

**Monday 12th July 2021****Monthly Parish Update****Vale of White Horse District Councillors****Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Sarah Medley**

Hello from Hayleigh & Sarah

Hello! This month we'd like to highlight the great news that more council-owned leisure facilities are now opening up, including the Abbey Meadow outdoor pool in Abingdon, and plans for the Beacon in Wantage to open in September – more details below. The café at the Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot has also recently opened, with a lovely new menu of tasty bagels and delicious cakes - well worth a visit if you're out and about in Didcot over the summer.

Although lockdown restrictions are lifting on 19th July, COVID-19 cases are increasing at a significant rate, with Oxford city now one of the top ten COVID-19 hotspots in the whole country. We strongly encourage residents to continue to follow the *hands – face – space – fresh air* guidance, to protect yourselves and others, in addition to regular testing and getting both vaccine doses.

We will use these monthly updates to keep you updated on our activities, general council news and any COVID-19 developments,. We also post regularly on our councillor Facebook Page: [Cllrs Hayleigh Gascoigne & Sarah Medley](#) - please do not hesitate to get in touch with any issues or concerns, either via Facebook message or email:

hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

COVID-19 Support

Community Support Hub – self-isolation support available

With Covid case numbers increasing more people are finding themselves having to self-isolate as a result of a positive diagnosis or close contact with someone who has tested positive. It's so important to self-isolate in either scenario to help stop the spread, but we know this is difficult for people and it's tempting to just pop out to get the shopping or run an errand.

That's where the community hub comes in – we're continuing to help link residents up to food support, either by signposting to help organising shopping, arranging for a click and collect shopping order to be collected or getting an emergency food parcel out. Residents may even be eligible for financial assistance if they risk losing earnings because they've had to self-isolate - [click here for more information on financial support](#).

To contact the Community Support Team:

call: 01235 422 600 Monday to Thursday 8.30-5pm and Fridays 8.30-4.30pm

email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

fill in an online form at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub

Remember, for the most up-to-date coronavirus information relating to district council support and any changes to services, please take a look at the dedicated Vale webpage for updates:

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/covid19

Residents can also contact

- Citizens Advice – 0808 278 7907
- Vale Community Impact – 01235 765348

Cases Data

Oxford City's cases are now firmly in the top ten in the entire country and the highest in the south-east. The City and County councils are calling on all 18-29 year olds in Oxford to take a PCR test at one of the many centres set up around the city. [Click here for more information on the COVID-19 situation in Oxford](#).

Remember that the latest figures are updated on the county council's [interactive dashboard](#) on a daily basis.

Local News

Valley Park Update

We (Hayleigh and Sarah) continue to meet regularly with the Planning officers at the council to stay up-to-date with the progress of Valley Park. It is very clear that the application will not come back to planning committee for further consideration until all of the reasons for deferral back in February have been addressed. One of the main reasons for deferral was the proposed roundabout design, and the issue with it prioritising car users over all other modes of transport. The developers have since issued a new design with traffic light-controlled crossings closer to the junctions of the roundabout, which is a step in the right direction. Our latest meeting with Vale planning officers, county highways officers and our new county councillor Sally Povolotsky was also attended by the county council cabinet members for Highways and the Environment. They are now fully briefed on the situation with the Valley Park roundabout and it is very encouraging that the senior leadership of the new county council administration are taking an active interest in this key issue for Valley Park.

Another key area to be addressed was the lack of healthcare provision at Valley Park. The good news is that the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group are now engaging with the developers and have requested the following:

- £2.841m from the Valley Park development is secured towards the proposed GWP healthcare centre; and,
- Should the GWP healthcare centre not proceed, £3.261m is secured from the Valley Park development which will enable OCCG to secure land elsewhere and build a healthcare centre or extend an existing health centre; or,
- 0.25 Ha Land is provided at Valley Park for a new GP health centre at nil cost and £2.841 m capital is provided towards its construction.

This information will be published on the [planning application webpage](#) shortly, and a response is awaited from the developers as to whether they will agree to this request.

Abbey Meadow outdoor pool reopened

Great news for families and swimmers in the Vale - the Abbey Meadow outdoor pool in Abingdon reopened on Monday 12 July in plenty of time for the summer holidays. [Click here for the full news article about the Abbey Meadow pool opening](#).

The Beacon to open again to the public

Vale of White Horse District Council is pleased to announce that it plans to open The Beacon arts and community centre in Wantage to the public again from 6 September. [Click here for the full news article about the Beacon opening](#). For more information you can also visit [The Beacon website](#) or call the centre on 01235 763456.

