



Monday 6th February 2023

Monthly Parish Update

Vale of White Horse District Councillors

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Sarah Medley

Hello from Hayleigh and Sarah

Hello! A reminder that there are several community warm spaces available locally, providing a welcome space for all, with free refreshments and activities for children. The [Didcot Wave](#) and Abingdon [White Horse](#) Leisure Centres are offering warm spaces open to all, both leisure centre members and non-members alike, from 11.30am to 3pm Monday to Friday. These spaces offer a warm welcome, comfortable seating, free tea, coffee & biscuits as well as the opportunity to charge your phone, use the free Wi-Fi and have a hot shower. The websites <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/> and <https://warmspaces.org/> have online maps of warm spaces nearby, and we are also aware of the following available in the local area:

- Mondays
 - 10am - 3pm at the Didcot Baptist Church
 - 2pm - 5.30pm at Snell's Hall in East Hendred ([Community Larder](#) at 4pm - 5.30pm)
- Tuesdays
 - 9am - 2pm at St Michael's Church Hall in Steventon
 - 11am - 2pm at the Village Hall in Chilton
- Wednesdays
 - 10am - 3pm at the Didcot Baptist Church
 - 1pm - 5pm at Didcot Community Partnership, 99 Station Road
- Thursdays
 - 10am - 12pm at the GWP Northern Community Centre
 - 10am - 2pm at the Didcot Baptist Church
 - 1pm - 4pm at The Harwellian Social Club in Harwell
- Fridays
 - 10am - 12pm at the GWP Southern Community Centre
 - 9am - 4pm at Snell's Hall in East Hendred

Blewbury Warm Space events will take place on Wednesday 15th February from 12.00noon to 2.30pm and Saturday 18th, 10.30am-12.30pm in the Vale Room in Blewbury village hall.

We 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.

Community Support

Cost of Living Support

If you or someone you know is in need of support over the winter months, a reminder that the council has put together a [Cost of Living Help](#) webpage for more information about financial and housing support, and local community food services. You can also contact the council's Community Support Hub for practical support and advice: call 01235 422 600 (Mon to Thurs 8.30-5pm and Fridays 8.30-4.30pm) or visit www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub. [Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale](#) can provide you with free, confidential advice via 0808 278 7907. [Vale Community Impact](#) can provide free advice too, call them on 01235 765348

[Help is at hand for people finding it hard to pay for food and energy bills](#)

The Household Support Fund scheme has opened again for people finding it hard to cope with the rising cost of food and energy bills.

The fund is initially open for applications to help eligible households that have not received any support

from the fund previously. However, from 13 February, if funds remain, it will be opened up wider to households that have received some funding in the past but not since May last year.

Residents can apply for support by filling in [an online form](#) on the councils' websites or by calling their Community Hub team during office hours on 01235 422600. The fund closes on 31 March, or sooner if it is fully allocated.

Local News

Valley Park Update

Hayleigh and Sarah: this section of our report provides an overview of the current live planning applications for Valley Park. There are often several live applications relating to the development, however those labelled 'RM' i.e. 'Reserved Matters' are typically the most noteworthy as they request planning permission for specific parcels of housing on the development. Residents can provide comments on these applications. Applications labelled as 'DIS' i.e. 'Discharge' relate to specific conditions from the outline planning permission and are not usually open for public consultation. The current live planning applications for Valley Park are listed below along with an update on the status of each provided by the Vale planning officers:

P22/V2744/RM – 246 dwellings

Following officers' review of the application, Taylor Wimpey has been given an opportunity to provide more information, clarify issues, address consultee comments and revise the scheme. Amended plans are expected and re-consultation is likely on receipt. Unless the Harwell Parish Council withdraws its objections on review of an amended scheme, this application is likely to be taken to planning committee for a decision.

P22/V2338/DIS – Housing delivery document (HDD)

The applicants submitted a revised HDD as mentioned in the January update. This revised HDD it is largely acceptable. However, the phasing plan in the HDD needs to be updated in line with amendments sought in respect of the phasing plan application (see the next item below).

P22/V2407/DIS – Phasing plan

The applicants submitted a revised phasing plan as mentioned in the January update. However, the amendments do not sufficiently address previous matters raised and therefore, the applicants have again been asked to address them.

P22/V2624/DIS – Surface and foul water drainage

This application has not progressed since the January update: we have requested cross sections for the proposed swales and attenuation basins and asked the applicant to address the Vale drainage engineer comments together with demonstrating that the drainage scheme can be accommodated with other proposed infrastructure e.g. footways and cycle ways and meet the Strategic Design Code expectations.

P22/V2798/DIS – Framework Plan

This application does not address all matters required by the Framework Plan condition of the outline permission. For example there are no details of materials proposed, visitor parking or strategic drainage details. The Framework plan basically shows layouts for the first phases of Persimmon's and Taylor Wimpey's developments which officers are not wholly satisfied with. The applicants have been asked to address officer comments and revised details are awaited.

