

Vale of White Horse

District Councillors' Report

Watchfield and Shrivenham Ward

Cllr Katherine Foxhall katherine.foxhall@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
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November 2024

Ward Overview

Pars Development, Townsend Road, Shrivenham

Kat has submitted a response to a new application for a private wastewater treatment works at this ten home development. We strongly object to the private solution which will discharge 5.7m³ treated waste per day into the field next door, and make residents responsible for the management of foul waste. We are expecting the application to come to planning committee shortly.

Food Businesses and Litter

In response to a new Vale initiative to reduce the amount of litter being dropped from takeaway businesses, Katherine has asked for Watchfield McDonald's to be considered for the scheme. The Cabinet member responsible has agreed to speak to officers about this:

<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/food-businesses-urged-to-%e2%9d%a4%ef%b8%8f-your-area-and-join-the-fight-against-litter/>

Remembrance Sunday

On Sunday November the 10th remembrance services were held across the country, and as always there were held across the parishes in our ward. Kat and Viral attended Watchfield and Shrivenham this year as representatives of Vale of White Horse Council chair.

Ashbury blocked culvert

Viral has continued following up with the County Council Highways engagement team and has been informed that budgeting is complete, and we are now waiting for the contractors to provide a works schedule. The expectation is on completion the culvert blockage/collapse will be investigated and repaired and works carried out on the footpath that has been disrupted.

Fernham Dropped Kerb

Following Kat's direct request to OCC officers at the FATAc meeting, we are pleased to learn that the dropped kerb in Elmside, Fernham has now been installed, giving residents safer access to the car park. Thanks to the officers who have followed this up quickly after Kat first raised this issue in 2021.

Little Coxwell Playing field

Viral has continued to keep in touch with Council officers on the process of this land disposal to the parish council. Officers at the Vale are periodically reaching out to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to get some priority on this.

Council News

Christmas tree collection points

Vale are requesting parishes come forward to offer Christmas tree collection points.

If your parish doesn't already provide a Christmas tree collection point, do you have space in a car park or on a public green in your parish to provide one for your residents to use? If you have the space, we can arrange for a collection from a public location in your parish, from 8 January - to arrange this, please email waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk.

Council Services over Christmas

The Council has a webpage with information about all services over the Christmas period, including waste collections, support for housing, cost of living advice, emergency contacts and Warm Spaces schemes at Leisure Centres: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/council-services-over-christmas-and-new-year-2024-25/>

Future Oxfordshire Partnership

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership was originally set up as the Oxfordshire Growth Board, bringing together all of Oxfordshire's councils and organisations including the NHS, Oxford Universities and the Environment Agency. As Chair of Joint Scrutiny, Kat has been responding to new proposals for a "slimmed down" FOP, which will become a Board of the council leaders to discuss cross-county issues. Government proposals for devolution are likely to be at the top of the agenda. Our main concerns are around a lack of attention to scrutiny of the new body, vague proposals regarding its remit, and a lack of detail about the funding the new Board requires. More details are available here: <https://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=635&MId=3342>

Vale of White Horse Switchboard

Switchboard operations have been outsourced to Capita for some years, this service after much work has now been brought in house with the hope that calls can be correctly routed to the right people faster.

Leisure Centres and Warm Spaces

Over the Christmas period there will be changes to the opening times of our Better Leisure Centres, please check via the Better UK website or with staff at your local centre for details.

<https://www.better.org.uk/healthy-communities/warm-spaces>

Vale budget setting process is ongoing

The Vale of White Horse is in the process of setting next years budget, as a Green group we are looking to propose some extensions to schemes being considered to put the council in a stronger position to reduce their long-term outgoings.

Consultations

Bathing water quality regulation consultation

The government department (DEFRA) is consulting on bathing water quality regulations, specifically:

- removal of automatic de-designation after 5 years of 'poor' water quality
- changes to the designation criteria of bathing sites
- removing the fixed dates of the bathing season from regulations

The consultation closes on the 23rd December, to make comment on this please go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforms-to-the-bathing-water-regulations-2013>

Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings

The government is consulting on allowing remote attendance and proxy voting for local authorities. Local authority meetings and committees are required to meet and vote in person, and this is a major barrier for many people, especially those with mobility issues or with young families, it is right that we should consider how we can adapt these processes to encourage participation in our democratic processes from a wider spectrum of our society.

The consultation closes on the 18th December:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings>

Support

Given the distribution and rural nature of our ward reports, we thought it may be helpful to start including items from organizations from outside of the councils influence as we become aware of them in the hope that it may help some of our residents.

Age UK – Homeshare Service

Age UK Oxfordshire are promoting a “Homeshare” service, whereby older people who may benefit from companionship can share their home with professionals, keyworkers or mature students who are willing to lend a hand when needed.

You can find more information on the Age UK Oxfordshire webpage
www.homeshareoxfordshire.org.uk.