

Monday 9th June 2025

Monthly Parish Update

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

Hello from Hayleigh and Debra

6th June marked D Day, and on Saturday 7th June we attended the ceremony at the Harwell Stone to lay a wreath on behalf of the Vale of White Horse District Council to honour the memory of those brave men that took off from the Harwell site 81 years ago to take part in the Normandy landings. It is always an honour to take part in such an event. Thankfully the weather held off just long enough. It was also very nice to see the new memorial sculpture inspired by the Horsa Gliders, to honour the 6th Airborne Division, the No. 38 Group RAF, and the Glider Pilot Regiment.

In the first week of June, the Joint Local Plan for South and Vale was undergoing examination by the planning inspectorate, taking place at the Bee House in Milton Park. The sessions were livestreamed, and there were various developers and other local authorities in attendance to speak at the sessions. The next steps are for the Inspectorate to consider what they have heard and seen and then make their decision whether to proceed to the next stage of the examination.

As mentioned in previous updates, Local Government Reorganisation is still in discussion amongst Local Authorities as we begin to gather evidence for our submission to the Government, for which the deadline is November. The councils have opened a consultation with public at [twocouncils.org](https://www.twocouncils.org) – more information later in the update.

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).

Climate & Environment News

Let's rethink bulky waste – could you rehome or repair it instead?

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are encouraging residents to think twice before booking a bulky waste collection – because that old cupboard, television, table or unwanted bookcase might still have plenty of life left in it.

For more information and advice, visit [southandvale.gov.uk/reuse](https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/reuse)

The Great Big Green Week

The annual celebration of all things 'green' started on 7 June with dozens of events all over the districts. Repair cafes, plant swaps, sustainable fashion shows, quizzes, bike and tech fix events, as well as a river clean up. All events are listed on the CAG Oxfordshire website - <https://www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk/great-big-green-week>

Changes to Brown Bin Collection – April 2025

A number of residents have asked about the new stickers for garden waste brown bins. The Vale of White Horse District Council have introduced a new garden waste subscription on 1 April 2025. It changes the way that you pay for your garden waste collection. The benefits are - it will make it easier for you to keep control of your payments – for example, if your bank details change. You now require a permit sticker on your bin, which will be sent to you when you pay for the year, and you need to stick onto your brown bin. This identifies to the waste crews that you have paid for that year, and they can empty your bin. The colour of the sticker will relate to the year that you have paid for, so will change each year. It will have your address on it so that the crews know it is your bin. This year (2025) the permits are yellow. If you have not received your sticker or have any queries please check www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/garden-waste/garden-waste-scheme-changes/ or get in touch with us

Council News

Full Council – 14th May

During the Full Council meeting, A new chair and vice chair were elected – Cllr Oliver Forder and Cllr Jill Rayner respectively. The leader, Cllr Bethia Thomas also announced changes to the cabinet;

Cllr Emily Smith returns to the Cabinet as the member responsible for Planning Development. Cllr Smith previously served as Council Leader and was co-chair of the Joint Audit and Governance Committee.

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne joins as Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Climate Action and Nature Recovery, having previously been Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.

During the meeting, the new Chair, Cllr Oliver Forder also took the opportunity to provide some clarity on the council's position relating to a recent Supreme Court decision. In a statement provided to members, Cllr Forder explained that the council would continue to support the Vale's transgender community and will deliver services offering support and space to all communities in line with the Equalities Act, noting that the Equality and Human Right's Commission's will be providing further advice that the council will follow.

Cllr Forder said: "The Supreme Court decision made clear that Trans people have not lost legal protection and that everyone, including the Trans community and the wider LGBTQ+ community, remains protected under the Equality Act. This Council's stance will remain positive, endorsing and caring towards the Trans community."

Get ready for a fun filled summer in the Vale

Children, adults and families across the Vale are gearing up for a jam-packed summer of fun with free and low-cost activities and places to visit. Throughout the summer, the council's Active Communities team will host a variety of events, including community walks and football sessions – there will be something for all ages and abilities to enjoy.

Check back during the coming weeks for more activity updates: www.southandvale.gov.uk/south-and-vale-holiday-activities

[Reducing need for temporary accommodation part of new homelessness consultation](#)

Minimising the use of temporary accommodation which can be disruptive to people's lives, especially for children, is one key aim of proposed updates to how councils tackle homelessness in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. Increasing the provision of genuinely affordable, long-term homes remains a core focus of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils' work to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping.

To take part in the consultation go to southandvale.gov.uk/homelessnessandroughsleepingstrategy/

[Joint Local Plan hearings](#)

The public hearings for the South and Vale Joint Local Plan started in the first week of June.

For the latest news, head to <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/joint-local-plan-2041-examination/>

[Five councils launch two-unitary proposal for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire](#)

Change is coming to local government across England, and five councils are working together to propose two strong and locally accountable unitary authorities for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. The government will replace the current two-tier system of local government, which consists of district and county councils, with new unitary authorities. It also wants smaller existing unitary councils, like West Berkshire, to reorganise so they cover areas of around 500,000 people.

The government wishes for councils to work together on plans for how these new unitary councils will work. As a result, the majority of the Oxfordshire authorities have teamed up with West Berkshire to work together positively and constructively on a proposal that meets the government's criteria and also provides an option for a better future for both Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. This proposal would deliver better services while retaining a close link to local communities.

The councils will launch a comprehensive public engagement exercise from **4 June to 16 July** to gather views that will help ensure the final proposals reflect the needs and aspirations of residents.

Residents can share their thoughts by taking part in the online survey by visiting twocouncils.org

They can also attend one of the engagement events held throughout Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. Details of the nearest events are below.

Date	Venue	Time
Friday 13 June	Coffee Aroma. 15 Hight Street, Abingdon , OX14 5BB	1.30pm – 4.30pm
Tuesday 17 June	Berro Lounge, Orchard Shopping Centre, 44 Orchard Street, Didcot , OX11 7LG	10.30am – 1.30pm
Thursday 19 June	Newbury Library, The Wharf, Newbury , RG14 5AU	11am – 3pm
Wednesday 25 June	The Beacon, Portway, Wantage , OX12 9BX	1pm – 4pm

[£1.9 million boost for local infrastructure](#)

Over the last six months, we have invested over £1.9 million in vital infrastructure delivered by the council, town and parish councils and other community organisations.

Investments have ranged from installing air source heat pumps and solar panels, to public art, bus shelters, skate park repairs, allotment works and gym equipment, tennis court and MUGA improvements. As the local planning authority, we collect financial contributions in the form of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) – this is the funding from housing developers to support the growth of the district when new developments are created.

Find out more about [CIL here](#) and [S106 here](#). If you have any questions, please email infrastructureclaims@southandvale.gov.uk