

Title	District Cllr Report
Authors	Cllrs H Gascoigne & D Dewhurst
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 14 th September 2023

Vale of White Horse District Councillors

Parish Update

05.09.2023

Hello from Hayleigh and Debra

August is a strange month for the council, things slow down as officers and councillors take their summer holiday time and children are off school. We've still been busy responding to queries from residents and parish councils. We've had a number of queries about planning applications this month, that we've helped with, including calling one application into planning committee after concerns from residents and parish councillors. Debra has been responding to queries about the Abbey Meadows Outdoor Pool in her role as cabinet member for Leisure Centres and Community Buildings, and has been digesting the details of the energy audit taken at the pool, to assess whether it could be made more energy efficient and thus reduce the running costs. September is going to be a busy month. We have a briefing to update us on the status of the Valley Park planning applications, we have five parish council meetings to attend, and a briefing on the waste contract, as well as our individual council commitments.

We have continued to push for updates on the Great Western Park Health Centre. This is the latest information we have been permitted to share:

The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Board (ICB) is responsible for healthcare services in Oxfordshire, including the Vale. The district council has been working hard over the past few years to help overcome a series of legal challenges that have caused delays in the ICB bringing forward a health centre on Great Western Park.

The district council has had some constructive conversations with Taylor Wimpey, the housing developer for Great Western Park who went through some organisational changes earlier this year. These have centred around the challenges facing the health centre and they continue to be helpful. During those ongoing discussions with Taylor Wimpey, the council have also made progress on play areas and allotments, to assist the developer to ensure they can be opened for residents to use.

The district council are currently working with a number of partners to tackle issues related to the delivery of funding and leasing arrangements for the land and any future building, and they have recently taken some steps that should simplify and speed up that process as they progress next steps. At the same time, the ICB continues to work with the local medical practice, Woodlands Medical Centre, to expand their current facility at Woodlands Road in Didcot.

The council is currently looking at what it can do to provide more regular updates to the community about the hard work they're currently doing to try and help partners like the ICB deliver the health centre that Great Western Park and Didcot badly need.

We would urge parish councils to contact the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to ask for updates as the process is currently in their hands.

If you have any concerns, questions or suggestions for us as councillors, please do email us. As a reminder, council meetings are held in public and if you wish to address council or committee, you can contact Democratic Services ahead of time. 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. We also post on our councillor Facebook Pages:

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

Please get in touch with any issues or concerns, either via email:

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

Community Support

Support for Ukraine

The council's [support for Ukraine](#) webpage continues to provide information and guidance for Ukrainian nationals and their hosts. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, as part of the Oxfordshire system which includes local authority, health and voluntary sector partners working closely together, are supporting people seeking refuge across several schemes. These are Homes for Ukraine, Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme, Afghan Citizens Resettlement scheme, UK Resettlement Schemes, the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa scheme and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Private landlords needed to host guests in Oxfordshire

Are you a private landlord in Oxfordshire with a vacant property? As guests start to rebuild their future and look for more independence, we are looking for landlords who can support their next step. If you would like to informally discuss what is involved, please email the central housing team:

Oxfordshirehousingcapacity@southandvale.gov.uk

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 Monday to Thursday, 8.30am-4.30pm on Fridays (and closed on bank holidays)

Local News

Valley Park Update

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:

Applications Under Consideration

P22/V2624/DIS – Surface and foul water drainage

No change - This application has not progressed since the last update i.e. 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. Responses are awaited.

P22/V2744/RM – 246 dwellings

Amended plans were received on 4 July and have been subject to consultation. Following a review of the amendments officers have provided further feedback to the applicant. A key issue arising for this parcel of development is that parts of the site are in flood zones 2 and 3 and therefore, could be susceptible to fluvial flooding. Condition 36 of the outline planning permission excludes built development from flood zones 2 and 3 but the proposed plans show housing in these areas. Taylor Wimpey claims this part of the site should not include flood zones 2 and 3 and has produced flood modelling seeking to demonstrate that flood zones 2 and 3 should be deleted from the Environment Agency flood map and recategorised as flood zone 1 which is suitable for housing development. This flood modelling was received by officers on 31 August 2023 and will be added to the file shortly and shared with drainage engineers (ours and OCC's) and with the Environment Agency and their comments requested.

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

Amended plans were received on 17 August 2023 and are currently subject to consultation. Officers will review the amendments in due course.

P23/V0432/FUL – temporary construction access from the A4130

No change - This application remains under consideration. OCC object as physical restrictions will be needed to prevent right hand turn movements into and out of the access, they query how visibility splays from the access along the A4130 will be maintained unobstructed, and the need for a pedestrian/cyclist refuge within the access. Harwell Parish Council objects. Their and OCC comments have been put to the applicants and their response is still awaited

P23/V0659/DIS – approval of details reserved by of condition 33 - Travel Plan

No change - OCC as highway authority has responded to our consultation and are seeking amendments to the travel plan which have been put to the applicants for consideration but no response has been forthcoming to date.

