently on the BBC included the demolition costs of Crowmarsh, rather than an electricity substation, so £1.9 million is the Gateway cost to date for South Oxfordshire District Council. There has been no cost to Vale on this development to date. Further details [are available in the report here](#).

Annual Canvass update

The councils are currently carrying out the electoral register annual canvass – that’s the requirement to contact residents each year to ensure they check that their details on the register are up to date.

They have already sent yellow letters to 28,753 households whose details they either don’t have, or they know are not up to date, asking residents to update their information.

Most households, whose details they do have, will shortly receive an email - this will ask residents to visit householdresponse.com/southandvale to either confirm ‘no change’ to the records, or to make changes online, if required.

The email will go out from Monday 8 September from elections@southandvale.gov.uk with the subject line “South & Vale District Councils - Annual Electoral Register Check” and will contain both council logos.

Give your views the councils’ new Licensing Act Policy

The council are planning to make a few changes to the policy which determines how we make licensing decisions and how licensed premises can operate in our district. Our proposed updated Licensing Act Policy includes new references to: Martyn’s Law, the Ask for Angela scheme and promoting initiatives for women and girls' safety; and updated guidance on staff training about safeguarding and evacuation and emergency procedures. Find out more and have your say via [our consultation page](#). Comments are open until 16 October.