



Monday 14th August 2023
Monthly Parish Update
Vale of White Horse District
Councillors
Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and
Cllr Debra Dewhurst

Hello from Hayleigh and Debra

What a soggy July! Despite the rain Hayleigh attended the opening of [Didcot Garden Party](#), which has lots of free activities taking place across the garden town area until the end of August. See the Vale website for more information, some great ideas for the summer holidays! It was great to see Western Valley Parish Council formed and attend their parish council meeting. We were also able to attend Upton and Chilton Parish Council meetings. Understandably, all parish councils were keen for an update on the Great Western Park GP surgery. On 23rd June, a report came to the Vale of White Horse council cabinet meeting regarding the surgery. The details of the paper cannot be shared at this time, as the monitoring officer deemed the report confidential. On the Vale website, you can view the [minutes](#), which simply state:

“Cabinet noted an update on progress with a new health facility at Great Western Park and authorised additional work to further this project.”

The reason for exemption from the public was stated as “Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person”. What we can share is that there are legal negotiations ongoing between the local NHS, known as the BOB ICB, Vale (who will hold the land) and Taylor Wimpey (who currently hold the land, and the financial contributions to the project).

At Vale’s full council meeting on 12th July, Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne asked for an update on the GWP surgery, and received a response from the Cabinet member responsible, Cllr Andy Crawford:

“I recognise the provision of the new GP surgery for Great Western Park is very important to local residents and as a council we endeavour to be as open and transparent about all our activities as we are able to. I am disappointed we were not able to make the report of 23 June public due to it being subject to the finalisation of commercially sensitive transactions, involving other parties. The decision by members to consider the report in private session was based on the advice of the council’s Monitoring Officer. A Communication and Engagement Plan has been prepared with input from all parties to establish a joint approach to proactive communications. This Plan has been shared with the ward councillors for Great Western Park. The plan identifies stages and methods for updates to relevant stakeholders and members of the public, which includes the publication of updates to a joint webpage created by the Vale and Integrated Care Board (<https://express.adobe.com/page/TgSqyuAwwwuCp/>). This webpage contains the latest updates on the project and is continually reviewed to ensure the latest available information is made public”

We will continue to push for further communication as we know this is a deep concern for local residents.

If you have any concerns, questions or suggestions for us as councillors, please do email us. As a reminder, council meetings are held in public and if you wish to address council or committee, you can contact Democratic Services ahead of time. If you need more guidance on this, please let us know!

We use these monthly updates to keep you updated on our activities and general council news. We also post on our councillor Facebook Pages:

www.facebook.com/CllrHayleigh & www.facebook.com/Debra4BlewburyAndHarwell

Please get in touch with any issues or concerns, either via email:

hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Community Support

Support for Ukraine

The council's [support for Ukraine](#) webpage continues to provide information and guidance for Ukrainian nationals and their hosts. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, as part of the Oxfordshire system which includes local authority, health and voluntary sector partners working closely together, are supporting people seeking refuge across several schemes. These are Homes for Ukraine, Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme, Afghan Citizens Resettlement scheme, UK Resettlement Schemes, the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa scheme and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Private landlords needed to host guests in Oxfordshire

Are you a private landlord in Oxfordshire with a vacant property? As guests start to rebuild their future and look for more independence, we are looking for landlords who can support their next step. If you would like to informally discuss what is involved, please email the central housing team:

Oxfordshirehousingcapacity@southandvale.gov.uk

Community Hub

The Hub can offer support and direct people to help on a range of things including Cost of Living, food support, etc. If you are struggling financially or just finding life difficult, the community hub can help. Whether it's practical support or just advice, please get in touch:

- Call: 01235 422600
- Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

The office hours are 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am-4.30pm on Fridays (and closed on bank holidays)

Local News

Valley Park Update

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:

Applications Under Consideration

P22/V2624/DIS – Surface and foul water drainage

No change - This application has not progressed since the last update i.e. 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

Amended details were received on 28 July 2023. The details have been uploaded to the file and consultation arranged with OCC as highway authority and our urban design officer. Officers will consider the amendments in due course.

P22/V2744/RM – 246 dwellings

Amended plans were received on 4 July and have been subject to consultation. Officers are reviewing consultee responses and the amendments.

P22/V0604/RM – infrastructure for Persimmon and Taylor Wimpey first phases

No change - Revised plans were received in late April 2023. The details have now been reviewed and feedback given to the applicants. Further amendments will be required to make the scheme acceptable.