P23/V0667/RM – 172 dwellings – Persimmon Phase 1

As mentioned at the start of this email, officers are now satisfied with this application and will be circulating a report to Ward members and Max Thompson seeking authority to issue an approval under the scheme of delegation.

Application Approved:**P22/V2798/DIS – Framework Plan**

An acceptable revised Framework Plan for parcels of land in the north west of the Valley Park site which include Persimmon's and Taylor Wimpey's first housing phases was received on 23 August 2023. This Framework Plan has been approved.

Climate & Environment News**[Electric vehicle charging and hire offers across Oxfordshire this World EV Day](#)**

Electric vehicle owners and hirers across Oxfordshire will be able to take advantage of a range of offers this World EV Day, which takes place on 9 September. This is an annual event aiming to highlight the progress in e-mobility and promote the shift to electrified transport. This year, the electric vehicle charging point companies will be offering deals – including free charging – for drivers across Oxfordshire. There's also the chance to join the county-wide EV car club scheme, with significant deals during World EV Day saving you money on membership and hire fees.

[Have your say on our landscapes and what's changing them](#)

A new study has launched to better understand, protect and enhance the unique landscapes across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse and you're invited to have your say. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are preparing a new Landscape Character Assessment and are calling for

residents, businesses and visitors to share what they love about local landscapes and what they think is changing them. The study is being carried out by environmental consultancy Land Use Consultants (LUC) on behalf of the two councils.

[Have your say on walkways in Didcot](#)

If you scoot, cycle or walk around Didcot then we'd love to hear from you. There is a survey to so you can comment on proposals to improve various routes in and around the town.

All the information on our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (otherwise known as LCWIP) is now available to view and you can give us your views on the proposals up to 5pm on Wednesday 13 September. <https://systrald.welcomesyourfeedback.net/Didcot-LCWIP>

Council News

[Champions to promote key work being done across Vale](#)

A new group of champions have been appointed to help highlight work being done by Vale of White Horse District Council in key areas.

- **Councillor James Cox is the cost of living champion** and will work to promote the support and advice being offered by the council for those struggling in the face of soaring prices. He will be visiting different organisations across the Vale who are helping residents with advice and support during difficult times.
- **Councillor Paul Barrow is the food and farming champion** and will focus on the work being done by the district's farmers and food producers. He will help support our farming communities, listening and learning from them, to promote innovation in food production and distribution, and to encourage us all to take a second look at what makes it onto our fork.
- **Councillor Eric de la Harpe is Active Travel champion** wants people to ditch their car journeys wherever possible and choose active travel instead. This includes walking and cycling but you could also scooter, skate or wheel.
- **Cllr Katherine Foxhall is Nature Recovery champion** will champion the council's work towards nature recovery – restoring habitats, protecting wildlife and combating climate change through collective action.

Keep an eye on the Vale website for more details of our Vale champions soon!

[Didcot Garden Party](#)

This year's party has been fantastic. If you've been to one or more of garden party events or taken part in our activities, please let us know what you enjoyed and what else you'd like us to do at a future Didcot Garden Party by completing our [short questionnaire](#).

[Silver screen Saturdays at the Beacon](#)

This Autumn, Cinema at The Beacon returns with a variety of new films. Showing first on the big screen is 'Are you there God? It's me Margaret' on Saturday 16 September, see the movie adaptation of Judy Blume's classic novel, starring Rachel McAdams and Kathy Bates. And don't miss October's film 'The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry' on Saturday 7 October.

Book your tickets here www.beaconwantage.co.uk/events

Additional Information arriving after the report was issued.**Didcot transport infrastructure is vital for the Vale**

The Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council has spoken of how important proposals for £300 million of transport projects in and around Didcot are to the district.

Planning applications by Oxfordshire County Council for the four projects known as HIF1 are due to be determined by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove.

Cllr Bethia Thomas, Leader of the Vale, said: “Significant plans affecting our district are underpinned by much-needed transport infrastructure improvements in and around Didcot.

“That includes a great deal of the district’s Local Plan, which sets out how we manage the housing, employment and infrastructure needs of the whole Vale. The HIF1 project will be largely government funded, so this is a rare opportunity for public major investment into local infrastructure.

“Our district is home to Science Vale, which includes world-leading, cutting-edge science innovation, technology and development. Significantly important growth and new jobs in many of these sectors, are dependent on sufficient transport capacity being delivered.

“We’ve already responded to the county council’s planning application setting out its importance to the Vale, and it will be vital for us to be party to the government’s public inquiry taking place in December, so we can ensure the needs and future prosperity of our district are properly represented.

