

Vale of White Horse District Councillors' Report

Watchfield and Shrivenham Ward

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Ward Overview

Faringdon Area Traffic Advisory Committee

The next Faringdon Area Traffic Advisory Committee is due to be held at 10am on Monday June 16. We are currently waiting to hear whether Cllr Markham will be joining the committee as county councillor. If you have any issues regarding road and travel infrastructure, please let Kat know, or you can approach the clerk, Katherine Doughty, directly to register to attend the meeting either in person or online: townclerk@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk.

Tuckmill Meadows

Kat visited the volunteers at Tuckmill on Monday 12 May to find out more about the livestock fencing and the plans to introduce cattle. We're very glad to hear that the fencing is now complete, and that the orchids are thriving!

Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits application for commercial development

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

Viral has submitted a fourth response to the latest version of the planning application for Wicklesham Quarry. This version reduces the height of all buildings, and not just for those in one specific sightline of Faringdon Folly. We noted the responses by the Vale Heritage and Landscape officers highlighting one of the significant concerns made by residents against the proposed development. We also noted the applicant's inclusion for use class-E with no provision in the development plan at this location for this and therefore having no evidentiary basis.

Viral had expected to speak to this at OCC Planning and Development committee in June; we now understand it is likely to go to the 14th July meeting and we will ensure that one of us attends.

Shrivenham Cricket Club

Kat, Viral and Cllr Markham spent a lovely evening with members of Shrivenham Cricket Club to learn more about the plans for the club's expansion, to meet some of the new Afghan players who have helped the club expand to a 2nd eleven team, and to discuss how we can support the club's need for new training nets in particular.

We look forward to seeing the Shrivenham cricket club continue to thrive and grow, and to make this much enjoyed sport more accessible to many more of our residents.

New Shrivenham County Councillor

We are delighted to welcome Cllr Emma Markham as the new County Councillor for Shrivenham Division, which overlaps with our ward except for the villages north of the A420. We are liaising with Emma in relation

to several matters that fall within the remit of the county council. You can get in touch with Emma at emma.markham@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Garden Waste Bin Permit Scheme – Commercial / Domestic overlap

While the new garden waste permit scheme is working well, we are aware that the system has tightened up regarding the use of domestic bins where there is also a commercial business e.g. for pub gardens. Kat has been asking the waste team and cabinet member to review where the line is drawn to avoid penalising our small rural businesses, and we would like to hear from anyone who has had a garden waste bin permit either refused or approved for a non-domestic use (e.g. pub, B&B, cafe, shop, sports club).

Playing Field Lease (Little Coxwell)

A field being used by Little Coxwell residents as a playing field was originally transferred to the Vale of White Horse and held under the Housing Act. The council last year determined the land would not be appropriate for housing. We now have confirmation that the Secretary of State has approved of the land's disposal, and Vale officers are proceeding with covenants to meet the needs of the parish council such that disposal terms can be drawn up. We are very pleased to see this progress in securing the field for the long-term and look forward to joining residents in enjoying events on the playing field.

Vale Homelessness and Rough sleeping strategy

Viral attended a workshop for councillors held by the Vale on its upcoming Homelessness and Rough sleeping strategy, and made representations based on feedback from other members of the Vale Green Group. The strategy at the Vale is still in its early stages and will be opened for public consultation once further progress is made.

Council News

Council IT Transformation and Service Disruption

The council is currently undergoing a major IT transformation. Many of the Council's IT systems are now unavailable both to the public and internally as they are transferred to in-house hosting. Disruption is affecting planning system and applications, and most of the council's online forms. We have been told that this work is taking longer than anticipated and the current best estimate for systems to return is Monday 9 June. Banner notices are on the council's website and customers can still contact the council via the enquiry form or by phone.

Planning consultation periods will be extended by fourteen days to account for the disruption. Full information is here: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/uncategorised/major-council-it-system-maintenance-from-24-may-for-around-one-week/>

Climate Action Fund

The Council's Climate Action Fund is open to applications until 30 June.

Local 'not for profit' organisations and town/parish councils can apply for a share of the £100,000 Fund, with up to £10,000 on offer for individual projects (minimum request of £250). Full details of the Climate Action Fund and how to apply are available on the [Climate Action Fund page on our website](#). Please also review our [Climate Action Fund application guidance](#).

Local Government Reorganisation

We have been continuing to follow the progress on the Local Government Reorganisation. The Government will accept proposals directly from County Councils, but in Oxfordshire district authorities are providing input into the process before final proposals are submitted to government.

The Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire have been developing a two-unitary proposal in conjunction with West Berkshire, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire. This proposal is open for public engagement at <https://www.twocouncils.org/>, where feedback from the public will be gathered and used to inform the final proposal for building two Unitaries ("Oxford & Shires" and "Ridgeway").

Oxford City have launched their own shiny website for a [Greater Oxford](#) consultation on an alternative to create a much larger City from parts of the Vale, South, West and Cherwell into an expanded city leaving outskirts to form smaller unviable Unitaries. We also expect Oxfordshire County Council to bring forward another proposal for subsuming the district and city functions into the a single county-wide Council.

Funds

Parishes, village groups and sports clubs are always on the lookout to fund their needs. We try to highlight any funding when we come across it and have found the Rural Services Network (rsnonline.org.uk) to be a useful resource. Specifically, the network has a monthly digest of open funds that are worth looking through (rsnonline.org.uk/rural-funding-digest-may-2025).

Useful Council Links

- Flytipping, Littering and Abandoned Vehicles: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/environment-and-neighbourhood-issues/neighbourhood-services/littering-fly-tipping-and-dumping-waste/>
- Housing Team: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/housing/>
- Community Safety (anti-social behaviour, vulnerable people and domestic abuse): <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/community-help-and-safety/>
- Cost of Living Help: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/cost-of-living-crisis-advice-and-support/>
- Emergency Situations: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/community-support/emergency-situations/>