



Monday 6th November 2023

Monthly Parish Update

Vale of White Horse District Councillors

**Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and
Cllr Debra Dewhurst**

Hello from Hayleigh and Debra

It's November and with both Halloween and Bonfire Night over, we are naturally looking forward to other winter celebrations such as Diwali and Christmas. If you are struggling this winter to pay for bills or keep your house warm, there is some information further on in this newsletter on how the council or other organisations can support you.

This month we've had discussions as a council about the future waste strategy – did you know that waste makes up half of the Vale of White Horse Council's emissions? ([See Greenhouse gas emissions report 2022/23](#)).

We had training on safeguarding and being able to spot the signs in our community of when an adult or child may be in danger. If you spot something and a person is in immediate danger, then contact the emergency services on 999. You can also report any Safeguarding concerns to Oxfordshire's Safeguarding [Children](#) or [Adults](#) Boards, or contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (which Vale is part of) on one of the following numbers:

- Office hours (8.30am – 5pm, Monday to Thursday, 8.30am – 4pm, Friday): **0345 050 7666**
- Outside office hours: Emergency Duty Team: **0800 833 408**

As always, if you have any 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 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.

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).

Age UK Oxfordshire

Age UK Oxfordshire asked us to share the below for vulnerable older people who need support in our communities over the colder and darker months.

They have brought together some useful information and resources in the form of an [online Winter Hub](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/about-us/winter-hub/) - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/about-us/winter-hub/>

Also being aware that not everyone has or wants access to the internet, they have created physical Winter Wellbeing packs which can be posted out to any older people or groups.

Please get in touch with them via contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or 0345 450 1276 if it would be helpful to receive some packs. Just a reminder too that they have a [Cost-of-Living Hub](#) on our website with lots of useful information - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/about-us/cost-of-living-hub/>

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 and parish councils can provide comments on these applications during the consultation period. Officers look at these comments and (where considered relevant to planning matters) seek to address them with the developers. For example, you may have noticed that it took a while for the first parcel of homes for Valley Park to be approved (some two years from the original outline permission). This was, in part, due to the number of times the Vale planning officers at went back to the developers to ask for amendments. 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/V2744/RM – 246 dwellings – Taylor Wimpey first housing parcel

Amended plans were received on 26 September 2023. Officers have considered consultee responses, reviewed the amended plans and provided comments to Taylor Wimpey on 30 October which will need to be addressed. As mentioned previously, parts of this parcel of land 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 plans including the latest amendments, show housing in these areas which is not acceptable. Taylor Wimpey had undertaken flood modelling and submitted it in September 2023 to the Environment Agency seeking to demonstrate that flooding is not an issue on site and that the Environment Agency's flood maps should be revised to categorise the site as flood zone 1 which is an acceptable location for housing. The Environment Agency has not accepted the flood modelling. Presently the proposals conflict with condition 36 of the outline planning permission and Taylor Wimpey will either need to undertake further flood modelling work (recommended by the Environment Agency) or remove built development from flood zones 2 and 3. Officers think Taylor Wimpey will seek to undertake further flood modelling work but we await a response to comments raised.

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

Amended plans were received on 17 August 2023 and officers have considered consultee responses, reviewed the plans and provided feedback to the applicants on 17 October which needs to be addressed. This scheme is also subject to the flood issues mentioned above and consideration of the application is now on hold awaiting the applicants' response.

P22/V2624/DIS – Surface and foul water drainage

No change - This application has not progressed since the last updates 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. This application is also held up as it overlaps with the two RM applications above.

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

No change - OCC as highway authority responded to our consultation and are seeking amendments to the travel plan which were put to the applicants in May 2023 for consideration but no response has been forthcoming to date.

P23/V2247/DIS – application seeking approval of water course crossings – condition 28 of the outline planning permission

This application was received on 3 October. Responses from consultees are awaited and officers need to review the application.

Climate & Environment News**[More than £56,000 given away for climate action projects](#)**

A total of 14 organisations including parish councils, climate community groups, a pre-school and a drama group were collectively offered more than £56,000 from the Vale's Climate Action Fund to help with a wide variety of projects which aimed to save energy, help nature recovery or educate residents on how they can help tackle climate change. The projects listed below are the ones from our ward area.

Organisation	Description of project
Blewbury Parish Council	Installation of at least two electric vehicle public charging points at Blewbury Village Hall, to assist EV users to charge their vehicles in the village.
Little Pippins Pre-School in Harwell	Installation of solar panels on Little Pippin's pre-school building.
The Harwellian Club	Project to set up and install interactive displays showing information and advice about the Harwellian Club's energy usage and the recently installed solar panels at the Harwellian social club.

So if you are a community group planning a project with a climate action focus then please check our grants page www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/grants or email the climate and biodiversity team at climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk to be notified when the Climate Action Fund is going to open.

[Affordable housing grant to help address urgent need](#)

More affordable, energy efficient homes will be built in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse thanks to a new improved grant process. As part of the district councils' work to help meet the urgent need for genuinely affordable housing in the region, local developers, Community Land Trusts and self-builders can apply for a Section 106 affordable housing grant to build affordable homes that meet the councils' climate criteria.

[Free carbon emissions calculator tool](#)

The vale have launched a free simple-to-use carbon emissions calculator tool for town and parish councils to measure their current carbon emissions using energy and fuel bills. It makes it easy to work out where carbon and cost savings can be made.