“Finally, it’s also important that the government takes heed of the wide range of local views on the subject – every voice and opinion is important, while the decision on Oxfordshire County Council’s planning application is being made nationally, it must be done with a local outlook.”

Notes:

In July, the Oxfordshire County Council Planning and Regulation Committee resolved to refuse a county council planning application for the HIF1 infrastructure projects. At this point, the government intervened and called the application in. It will now be subject to an eight-day public inquiry held by a Planning Inspector starting on 5 December. The inspector will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will make the final decision.

There is [more information on the projects on the Oxfordshire County Council website](#). In summary, the HIF1 scheme involves:

- A4130 dualling - linking Valley Park to Didcot Science Bridge
- Didcot Science Bridge - a new bridge across the railway line and the former Didcot A power station site
- Didcot to Culham River Crossing - a new link road and bridge over the River Thames
- Clifton Hampden bypass - a new bypass to re-route traffic away from Clifton Hampden and Burcot.

Title	Clerk's Report
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 14 th September 2023

6.1. Parking Enforcement – To note recent success of reporting double yellow line parking to OCC Civil Parking Enforcement, the link to report is on the front page of WVPC website.

When the Council was newly formed we received a complaint about the nuisance parking outside the shops on Greenwood Way. Unfortunately, a lot of the roads in and around the Parish are “unadopted” and we had been advised there was very little which could be done to prevent the nuisance parking.

Contrary to this advice, a member of this Council submitted a “Civil Parking Enforcement” [CPE] report to OCC. Shortly after a parking notice was seen on the windscreen of a repeat nuisance parker. To date, that same car has not been seen parking in the same spot.

It is hoped that it was the action of reporting this issue to the CPE team which resulted in the enforcement notice which stopped the nuisance parking by this particular car.

We therefore encourage residents to make use of the CPE reporting portal, and a link to make reports has been placed on the front page of our website.

[Report Suspected Illegal Parking.](#)

If you suspect a car has been parked illegally – on yellow lines, or outside the permitted times etc you can report them easily on a computer or from your smart phone. You need to know the make, model & registration of the vehicle and preferably also a photo plus the time and date of the parking.

The more reports there are for a specific area and time of day, the more likely that area will have an extra visit at that time.

6.2. To approve purchase of a remembrance wreath and send representative to the Harwell Memorial on Remembrance Sunday – Budget up to £50

e-mail from the Local branch of the Royal British Legion

Dear Western Valley Parish Council,

Firstly may I offer my congratulations on your formation earlier this year. Given our close proximity I hope that we can build up a long-lasting and positive relationship as we work together as best we can.

I write with the attached letter of invite to the council to attend the Harwell Village Remembrance Parade to lay a wreath at the memorial. Given there is no War Memorial within your parish we would be delighted to host your representative to lay a wreath at our event as your local Remembrance event held at the National 1100 silence and very much hope you will join us.



7th September 2023

To: Laura White
Clerk, Western Valley Parish Council,

Harwell Village Remembrance Parade and Service, Sunday 12th November

On behalf of the Chairman and Councillors of Harwell Parish Council:

I am delighted to write inviting Western Valley Parish Council to participate in the Harwell Village Remembrance Parade and Service in on **Sunday 12th November 2023**.

Participation does not need to include being part of the marching element of the day, I write to invite a representative of the Western Valley Parish Council to lay a wreath at the village War Memorial.

We recognise not everyone wants to be part of the marching parade and so to encourage participation representatives laying a wreath have three options in how involved in the Parade they are:

- Laying a wreath, stepping forward/out from the crowd when the organisation name is called forward.
- Joining the parade once it has assembled at the War Memorial, standing with other wreath layers formed up on the High Street and stepping forward when called.
- Taking part in the marching element of the parade; joining us at Townsend to march (walk) along the High Street to assemble at the War Memorial, stepping forward to lay the wreath when called. After the service then marching (walking) to the Church.

Both the Harwell Parish Council and RBL would be delighted to see greater village inclusion and participation in the Remembrance Service, it is a service for all and hope that Western Valley Parish Council will consider joining us by laying a wreath.

Wreaths are available either directly from the Royal British Legion, or via Harwell Branch RBL (see overleaf)

Timings are as follows:

Parade Forms up at Townsend adjacent to "The Hart of Harwell" PH	10:30 am
March off to War Memorial in High Street	10:35 am
Service at War Memorial	10:45 am.
March off to St. Matthews Church, Church Lane after War Memorial service.	
Parade disbands in Church Lane to enter Church for Service approx.	11:30 am.

We do hope you will consider joining us and accept this invitation to lay a wreath at the service. (If you would like a wreath please indicate before 12th October to avoid disappointment.)

