

**Thursday 10th April 2025**

Monthly Parish Update

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

Hello from Hayleigh and Debra

As we write this, it is the start of the Easter holidays. The longer evenings and the brighter weather have been very welcome.

The most exciting news this month is that the GP surgery on Great Western Park has been given planning permission as of the start of April. This is a key milestone in delivering the much needed surgery and we're sure that this will be welcome news for parish councils and residents across our ward who have felt that the current services in Didcot are stretched.

Woodlands will be running the surgery, so they will now be working with their developers to start preparing the site, ready for construction. We will share any news related to project timelines as and when we get it, but, as the health authority, BOB ICB, have responsibility for this – please do also keep any eye on their communication site - [Great Western Park, Didcot GP Services | BOB ICB](#)

Local Government Reorganisation continues to dominate the work of the council. In early February, the government set out more detail on its timelines for changes in local government structures. A request was made to all remaining two-tier areas across England (county and district councils) for interim proposals for new single-tier (unitary) authorities by 21 March and final proposals by 28 November. [An initial proposal](#) has been submitted on behalf of West Berkshire Council and the district councils in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse for the creation of a new unitary council that would see the three areas combined. This is the favoured proposal of our council as we believe that the three councils have similar characteristics and the population/geographical size would be appropriate – big enough to be viable, in the government's eyes and small enough that democratic accountability is maintained.

Ridgeway Council forms one half of a two-unitary council proposal for Oxfordshire, with the other half made up from the district council areas of West Oxfordshire, Oxford City and Cherwell. West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council have [confirmed they will be developing the North Oxfordshire Council](#) half of the proposal. The government does not have to agree with our proposals, of course and may choose to listen to the City or County councils or do something different entirely. To our mind, this is a key time in local government, and it's important to stay engaged and influence where possible.

Here is a link to the [Calendar of Vale committee meetings](#) – members of the public are always welcome to speak at these meetings on items that are relevant to the committee itself, or specific items on the agenda. If you would like any guidance on this, then please do contact us.

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

Valley Park

Planning applications for Valley Park continue to be received and worked on by the planning officers at the Vale. They kindly provide the below summary so that we understand what is currently in the system. We encourage residents and parish councils to review these and respond with their comments. The officers use these to negotiate with the applicant and make amendments.

Applications Decided and Approved

P25/V0059/DIS - Discharge of condition 7 (street lighting) of planning permission P24/V0733/RM.
These details were approved on 25 February 2025.

P25/V0112/DIS – Discharge of conditions 23 (Foul Water Drainage Strategy) & 24 (Surface Water Drainage Strategy) on planning application P14/V2873/O

These details were rejected on 25 February 2025. A new application will be required to discharge these conditions.

P24/V2506/RM – Substation within Phase 3P

This application was approved on 5 March 2025.

P24/V2615/DIS - Discharge of conditions 3(Tree 229 Protection) & 4(LEMP update) on application P22/V0604/RM.

These details were approved on 28 February 2025.

P25/V0475/DIS – Discharge of condition 12(Construction Environmental Management Plan) on application P14/V2873/O.

This relates to parcel T2b (Dahlia View). Partially discharged on 8th April.

P25/V0511/DIS – Discharge of condition 3 (Coach Parking) on application P24/V0549/RM.

This relates to parcel RM1b Phase 1 (road infrastructure). Fully Discharged on 8th April 2025

P25/V0160/DIS – Discharge of condition 2 (Access) on application P24/V2073/RM

This application is under consideration. Fully Discharged on 20th March 2025

Applications Under Consideration

P24/V1099/RM – seeks approval for the road leading south from the Science Bridge roundabout and connecting to that part of the road associated with application P24/V0549/RM which is mentioned below, and for green corridors including Cow Lane.

As explained previously, the key issue we have with this application is that it includes watercourse crossings, and we need to know how the watercourses are proposed to be bridged, and the position and characteristics (angle, road alignment, etc.) of this crossing are likely to be influenced by the design of the crossing.

The details of the number, location and design of watercourse crossings are required to be approved under Condition 28 of the outline permission. An application to discharge condition 28 (P23/V2247/DIS) was refused and has since been dismissed at appeal. The developers have now worked up the design of the watercourse crossings, and they plan to submit a full amendments pack for this application in the next few weeks. Further consultation will be carried out for these details to be fully assessed.

P24/V1369/SOB – request for DoV

Proposed changes to public art and proposed changes to sports provision, and also looking to add in that any future S73 application does not require a DoV. Discussions are still ongoing between the LPA, OCC, developers and legal.

P24/V2560/RM - Infrastructure phase Bund 1, comprising the installation of Noise Bund 1 and associated infrastructure and landscaping

This application is under consideration and awaiting comments from specialist officers. Amendments are to be submitted within a couple of weeks, and will go out for further consultation. An extension of time is to be agreed, with the application likely to be determined by end of April/early May.

GP Surgery

The planning application for the GP surgery has been approved! The planning officers at Vale issued their decision at the start of April.

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 [Great Western Park, Didcot GP Services | BOB ICB](#)

The updated application built upon the original application for the health centre to address concerns raised with the original application, with updated design information set out in a [detailed design statement](#). This explains the design concept and principles that have been developed and incorporated into the proposed building – such as setting out landscaping, and parking arrangement – with the aim of optimising the site and range of services the building can provide for the surrounding community. It also sets out the sustainability measures the development will incorporate such as use of low energy LEDs.

