

District Councillors Report to Parish Councils

Watchfield and Shrivenham Ward

January/Early February 2022

Vale of White Horse District Council

Covid – As infection rates still remain high in both the Vale and Swindon we request that residents continue to follow the guidance and take care. Should the current arrangements change we would encourage people to keep a watching brief on the Vale's website for any new information. www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Community Hub – The Vale's Team are overseeing the Household Support Fund Voucher scheme as well as supporting the residents that are self-isolating. To find out more or seek help call Citizens Advice 0808 2787907 or Vale 01235 765348. All details are on the Vale website: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Business Grants – Businesses that have been struggling due to the Omicron variant can now apply for a grant. All details may be found at www.svbs.co.uk

Afghan Refugees – The Vale continue to work closely with the County Council and other Oxfordshire partners to assist with finding suitable accommodation, health, education and other services. The Vale are committed to accommodate three families. The first two families have settled in well and we are expecting the third one to arrive in the next few weeks.

Planning – The joint design guide consultation has been extended. The new deadline is 11.59pm on Tuesday 15 March. The guide sets out a series of steps and design principles that will be considered when deciding future applications. Parishes are encouraged to view the proposals.

The number of planning applications for all villages in our Ward continue to rise. Details by each Parish may be found on the Vale website.

Previously we have mentioned controversial applications. Currently there are two in Shrivenham. Both have attracted a great number of objections including Oxfordshire County Council Highways and Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group. It is anticipated that these applications will be determined in the next few weeks.

Council Meeting – The next full Council meeting will be held on 16 February. The agenda will be published on the Vale website on Wednesday 9 February. This meeting will determine the budget for 2022/23 and the profile for the following four (4) years. The meeting will also confirm Council Tax for 2022/23.

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee – A meeting took place on Monday 10 January 2022 and the minutes may be found on the Vale website. The meeting reviewed its Action Plan and this will be discussed by the Cabinet on 4 February. The next Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday 5 April.

Swindon CCG – Simon and Elaine met with the Swindon CCG on 27 January. It was an informative meeting and like many organisations subject to change. Indeed later this year the Swindon CCG will operate as part of an Integrated Care Alliance. Swindon is part of BANES - Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG. Our meeting was more of an introductory one and it has laid the basis for better communication with us as local Councillors and the Vale. We have agreed to meet every six to eight weeks.

Electric Vehicles – The first EV Charging points are currently being installed at the Portway Car Park in Wantage. Details of when charging points in other Vale car parks will be available will be publicised when confirmed. These are expected to be in Abingdon and Faringdon. It is anticipated that all installations will be completed by the end of March.

Civil Parking Enforcement –The scheme is proving to be very effective. Officers have been taking enforcement action where traffic orders and regulatory signs and lines are in place. It must be stressed that problems such as pavement parking are not automatically enforceable unless there are formal restrictions in place.

Car Parking Changes and Charges – A review of the current 2 hour free parking and charges for all Vale car parks has been undertaken. The recommendations will be considered as part of the budget. If agreed the free 2 hours will reduce to 1 hour and hourly charges will increase.

White Horse Community Lottery –The lottery has been very successful and voluntary and charitable groups are invited to join – ***it is free!*** As previously reported the Lottery now has its own website: www.whitehorselottery.co.uk which provides all the information required to participate.

Community Safety – South and Vale Community Safety Partnership and Oxfordshire charity Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse are running a series of **free** online training sessions for people in the hair and beauty industry to raise awareness of Domestic Abuse. We encourage participation and more information is available on the Eventbrite page at www.southandvale.gov.uk/youcanhelp

Swindon Borough Council – New Eastern Villages

For information a discharge of conditions S/COND/21/1998 has been submitted to SBC for the land north of the A420 South Marston and Rowborough. The condition relates to the phasing of the development of 2380 dwellings over a fourteen year period. There will be three access points all on to the A420. Old Vicarage Lane, new access point nearer to Acorn Bridge and Thornhill Road. In addition an application for 1553 dwellings, a primary school and POS at Kingsdown off the A419 has been submitted to SBC. This application is not part of the New Eastern Villages. However, as SBC do not have a five year land supply the Council is open to speculative applications such as this.

The works in and around the White Hart roundabout continue with tailbacks often to and from Acorn Bridge. SBC have again moved the end date which is now expected

to be by the end of March. Meanwhile traffic around our villages increases particularly HGV's.

Although we don't normally hold surgeries we are always available to deal with any issues. However, following the success of recent events held in Shrivenham and Watchfield we will be arranging more in the near future.

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