

# Vale of White Horse District Councillors' Report

## Watchfield and Shrivenham Ward

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## Ward Overview

### Shrivenham Golf Course Planning Application

This application is still under consideration. We are pleased to see that the BSW Integrated Care Board have been contacted and have made a formal response, objecting to the proposal and stating that without mitigation Elm Tree Surgery “does not have the capacity to absorb any additional residents in the current state”.

Kat has contacted the planning officer responsible for the development to ask for any more information about potential timescales for this to go to committee.

### S106 Funds

We are glad to see that the final pot of S106 funding received (in 2013!) in relation to the Cowan's Camp Development in Watchfield (Anson Drive etc) has been allocated to the ongoing decarbonisation of Faringdon Leisure Centre. Given the long delay in allocating these funds, this money was at risk of going unspent.

We have also been working with officers to try and identify any potential S106 funds that could support local charity Root and Branch. Although we have been told there are no existing ring-fenced funds that are appropriate, we have been advised to contact Planning to find out whether future agreements could be set up with this kind of project in mind.

### Civil and Military Partnership Meeting

With County Cllr Emma Markham, Kat attended the latest Civilian and Military Partnership meeting on 26 February. After guided tours of the Defence Academy and the collections at the College of Management and Technology, the discussions focused particularly on young people. It is clear that although Operation Lazurite has officially ended, there remains pressure on local primary and secondary schools, as government support (e.g. translation and integration) are scaled back.

### Council & Integrated Care Board Relationship

We remain concerned at the various ways that BSW ICB's responsibility for our area continues to be missed in council communications and documents. Kat raised this in a recent Constitution Review meeting, and at February's full Council. Kat has fed this concern into the current Healthwatch survey.

We have a quarterly meeting with BSW ICB scheduled for 23 April, and welcome any points of discussion that residents may wish to raise.

## Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits application approval for commercial development

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

Kat, Viral, and Emma continue to closely follow the progress of this application. As we currently understand it, final approval is still pending while the County Council verifies that all statutory obligations were met during the application and decision-making process.

Recently, Viral wrote to the County's Head of Legal to formally raise concerns about the process that was followed. In addition, he wrote to the Government's Planning Casework Unit (PCU) to ask that they consider recommending the Secretary of State "call in" this application for review.

There is always a risk that if a call-in request does not go your way, it can make the scrutiny of future applications on the site more difficult. In this case, the PCU wrote back to inform us that, after careful consideration, the Secretary of State has chosen not to intervene, leaving the matter in the hands of the Local Planning Authority.

Please remember that this planning application is for **outline permission only** and is strictly limited to site access. The plans the developer has illustrated for a "Life Sciences" park are wholly speculative at this stage. We will continue to closely monitor any future "Reserved Matters" applications (which will cover the actual design, scale, and layout) to see what is proposed going forward and to ensure the developers are held to account.

## Council News

### Local Government Reorganisation Consultation

There is still time to contribute to the government consultation on options to reorganise local councils across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire, replacing county and district councils with single unitary structures responsible for local services.

The consultation asks residents for their views on each of the three proposals put forward for Oxfordshire

Visit: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/oxfordshire>

The consultation is open until 26 March 2026.

Meanwhile, the Vale Leader has again rejected Swindon's potential involvement in the larger strategic mayoral authorities that are also being proposed. We will continue to advocate for the importance of Swindon to our residents, not least for health services.

### Garden Waste Bin Permits for 2026/7

Garden Waste Bin permits are due for renewal – residents will be receiving reminders by email. Residents who are unable to access their online account to buy or renew a permit can call the council on 01235 422422.

Permit online renewals can be accessed at: <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/garden-waste-permit/>

### Council Budget

Vale Councillors agreed the District Council's budget for 2026/7 at Full Council on 12 February. The Green group were pleased to have an amendment accepted to include administrative resource to clear a backlog of more than £2million ringfenced for Disability Facilities Grant.

While the council finances remain stable for this year, we are very concerned that 2027/8 is looking very difficult.

More about the budget is here: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/council-tax/vale-council-sets-balanced-2026-27-budget-focused-on-communities-services-and-responsible-spending/>

### Joint Local Plan Procedure

Following a procedural meeting between council officers and government inspectors on 12 February, we understand that hearings will recommence and the council has requested that these happen in June and July 2026. The Plan will be assessed against the 2023 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (not the NPPF 2024 version, nor the draft NPPF 2025 currently under consultation).