The officers at Vale of White Horse council continue to work with BOB ICB, Woodlands and their developer, Assura, to ensure the project maintains momentum.

Climate & Environment News**[Climate Action Fund opens in a few weeks](#)**

The next round of the Climate Action Fund will open to applications in May.

Local 'not for profit' organisations (which has included amateur dramatic groups and pre-schools as well as town and parish councils) can apply for a share of the £100,000 fund, with up to £10,000 on offer for individual projects (minimum request of £250).

As ever, the councils are looking to help finance community projects that aim to address climate change and nature recovery. The fund has previously supported projects such as the installation of public electric vehicle charging points and solar panels and a boardwalk at a nature site to allow visitors access without damaging important habitats. Full details of the Climate Action Fund and how to apply are available on the

[Climate Action Fund page on our website](#).

[Tougher fines to tackle fly-tipping and protect our environment](#)

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are stepping up efforts to combat environmental crimes with stricter penalties for fly-tipping, littering and for householders who fail to ensure that their waste will be disposed of legally. From 1 April 2025, those who fail to meet their legal responsibilities for waste disposal will face significantly higher fines as part of a national crackdown on anti-social behaviour.

[New depot helps secure the future of waste collections](#)

A new vehicle depot at the Haseley Trading Estate will significantly contribute towards South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils long-term future of successful waste collections in the districts. The existing services contract and occupation of the Culham depot expire in 2026, so amongst other work, this has meant a requirement for a new location that meets the vital need to provide important statutory waste collection services.

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

[Signs point to more nature recovery in Vale](#)

Visitors to meadow areas across the district will be better informed thanks to a series of tailor-made wooden signposts recently installed by the Vale of White Horse District Council at its green spaces.

The new information posts can be seen at the following 14 locations:

- Abingdon – Abbey Meadow, Rye Farm, Tilsley Park, Mons Way, Herons Walk and Fitzharry's estate
- Botley – St Paul's Crescent
- Cumnor – Fogwell open space
- Faringdon – Folly Park, Folly View and Marlborough Gardens
- Marcham – Howard Cornish Way
- Wantage – Manor Road Memorial Park and Mably Way
- A further signpost will be added at the meadow area at the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre when work to replace the heating system is completed later this year.

Waste less, save money this Easter

In the UK, we spend around £300 million on chocolate at Easter every year, with around 80 million Easter eggs purchased.

However, Easter also results in tonnes of waste from food and packaging, including:

- more than 9,600 tonnes of cardboard waste,
- over 4,000 tonnes of plastic waste and
- 8,500 tonnes of food waste - including 8 million hot cross buns wasted, 19 million leftover potatoes and 8 million Easter eggs uneaten and discarded!

But there's plenty we can all do to waste less while having fun and saving money at Easter – residents can find some great tips on [Vale Easter Waste page](#).

Council News

Pioneering planning scheme shortlisted for economic growth award

An exciting planning project for Milton Park has been recognised by being shortlisted for an industry award. The Milton Park Local Development Order is a pioneering public-private sector collaboration promoting ambitious, sustainable economic development, utilising largely previously developed land through simplified planning control.

Get ready for Easter fun with free and low-cost holiday activities across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse!

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are thrilled to announce their exciting programme of free and low-cost activities for young children, teenagers and families this Easter holiday. Taking place at various locations across the districts, there's something for everyone to enjoy!

Ticketless car park machine trial starting

Four car parks across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will start trialling new ticketless machines. The trial will start at Civic Car Park and West St Helen St Car Park in Abingdon on Wednesday 9 April and Cattlemarket Car Park and Goldsmith's Lane Car Park in Wallingford on Monday 14 April.

There will be two different machines to choose from when buying a parking ticket, with either machine, users will need to enter their vehicle registration and select the length of time they wish to park. Users can still pay in the same ways as before – by cash, card or via the app – but the machines will no longer issue a ticket.

New café to open at The Beacon supported by local volunteers

The Beacon in Wantage will once again have a café thanks to the support of volunteers from the Wantage Literary Festival. Vale of White Horse District Council, who own and manage the Beacon, has been working on different options to re-introduce a café or refreshment area to The Beacon.

The Brews and Books café will be run on a pilot basis from 25th April until the end of October (which will include the next Literary Festival performances). It will be open Monday to Friday* 9.45am-1pm. The festival team and Beacon staff will then review how the pilot has gone.

80th Anniversary of VE Day

This May will mark the 80th Anniversary of VE Day.

As well as raising the Union Flag outside Abbey House we're encouraging organisations to add the details of events they are organising to our [Southern Oxfordshire What's On website](#).

hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Page 4 of 5

debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Events can also be added to the [official website VE/VJ Day website](#).

This site also includes information about how to set up an event and other useful resources,

[Try something new this summer at Cornerstone!](#)

Get creative, get moving, and get inspired this summer at Cornerstone Arts Centre, with a fresh new programme of classes for all ages starting at the end of April.

For adults, try your hand at Learn to Paint or Printmaking, or stretch and strengthen with our ever-popular Pilates sessions. For kids, there's Mess Makers for little ones to get crafty and creative, high-energy Street Dance classes, and Youth Theatre for aspiring young performers.

Plus, book classes before the season starts and take advantage of Cornerstone's early bird offer, saving £10 on the listed price! [There's even more to explore on the Cornerstone website](#), from one-off workshops to weekly sessions.