

Vale of White Horse

District Councillors' Report

Watchfield and Shrevenham Ward

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Ward Overview

Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits application for commercial development

[OCC Application MW.0151/23](#)

The applicant has submitted amendments to the original outline planning application, with changes to the max heights, site layout and now includes additional assessments in relation to ecology, transport and tree management.

The application is still with Oxfordshire County Council, with further responses to the consultation expected by the 11th June. The Vale of White Horse as the planning authority and a statutory consultee have been approached for a response and officers are looking over the proposed changes.

We will review the changes to the proposals and will submit a further response both directly and will share with officers to help inform the Vale response.

Eaton Hastings - Music events in rural Vale

Residents raised concerns around potential noise and disturbance due to an organized music event. Katherine contacted officers who confirmed that the event had a temporary license, which come under national legislation but do define limits on the end time and the number of attendees.

The event had been advertised beyond the permitted time(11pm) and Vale officers were able to remind the applicant of the time limit, and we later received confirmation from residents that the event did end around 11pm.

Viral visited the locality on the day of the event and was able to speak with some residents and understand more the impact of this event on the rural community. We will continue to monitor the matter for concerned residents. Any noise complaints should be reported using the Vale portal to make sure that disturbances can be taken into account when future events are applied for: [Nuisance Complaint and Enquiry reporting forms - Vale of White Horse District Council \(whitehorsedc.gov.uk\)](#)

Little Coxwell – responding to regularization of planning

An application was received by the Vale to regularise planning documents which were approved in 2021. Having spoken to officers it is clearer that open enforcement cases would not be material to the regularisation of parking at the site (the subject of the application).

We will continue to follow up on this matter as it progresses.

Little Coxwell – Playing Field Lease from the Vale

The Vale officers have concluded their due diligence for this site. The site originally came into Vale's possession through a defunct rural housing body but remains held under the Housing Act. The field has been used as a village playing field and for community events for many years, however officers needed to consider whether the site would be viable for affordable housing.

We are pleased to see this work has completed, and Vale officers are now going through the legal process which will hopefully lead to a long-term lease or disposal to Little Coxwell parish council. The parish council have been informed and we will continue to follow this as it progresses and look forward to more than a decade of delays on this matter being concluded.

Ashbury – Bins

We have been following up on a request for a bin to be collected and replacement bins in Ashbury. We have made some progress with the Vale waste team having confirmed they will be able to add a bin to the collection. The replacement is proving more difficult as land ownership at this point is unclear, but we hope to make progress once that is better understood.

Shrivenham - S106 funding

An application for S106 developer funds has been granted towards improvements at Shrivenham Memorial Hall.

Support for parish councils

It is clear to see the huge amount of work done by parish councils. As ever, if a situation arises that we can help with from a Vale perspective, please get in touch.

Council News

Vale Cabinet corporate plan – “Heart of the Vale” consultation

Councils set out four-year plans on their key priorities. In the Vale this plan is being driven by the cabinet, and a recent consultation has now closed. As a Green group we asked that the proposed plan include more solid commitments, more specific detail, and we are concerned that commitments on sound financial management, transparency and scrutiny appear to be losing prominence.

The corporate plan should be meaningful and provide something tangible that can be used to assess success or failure against.

The Vale Green group leader Cllr Sarah James sent our response in full to officers as well as responding through the online response form. Please let us know if you would like to see a copy.

Vale sporting and leisure facilities strategy consultation

The Vale recently consulted on its sporting and leisure facilities strategy, with the consultation ending on the 24th of April. We responded to this consultation, particularly noting that the strategy assessments highlighted the relative lack of swimming facilities around Shrivenham. We also noted that with the growth in population and housing the sparsity in facilities would be felt more over time in the Western Vale.

While we were very pleased to see [decarbonisation projects progressing at Vale leisure facilities](#), as ward members for Watchfield and Shrivenham we felt further questions needed to be asked at full council. Viral spoke up about the relative lack of facilities in the western rural Vale, you can find details of these on the council website:

<https://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=108&MId=3197>

General Election 2024 – Boundary Change to Witney constituency

As we are sure everyone is aware we will have a general election on the 4th of July.