Extra funding for Didcot Garden Town

Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils are to receive £405,000 of government funding to help continue work on three garden community projects, including £125,000 for Didcot Garden Town. [Click here for the full news article about the garden community projects funding](#).

The Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study

Proposals for a new station at Wantage/Grove are included in a new report looking at how the rail network can best support Oxfordshire's predicted growth in jobs and housing. [Click here for a summary of the report on the Network Rail website.](#)

Proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has published its initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries and launched an eight-week consultation, which closes on **2 August 2021**. People can comment on a range of issues such as where the proposed new boundary lines are to the names of the constituencies. You can view the proposed changes for the south east on [the Boundary Commission website](#). In particular, we would draw your attention to numbers 28 and 41-45 which detail proposals for Oxfordshire. In summary, these include:

- significantly reconfiguring the Wantage constituency, which would become more compact. It would also be renamed Didcot and Wantage to reflect its two main population areas.
- increasing the number of constituencies in Oxfordshire from six to seven
- making relatively minor changes to the Henley and Oxford East constituencies

Note from Hayleigh and Sarah: these proposals only affect our parliamentary constituency (currently Wantage), in which residents vote for an MP during General Elections. The proposals do not change anything about the current parish, district or county council boundaries.

Council News

Council Meetings

The next Full Council meeting of the Vale of White Horse District council will be on Wednesday 14th July at 7.00pm – [click here for the agenda and link to watch the meeting online.](#)

Due to the recent legislation change regarding council meetings, this meeting will be held in person at 135 Milton Park. However, the new hybrid format will still be used, where the meeting is conducted via video conference and broadcast online, and members of the public can choose to attend remotely or in person. Councillors can also attend remotely but are not permitted to vote unless present in person.

The Oxfordshire Growth Board met on Tuesday 8th June – [click here for the minutes of the meeting.](#)

Members of the public and ward councillors are able to participate in meetings remotely, as well as in person and via written statement. If you wish to speak at any council meeting (full council, cabinet, committees etc), you just need to register in advance with Democratic Services: email democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk

New White Horse Community Lottery: win prizes and help good causes

The White Horse Community Lottery has been launched by the Vale of White Horse District council as a fun and creative way for voluntary and community groups to raise much needed funds. Players of the lottery can choose which local good cause(s) they want to support when they purchase tickets and prizes range from free prize draw entries to a weekly £25,000 jackpot. Tickets cost just £1 with 60p from every ticket sold going to support charities and community groups across the Vale of White Horse. For more information on where to buy tickets and how to get involved as a local organisation, [click here for the full news article about the lottery.](#)

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

The latest meeting of our Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) took place on 14 June and featured:

- A review of the progress to develop a new council tree policy
- An update on Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme projects

[Click here to watch a recording of the CEAC meeting.](#) For more information on the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, [click here to visit the website.](#)

Taking climate action together

Last month the district council held a town and parish council forum on 'Climate action – how can we take action together'. The event featured a review of our draft Climate Action Plan and a discussion on how we can work together to achieve our major target of becoming a carbon neutral district. The feedback and ideas that towns and parishes provided on the draft plan's six main themes - transport, energy, natural environment, non-domestic buildings, homes and waste, will be shared and, where appropriate, incorporated into the draft climate action plan. We expect to publish our Climate Action Plan in Autumn 2021 – watch this space for more updates.

Move Together

The Move Together initiative recently launched across Oxfordshire for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable and who have been shielding, and any residents whose health has been affected by the lockdowns over the past year. [Click here for the full news article about Move Together.](#)

New air quality website for the county - they want your views

The district council has been working with Oxford City Council, the county council and the other districts on a countywide air quality community website to help raise awareness of air pollution. Once developed, the website should provide air quality evidence, information and advice in a simple and accessible manner to all Oxfordshire visitors and residents. This week the city council has launched a consultation asking local people for their views on what they want from the new website. [Click here for the consultation](#) - the deadline to submit your comments is **5 September**.

Ultra-fast broadband coming to our area

Open Reach has announced that 45,000 homes and businesses in Oxfordshire should benefit from ultra-fast full fibre broadband by 2026. This follows £18m investment in the county with Abingdon, Blewbury, Childrey, Cumnor, Didcot, Marcham, Oxford, Wantage and Warborough set to benefit. More information [Click here for more information from OpenReach.](#)

Councils' Five year land supply maintained

The council is pleased to confirm that it has maintained a five-year housing land supply, helping to limit the opportunity for speculative development in our communities. [Click here for the statement on the five-year housing land supply.](#)

New management structure at district councils to provide stability to residents

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have made their interim senior management team structure permanent to help provide a firm and stable base from which they can deliver their corporate plan priorities and services to residents. [Click here for the full news article about the management structure.](#)