P23/V0432/FUL – temporary construction access from the A4130

No change - This application remains under consideration. OCC object as physical restrictions will be needed to prevent right hand turn movements into and out of the access, they query how visibility splays from the access along the A4130 will be maintained unobstructed, and the need for a pedestrian/cyclist refuge within the access. Harwell Parish Council objects. Their and OCC comments have been put to the applicants and their response is still awaited

P23/V0659/DIS – approval of details reserved by of condition 33 - Travel Plan

No change - OCC as highway authority has responded to our consultation and are seeking amendments to the travel plan which have been put to the applicants for consideration.

P23/V0667/RM – 179 dwellings – Persimmon Phase 1

Amended plans have been received and are currently being consulted on; the consultation period ends on 9 August. The proposal has been reduced from 179 dwellings to 172. Officers will consider consultation responses and the amended plans in due course.

Rail Travel

Readers may be aware that there is currently a consultation open regarding the closure of the ticket offices at the Didcot railway station. To share your views on the issue you can respond to the consultation on changes to ticket offices by going to the GWR website <https://www.gwr.com/haveyoursay>

Climate & Environment News**[How we're 'Letting It Bee' for Love Parks Week](#)**

As Keep Britain Tidy's national Love Parks Week starts on 28 July, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils are sharing with residents the latest updates on their work to increase biodiversity in their parks and open spaces.

The councils have chosen 17 locations as Let It Bee sites which do not impact on pedestrians or sightlines for drivers. These sites – on land owned by the district councils – are also near shorter grass areas and pathways for people wishing to exercise, play or relax.

Across these sites the council parks team has been pleased to report an increase in the abundance of wildflowers and plants including bee orchids, cornflowers, poppies, common knapweed, yarrow, red clover, yellow rattle and ox eye daisies. As these have come into bloom, they have provided important shelter and food for pollinators including bees and butterflies.

[Help to stop waste fires](#)

One of our bin crews had to carry out an emergency tip of a whole truckload of recycling on to a street in Abingdon, a few weeks ago, after a fire started in the back of their truck. There have also recently been several fires reported at waste facilities.

The fires are happening because people wrongly put flammable items in with their waste or recycling. This is clearly very dangerous, putting lives at risk, disrupting vital services and cause significant and costly damage to equipment and the environment.

We already have webpages up and running on this topic, so head over to our [Help Stop Waste Fires page on the Vale website](#) to find out more.

[**Waste and Recycling Activity Pack**](#)

Just in time for the summer holidays, residents can now download our new children's Waste and Recycling Activity Pack.

This colourful and easy-to-read pack provides some fun activities for young children to enjoy which will help teach them about waste and recycling and about reducing waste around the home.

The pack is available to download now by visiting [our Activity Pack page on the Vale website](#)

[**Forum on how to save energy \(and costs\) for community buildings**](#)

The councils' Climate and Biodiversity team recently held an online forum for community organisations and town and parish councils on making cost savings through improving energy efficiency in community buildings such as local sports clubs, village halls and parish buildings.

The event included speakers detailing their experience of making changes to community buildings. There was also information on the practical and financial support the councils can offer including a new [guide to retrofitting available to download here](#). The recordings of the presentations are available on [the community buildings energy page on the Vale website](#)

[**https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/climate-emergency/councils-launch-new-nature-recovery-project**](https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/climate-emergency/councils-launch-new-nature-recovery-project)**Council News**

[**£155k of longer-term funding for vital information and advice services**](#)

Organisations based in the Vale of White Horse who provide vital information, advice and outreach services can now apply for up to five years of funding, thanks to a new grant scheme. Vale of White Horse District Council has launched the £154,920 partnership grant to help ensure that information and advice organisations who help people in the areas of debt, employment, finance, housing, energy, family, law and courts, immigration and health can secure funding for their services.

The new scheme will support services to be more flexible and responsive by offering revenue funding that extends for up to five years.

[**Cash boost for rural economy across districts**](#)

More than £1m is available to help improve the rural economy across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. Both district councils have secured funding from the government's Rural England Prosperity Fund, which can be used to provide a boost to projects such as creating rural business hubs, setting up community energy schemes and diversifying farm businesses beyond agriculture.

They are now asking for Expressions of interest to understand which organisations might apply and for what type of project.

You can find out more details on the scheme and download the Expression of Interest form on the [South Oxfordshire REPF page](#) and [Vale of White Horse REPF page](#).

[**Lots of fun for everyone this summer!**](#)

Are you ready for a summer of fun? South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have organised a summer packed full of fun free and low-cost activities for the whole family to enjoy! Starting

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Monday 24 July and running through to Friday 1 September activities will be taking place across the districts to ensure nobody misses out on the opportunity to get involved.

Whether you like exploring the great outdoors, taking part in fitness classes, table tennis, or unwinding with some light yoga, there's something for everyone.