With the new boundary changes, all of the villages in our ward, as well as Faringdon, will now be within the Witney constituency, rather than Didcot and Wantage.

Our work for residents continues as normal, but the following may be useful to remind residents of:

- Details of polling locations: wheredoivote.co.uk
- Details of candidates standing for election: whocanivotefor.co.uk
- Voter ID is now a requirement: electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID

Garden Waste Scheme Changes

From 1 April 2025 we will be introducing a permit scheme which will change the way that you pay for your garden waste collection. This also means that your payment date will change. It will make it easier for you to keep control of your payments – for example if your bank details change. If you sign up for an online account with us you will have easy access to change your contact details, so that we can contact you easily if we experience problems with the service or need to let you know about any changes.

More details here: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/garden-waste/garden-waste-scheme-changes/>

Changes to Vale Housing Enforcement Policy

The housing enforcement policy provides guidance for social landlords, private landlords, letting agencies and tenants on our approach to ensure acceptable standards are met for rented properties in the district – so they provide good quality and well-managed accommodation.

If landlords and property agents fail to fulfil their legal obligations and rent out sub-standard accommodation, this has negative impacts for tenants and for the local community.

Our policy will help ensure a fair and consistent approach to housing enforcement in the district.

Full details are here: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/housing/housing-delivery-strategy/housing-enforcement-policy/>

No Mow May

We have been very happy to see so many of our residents, parishes and other organizations following the No Mow May Movement, giving opportunities for wildness to recover in so many gardens and verges in the Vale. We are also pleased to see the Vale continue to provide wildflower meadows for those who do not have much outside space to enjoy in addition to aiding our much-depleted biodiversity.

While the Vale only manages a limited amount of public open land, we hope to see the Vale be even more ambitious in its plans to accelerate and support nature recovery.

The Vale have produced maps of where they have reduced cutting of grass in the short term, please do visit these to see what grows given the opportunity: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/parking-roads-and-streets/grounds-maintenance/grass-cutting/>

New partnership to tackle rural crime

The Rural Crime Partnership is bringing together Thames Valley Police, West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse District Councils and the Community Safety Partnerships to tackle crimes such as fly-tipping, burglaries and theft in rural areas.

You can read more on this here: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/community-safety/new-partnership-to-tackle-crime-in-rural-areas/>

BOB ICB stake holder newsletter

The May issue of the BOB ICB stakeholder newsletter has just been published, with the latest on health and social care across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

<https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=534e76886a&e=b333aa7b7a>

Emergency local plans

Parishes and other organisations will often have emergency local plans, which assess the likely emergencies that may arise and how they may support residents under those circumstances. The government have published a new support website for emergency preparedness.

If your parish are looking to build an emergency local plan or update an existing one, you may find some of the information and templates useful: <https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-involved-in-your-community/information-for-communities-and-community-groups/>

Funds

Climate Action Fund now open

The Climate Action Fund is now open to help fund climate-related projects in the district. Previous grant include EV chargers at a village hall, solar panels on a preschool building, creation of a wildlife habitat and carbon literacy training - to name just a few.

The total funding available will be £100,000. The size of individual grants has doubled to a new maximum of £10,000 (minimum is £250).

Please help spread the word to local groups and organisations.

Visit the Vale website for more information about the [Climate Action Fund](#).

Latest round of Rural England Prosperity Fund now open

The next round for Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) applications has now opened and organisations can apply for the scheme on the councils' websites: [Vale of White Horse DC](#).

The fund offers up to £75,000 of capital funding for small businesses and community infrastructure projects that help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. Applications close at midday on Monday 1 July.

Consultations

Greenspaces in the District

Land Use Consultants (LUC) are asking residents and organisations to complete a short online survey to understand how they use greenspaces in their local area. This ranges from parks and recreation grounds to natural spaces like woodlands and meadows.

The survey runs from Thursday 30 May to Sunday 30 June 2024.

You can take part in and help share LUC's short survey here:

[South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse GI and Open Space Public Survey](#)

If you have any questions about the survey, please email the LUC team at SouthandValeGI@landuse.co.uk.

Support when leaving hospital

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would particularly like to understand what worked well and what could be improved, so it can help shape the support people receive when they leave hospital. You can share your views and experiences by completing this anonymous survey www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/leavinghospital.