Didcot & Villages Healthcare

As your local councillors we are very aware of the pressure on our local GP services in the Didcot area – it's one of the main issues residents contact us about. We will continue to work with the officers at the council and the staff at the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The ICB are responsible for delivering the GP

surgery on GWP, using the money given by the developers. When we have any updates on progress, we will share them.

All three Didcot GP practices have now closed their books to new patients, as stated on their websites. The surgery websites have a search feature to find an alternative GP, however if you are struggling to register please contact the NHS Oxfordshire Patient Advice and Liaison service: bobicb-ox.palscomplaints@nhs.net

Healthwatch Oxfordshire are hosting an open forum on Tuesday 28th February at 4.30pm and all are welcome to attend. Please go along to:

- Have your say about local health and care services
- Hear about their work and tell them your views
- Meet the board of trustees and put your questions to them

If you can't make it but have a question to ask or an issue to raise please get in touch via 01865 520520 or hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

Have you visited or been in touch with your GP recently? If so, what was it like? There is a Feedback Centre that allows you to leave reviews of GP surgeries in the county. It only takes a few minutes to do and is completely anonymous. Share your experience [here](#).

If you want to receive the Healthwatch Oxfordshire directly to your own email address, you can subscribe using this [sign-up form](#).

They also provide news and information updates via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

GWP Council Site

As residents on Great Western Park or Harwell parish may be aware, there is a live planning application submitted by the council for a storage yard for maintenance vehicles. The current store for these vehicles is near Crowmarsh, but the council is seeking a new site. A large proportion of the land owned by both councils is situated at Great Western Park, and so for a fuel economy point of view, having the store of the maintenance vehicles close is logical.

The site is currently used by Taylor Wimpey and they also use it for vehicles. The land (along with other pieces of land on GWP) will be transferred to the council in due course, as was outlined in the S106 agreement when planning permission was first given. The site will be 0.5 acres and be used for a small number of vehicles.

We understand that people living near the site are unhappy about this new application. We have called in the application to planning committee, so it can be heard by them. If accepted, residents can attend and speak about the application, and about their objections, or ideas to improve the application (like screening with vegetation, for example), or they may email the planning committee. Before that, I would recommend that people who are concerned log their comments on the Council's planning portal, as the planning officers look at these when making recommendations.

Climate & Environment News

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

CEAC was held on Monday 23rd January, and [the draft minutes](#) can be found on the Vale website. It was great to hear the progress made with the Climate Action Plan. Some highlights:

- Decarbonisation grants for two leisure centres (White Horse and Wantage Leisure Centres) had been successfully attained after a bidding round. Engaging with consultants to help identify sites for decarbonisation for the whole council estate.
- Climate Action Fund (CAF) – this had opened in October 2022 and was extended to January 2023. 18 applications were made. The maximum grant request was just over 55 thousand pounds. The results of the applications would be announced at the end of February. Small money can go a long way and behaviour changes were being made in the process. Schemes already supported by CAF funding were going well.

- On trees and nature recovery – two tree planting sites have been identified in Abingdon, including Herons Walk for flower planting. These will be Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funded and works will be carried out within our parks team.
- Councillors in the meeting considered the different options for how the council can help local efforts to retrofit homes. Retrofitting involves making changes to existing homes to improve energy efficiency, remove fossil fuel heat sources and replace with low carbon alternatives, and generate renewable energy onsite. Retrofitting is a critical part of achieving net zero and a major programme for retrofitting existing homes is required to reach net zero in our districts as 24.8% of carbon emissions in Vale of White Horse comes from residential buildings.

Council News

[Fun, free and low-cost activities for families this February half term](#)

There's an array of free or low-cost activities this February half-term to keep the kids entertained across South Oxfordshire and the Vale.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils arts centres and Active Communities team have planned a week of theatre, workshops and physical activities for children and their families to engage with. There are many sessions planned locally including at The Cornerstone, Didcot and The Beacon, Wantage. Take a look at the [webpage](#).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation

The Government is asking people for their views on their proposed approach to updating the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied by local planning authorities, such as Vale. We can only make planning decisions in accordance with this framework.

To find out more, visit the [Government's consultation webpage](#).

If you unhappy with planning process, or would like make comments, please respond to the government's consultation, it closes on 2 March 2023.

Everyone will need photo ID to vote at the local elections

The government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at some elections. This will apply for the first time in England at the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023, so please help spread the word in your local area.

Accepted forms of photo ID will include, but are not limited to, passport, driving licence (including provisional license), disabled parking blue badge, certain concessionary travel cards and identity cards with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme).

Anyone who doesn't have accepted photo ID can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate. The deadline to apply for ID for the local elections is 25 April.

For more information, including details on how to apply, you can visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or call the Electoral Commission helpline on 0800 328 0280.