

**Monday 10th March 2025**

Monthly Parish Update

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and**Cllr Debra Dewhurst***Vale of White Horse District Councillors*

Hello from Hayleigh and Debra

Spring is just around the corner, and we have been so delighted to see the sun shine so much. We hope that with the improvement in the weather, the major flooding issues that have plagued our area will be alleviated somewhat. However, if you continue to experience issues, then do get in touch and we can contact the appropriate agency to take action.

On 31st March, Didcot Powerhouse will be hosting an impact report launch event. *What is Didcot Powerhouse?* The Didcot Powerhouse Fund is a donor advised fund, managed by the Oxfordshire Community Foundation and hosted by Didcot First. They collect funds from local enterprises and businesses and redistribute them in the Didcot area (including the surrounding villages) to charity and community groups who may not otherwise have the resources to apply for national grants. If you want to learn more about how the group works, who it helps or perhaps even make a donation – please contact Hayleigh (who sits on the Advisory Board) who can help you register for the launch event.

Local Government Reorganisation continues to dominate the work of the council as it will for the foreseeable future. The leader of the council continues to meet with leaders of the neighbouring councils in order to come to a consensus on what will be best for our area. Two clear options on the table at the moment appear to be either an Oxfordshire unitary or a rural combined authority comprising Vale, South and West Berkshire. The government is mainly engaging with county councils, and so will take proposals from them. Ultimately, the government will decide what it wants. To read more information about this, [see papers](#) from Vale's extraordinary council meeting on 19th February.

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

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).

[Find out more about the community lottery on our website](#)

Local News

GP Surgery

As mentioned last month, the updated planning application for the Great Western Park GP surgery was submitted the Vale of White Horse District Council. The period for consultation has now closed and it will be decided by planning officers in the coming weeks.

The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) are responsible for delivering this project alongside Woodlands Surgery who will be running surgery when it opens. BOB ICB update the following site with news about the surgery, so keep your eyes peeled. [Great Western Park, Didcot GP Services | BOB ICB](#)

As your councillors, we will also let you know as soon as we know when a decision has been made on the application.

Climate & Environment News

[New plan to help power Oxfordshire using local renewable energy](#)

Oxfordshire councils have joined together, under the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, to deliver pioneering local area energy plans (LAEPs) for Oxfordshire, to address climate change and secure cleaner, more affordable energy for the county.

[Clean green energy coming to Wantage Leisure Centre](#)

Work begins next week at Wantage Leisure Centre on a multi-million-pound energy efficiency programme with solar panels and extensive insulation of the roof to lower the site's carbon emissions. Work begins next week at Wantage Leisure Centre on a multi-million-pound energy efficiency programme with solar panels and extensive insulation of the roof to lower the site's carbon emissions.

[New eco map](#)

The [Climate Action Oxfordshire website](#) has a link to a map where local businesses or organisations – from refill stores or car clubs, solar panel installers or upcyclers can add their details to the map for free. It can then be used by with local people all looking to reduce their carbon footprint and live a more sustainable life.

It's really easy to join, simply follow this [link to the map](#) and click on the 'Join the Map' tab.

Council News

[Full Council – 12th Feb & 19th Feb](#)

12th February was Vale of White Horse District Council's budget meeting, the details of which can be found on Vale's website [here](#).

19th February was an additional meeting in the calendar and the agenda and draft minutes can be found [here, on the Vale website](#). It was a meeting to discuss Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the implications for Vale of White Horse District Council and the process as we understand it to be at the moment – though timelines and processes continue to evolve. The paper published for the meeting is good snapshot of how we think LGR is affecting our local area at the moment and so we would recommend you read this, should you be interested in understanding more.

Vale's 2025-26 budget ensures essential services and excellent value

Rigorous financial planning and efficient use of resources ensured that Vale of White Horse District Council could approve a balanced and forward-thinking budget for 2025-2026 that safeguards public services, despite the challenges of an unstable national economy.

All the updates from the latest Vale Council meeting

The budget was the focus at the first full Vale of White Horse District Council meeting of 2025, alongside investment in housing and approval of a new council plan.

A new council for the Vale, South Oxfordshire and West Berkshire?

Councillors in the Vale of White Horse have held a public meeting to discuss the future of the district council in light of the government's plans for devolution and local government reorganisation.

South and Vale Leaders write to West Berkshire Council on unitary council proposals

Published 24 February 2025 The Leaders of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils have written to the Leader of West Berkshire Council to support the creation of a joint forum of senior council members from each authority to support the three authorities to work up a proposal for a possible unitary [...]

Have your say on how we provide homes to those in most need

Proposed changes to the way social housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire is allocated for those in the most need will speed up help for homeless households to move into long-term accommodation. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils are inviting people to take part in a public consultation on proposed changes to their Joint Housing Allocations Policy.

Councils offer help to bring empty homes into use

Property owners are being offered support to bring empty homes back into use, to help meet local housing needs.

Help shape new rules for charity collections in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Residents, charities and businesses in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are encouraged to comment on a new policy for charity collections across the two districts.