For more information, email climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk

[Do you live in a house without a gas boiler?](#)

The good news is you may be eligible for energy efficiency upgrades for your home, such as insulation, solar panels and heat pumps, all funded by the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2). These upgrades

can help to reduce energy bills and make homes easier to keep warm. The grants are available to homeowners and landlords whose properties are not heated by gas boilers, with a household income of less than £39,000 and with a low energy rating (D-G). Visit welcomethewarmth.org.uk to find out more.

[Online forum about energy efficiency in homes](#)

The Vale are hosting a **free online forum** aimed at town and parish councils and community groups to help residents bring down their energy use and costs. There will be outside speakers and a Q&A session. It is takes place on **Tuesday 14 November at 6.00-7.15pm**. To register for the event, email

climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk

Council News

[The Vale steps up to help families who supported the UK's military operations in Afghanistan](#)

An innovative new arrangement will support the welfare of families from Afghanistan who have contributed to the UK's military operations in their country. Families who had put themselves at risk by working and fighting for the UK, were forced to flee their home country when the Taliban regained control. Since then, many of them have spent more time than is suitable in hotel accommodation provided by the Home Office. Once finalised, the new arrangement – which is part of a UK-wide scheme – will mean that currently unused Ministry of Defence housing can be used as temporary accommodation.

[Councils support staff with pledge for the Real Living Wage](#)

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have pledged their ongoing commitment for paying staff at least the Real Living Wage. Both councils currently ensure all directly employed council staff receive at least the Real Living Wage and have done for several years. At Vale's Council meeting on Wednesday 11 October, councillors put forward a cross-party motion on the Real Living Wage, which was passed unanimously.

[New grant to help people stay warm and fed this winter](#)

A new food and warmth grant will help support people in our communities this winter who may otherwise struggle to afford essential things. Access to nutritious food and warm homes are basic necessities – but the ongoing impact of the pandemic on people's finances, health and wellbeing has been further heightened by the cost-of-living crisis. Launched by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils, the grant is aimed at local voluntary and community groups, and town and parish councils, who can use it to support those most in need in the districts. Organisations can apply for grants between £2,000 to £5,000, or up to £10,000 for collaborative projects between groups of two or more organisations.

[Funding boost available for rural businesses and organisations](#)

A new grant scheme has launched for rural businesses and organisations based in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. The fund is designed to support capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure that help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. Interested parties are encouraged to submit their application before midday on Friday 24 November 2023 by visiting the [Vale of White Horse District Council website](#).

[Over £82,000 awarded to expand youth activities](#)

Children across Wantage, Grove and nearby neighbourhoods will soon have more exciting youth activities on offer, thanks to a funding boost for Sweatbox Community Youth Services. Sweatbox is set to receive £82,166 from Vale of White Horse District Council to expand their weekly youth activities, which include sports, arts and more.

[Over £440,000 awarded to support swimming pools in South and Vale](#)

Swimming pools across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have been awarded a total of £441,542. The award will help ensure residents continue to have access to good swimming facilities across the two districts.

[Over £130,000 boost for Didcot Wave gym](#)

The Didcot Wave leisure centre is set for a boost of £133,129 towards new gym equipment. The centre, located in Newlands Avenue, Didcot, will benefit from new cardio and resistance gym equipment early next year. The plan is to provide state of the art equipment – with some self-powered items that will reduce the energy consumption of Didcot Wave.

Cornerstone and The Beacon

South and Vale's entertainment and community venues

[Celebrate Christmas at Cornerstone](#)

Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot is getting ready to celebrate Christmas this year with a range of shows and workshops to suit all ages. Everything starts on Sunday 3 December as part of the Play2Give DidcotFestive Market in the Market Place next door to Cornerstone.

[Men's health at Cornerstone](#)

November is Men's Health Awareness month and coming to Cornerstone Arts Centre is Matt McGuinness with his show **We Are What We Overcome**.

One man's journey to good mental health, combining music with thought-provoking comedy and powerful stories.

Matt will be at Cornerstone on **Thursday 16 November** and there's currently 10% off tickets with the code MHOffer10. This can be applied in person at the Box Office or online.

[Autumnal delights to entertain all at The Beacon](#)

The Beacon's autumn season is well underway, here are some of the highlights coming to the stage soon...

On Saturday 25 November, come along for an utterly enchanting evening with multi award-winning magician Ben Hart. Expect stunning displays of wonderment, wicked humour and extraordinary works of magic in his all-new show JADOO.

Don't forget to book your tickets early for the Christmas pantomime Robin Hood by TaleGate Theatre Productions. Packed with songs, slapstick and fairy tale magic that all the family will enjoy. Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 December at 2pm.

For more information and to book your tickets [visit The Beacon website](#).

[Young artists encouraged to display their work in Wantage](#)

The Beacon in Wantage is reaching out to local schools and youth groups to display artwork on their Art Wall, showcasing local young talent and celebrating the community in the building.

Pupils at Grove Church of England School, Wantage, were the first to have their art displayed on The Beacon's Art Wall earlier this year.

The Beacon is looking to continue showcasing the work of local young budding artists. Any organisation whether it's a school, Scout or Guides that works with young people and would like to exhibit their work for free can find out more by contacting [The Beacon, beacon.wantage@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:beacon.wantage@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)