

Vale of White Horse District Councillors' Report to Parish Councils

Katherine Foxhall and Viral Patel

Watchfield and Shrivenham Ward

June 2023

We have now completed much of the Council's induction programme. In the ward this month we have been working to get to know more about the particular concerns of individual parishes, as well as taking on case work for individual residents.

District Council News

Waste Services Survey – please respond by

Vale is asking people to share their views and experiences of waste services across the districts, including household waste, recycling and food waste collections, bulky waste collections, street cleaning services, customer services and the councils' waste and recycling information. Please do respond and share the link with residents. The survey is open until 10 July.

[Southandvale.gov.uk/WasteSurvey](https://southandvale.gov.uk/WasteSurvey)

Climate Action Fund – Deadline 14th July

The Vale of White Horse's Climate Action Fund provides grants of up to £5,000 for climate-related community projects in the district. The Fund has opened again for applications from town and parish councils and local groups who have proposals which aim to tackle climate change.

There is £100,000 available – double the amount previously available for those applying for grants. The fund will be open for applications until 14 July.

For more information: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/climate-emergency/100000-now-available-for-community-climate-projects-in-vale/>

Financial Support for Food Banks & Community Larders

More information: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/uncategorised/council-grants-now-available-for-food-banks-and-community-larders/>

Ward News

Thames Water trunk main – Eaton Hastings.

The Thames Water Blunsdon-Faringdon trunk main replacement is a major local project. Katherine is working to establish lines of communication via the councils and Kier to help keep residents informed, to ensure that remedial work e.g. tree replacement following the project is carried out, and (given this week's news) to secure assurances that the scheme is fully-funded. This project also affects Buscot & Coleshill parishes, and I will pass on any information. Useful detail about the project is here: [Faringdon to Blunsdon Trunk Main Phase 2 \(2023\) | Water Projects \(waterprojectsonline.com\)](#)

Katherine is working with residents involved with the Eaton Hastings parish meeting to look at woodland recovery following ash clear-felling and to help improve parish democracy and representation with local authorities.

Planning – Watchfield, Shrivenham, Bourton, Longcot, Little Coxwell

We have been following up planning concerns in several places including with individual residents, parish responses and to understand apparent delays in decision-making. These have included several applications that were submitted before we were elected, so we have been working to ensure continuity with previous Cllrs and that previously requested call-ins are accounted for.

The follow ups raised with us included two larger proposals in Shrivenham, one of which Vale planning have now turned down due to falling outside the Vale's local plan and the Shrivenham neighbourhood plan. The other is a proposal for a care home raising local concern around the pressure it could place on health services and other local infrastructure. We are approaching this with an open mind and monitoring the application but note there are technical objections in place which remain unaddressed at the moment.

A screening application has been submitted relating to the former Wicklesham quarry which has a SSSI designation, which borders the ward. At present there is no formal full or outline planning application that can be responded to.

Viral has further been approached in relation to several notable smaller planning related matters in Watchfield, Bourton and Longcot. These are no less important and often all residents and parishes desire is a little clarity on the proposal, any impact it would have on their quality of life, or simply support where relations are strained. We are pleased to be able to help bring that clarity, an update or simply provide support, as often all that is necessary is for all parties to feel informed and listened to.

Tuckmill Nature Reserve Pollution Incident

In May, we reported Katherine's work with Friends of Tuckmill and the District Council to alert the Environment Agency to a developer dumping large quantities of water from a construction pond into a stream running through the nature reserve. We are pleased to say that this was taken seriously, with both Environment Agency and Nature England following up. While the contractor has not on this occasion been prosecuted, they have been reminded of the need to take particular care around SSSIs. The nature reserve is looking glorious!

S106 funding for Shrivenham Multi- Use Games Area

We were pleased to be notified that Shrivenham Parish Council has been awarded £40,306.89 for installation of a mini multi-use games area (adjacent to the existing MUGA) at Highworth Road recreation ground using S106 monies. If you have a project that you would like to apply for please let us know.

Noise nuisance from rented properties – Little Coxwell

Viral has been working to support residents in Little Coxwell where noise and disruptions are having a negative impact on people and animals. Vale officers have asked for logs of incidents from the affected residents. This will allow them to determine what action is necessary across planning, environmental health, and highways, and whether any formal action is necessary and appropriate.

Rural transport links – Ashbury

During the election campaign and since, the lack of any transport specifically in rural areas and geared towards those with mobility issues has come up. Viral has started liaising with Community Connector and Vale Community Impact to see what can be done to help those with no means of getting around. This is at an early stage, but we will continue to see what support is available and how to make it available sustainably such that we can maintain continuity of anything that can be put in place.

Council Meetings / Events Attended

Faringdon Area Transport Advisory Committee (FATAC)

Katherine attended as a committee member. Discussions included a police report around causes of injury and fatalities on the A420, and safety around the new playground near the Coxwell junction. I asked OCC to consider installing “Sheffield” style bike stands at bus stops along the S6 route as part of their maintenance / upgrade routine alongside dropped kerbs / new lighting. Secure stands would enable residents from nearby villages to lock bikes and access bus services – as at Kingston Bagpuize. Obvious stops include Watchfield Defence Academy, Longcot turn and Great Coxwell junction.

Westmill Solar Conference

This was an excellent day, attended by Katherine, with very good presentations from representatives of NFU, Solar Energy UK, community solar organisations and biodiversity experts. Key messages include that permitted development rules are changing to allow solar canopies; solar can be completely compatible with nature recovery and biodiversity net gain, as well as large-scale food production when managed carefully. Grid connections for major infrastructure are nationally a major challenge, as is the potential for incremental over-development. Technologies exist but political will is required.

Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Independent Care Board

Katherine and Viral received a briefing from representatives of the new BANES Independent Care Board, which recently replaced the Clinical Commissioning Group. BANES includes Shrivenham and Watchfield area, while the rest of Oxfordshire is now within the Bucks, Oxon and Berks ICB. It is a major priority for us to continue the work that Cllr Ware started to ensure that our area is not forgotten both within the ICB and the councils. We asked how major new developments are considered when commissioning services to ensure that residents can access health care; how information is shared between organisations when patients require services in e.g. both Oxford and Swindon.

We expect to be involved in consultations about the commissioning of new services for our area over the coming months. Please do contact us if you have particular factors that you think need to be considered as new services are commissioned over the coming months.

Miscellaneous

DEFRA Hedgerow consultation

DEFRA have launched a consultation on hedgerow protection, open until 20 September: [Consultation on Protecting Hedgerows - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

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