Yours sincerely,

Peter Davies

Branch Ceremonial Officer,
Harwell.Committee1@rbl.community
Royal British Legion Harwell Branch
<https://harwellrbl.co.uk/>

6.3. To approve to not opt out of the central procurement and appointment regime for External Auditing

e-mail from the SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments):

As a newly established Council which is a “smaller authority” established on or after 1st April 2022, the Council will not currently be included in the central external auditor appointment regime for which Smaller Authorities’ Audit Appointments Ltd is responsible.

Smaller Authorities’ Audit Appointments (SAAA) was formally appointed in January 2016 by the Minister for Local Government at the then Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as “a person specified to appoint local auditors” under powers set out in Regulation 3 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 to perform the functions set out in legislation for smaller authorities. It is the sector led body for smaller authorities (those under £6.5 million annual turnover) formed by the National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks, and Association of Drainage Authorities.

SAAA undertook a formal procurement process following which it appointed external auditors to all smaller authorities for the 5-year period commencing 1st April 2022, with the audit fees fixed according to published fee scales: <https://www.saaa.co.uk/audit-fees/>. Auditors are individually appointed for each authority based on contract areas that broadly equate to county areas. Further information is available on the SAAA website <https://www.saaa.co.uk/>.

All authorities were given the opportunity to opt-out of the central procurement and appointment regime (although none did), and SAAA is obliged to write to any new authorities to provide the option to opt-out of the central appointment regime and to procure and appoint its own external auditors if you do not wish to be included in the central auditor appointments.

If an authority decides to opt-out of the central regime the authority must follow the prescribed statutory procedures for appointing its own external auditor as set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, Part 3. To be eligible for appointment as external auditor to a smaller authority an audit firm must be a statutory auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and registered with a recognised supervisory body.

The authority must appoint an audit panel/committee in line with CIPFA guidance on setting up an audit panel. This includes drawing up a specification, advertising, determining the appointment process and recommending to the full council who should be the authority’s “appointed auditor”. The audit committee/panel should determine what information is required from firms as part of the tendering process, such as financial standing, public audit experience, understanding of the ‘limited assurance’ regime, insurance cover and limits (professional indemnity, public liability, employee liability).

The authority must inform SAAA if it decides to opt-out of the central regime by completing an Appointment of External Auditor Certificate. Opted out authorities will be subject to review to ensure that they have complied with proper procedures in opting out and the appointment of external auditors. If an authority fails to comply with the set procedures, SAAA is obliged to notify the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Secretary of State will appoint an auditor for the authority and an administration charge will be levied.

If SAAA does not hear from the authority within 8 weeks of the date of this communication that it wishes to opt-out, then it will assume that you wish to be included in the central appointment regime and the external auditor for your county area will be appointed to the authority. You will then be sent by e-mail a formal ‘notification of auditor appointment’ letter from SAAA.

Title	Finance
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 14 th September 2023

7.1. To approve additional payments to be made as soon as possible once precept has been received.

Payments to be sent Direct to Supplier

Item	Supplier (For VAT Purposes)	VAT	Total Payment
Website Creation and Support	Eyelid Productions Ltd	Zero	£450
		£00:00	£450
		LESS VAT	£450

Refunds to L White

Item	Supplier (For VAT Purposes)	VAT	Total Payment
Microsoft 365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	£2.06	£12.36
Bank Opening Balance	Western Valley Parish Council	Zero	£500
		£2.06	£512.36
		LESS VAT	£510.30

Staff Costs August

Item	Supplier (For VAT Purposes)	VAT	Total Payment
Total Payroll Costs, Inc HMRC	L White & HMRC combined	Zero	£431.14
Work from home allowance	L White	Zero	£26
		Zero	£457.14

Title	Training Courses
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 10 th August 2023

8.1. To consider list of upcoming training courses and approve budget and attendance by Councillors or Clerk.

Additional Courses have been made available since our last meeting:

Roles & Responsibilities (In Person – District Centre) – 18th January 2023 £110

This one-day course will outline the roles and responsibilities of clerks and councillors so that they can work together effectively. It will also provide an introduction to law and procedure for local councils and a networking lunch break.

Developing Effective Actions Plans (Online) – 23rd January 2024 £50

Learn how to turn your parish/town council vision or strategy into actionable goals and steps (whatever the timescale).

Finance For Councillors (Online) – 6th February 2024 £30

This session is for councillors only and is designed to give them a greater understanding of their duties with regard to the council's finances.

Addressing The Biodiversity Crisis For Parish And Town Councils (Online) – 20th February 2024 £50

Practical measures you can take to help enhance local wildlife and habitats.

8.2. To approve Clerk's attendance at the National SLCC Conference, budget £500

NOTE: Clerk will cover all other miscellaneous expenses related, including travel costs etc.

This was discussed under the heading of training at the last meeting, but was not formally an agenda item – to ensure transparency and correct procedure is followed, this has been entered onto this agenda for formal approval at the advice of the local internal auditors group.