

# Vale of White Horse District Councillors' Report

## Watchfield and Shrivenham Ward

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**June 2024**

## Ward Overview

### Fernham dropped curb

At the recent FATAAC meeting Cllr Foxhall made a request for the County Council (previously made in 2021) to install a dropped kerb to aid Elmside residents to give level access to their car park. This has now been forwarded by OCC for addition to the work program.

### Mould issues in social housing

We continue to see issues with residents living in poorly maintained rented housing. We continue to work with the Vale Housing team to ensure these (often vulnerable) residents are supported by working with the housing associations to respond to maintenance requests.

### Ashbury Primary School 300 years celebration

On Friday 28 June Katherine attended the Ashbury Primary School celebration to mark 300 years of the school's existence. Thank you to the PTA for the generous invitation to share some thoughts on the school's history and well done to the children who performed beautifully!

### General Election 2024

A great deal of work is needed to organise and execute parliamentary elections, so we are acutely aware of the added pressure Vale officers are feeling. We would like to thank them for their dedication and hard work and recognise the additional pressure they are under at present.

Residents can apply for an emergency proxy vote until 5pm on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July.

For more information see: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/local-democracy-and-elections/elections-and-voting/current-and-upcoming-elections/general-election-2024/>

## Afghan Relocation and Assistance Program

We have been working on the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Programme since 2023. We have been very reassured to see the great deal of good will shown by so many of the residents of Shrivenham and Watchfield. Many children are now being supported in local schools, with additional funding coming from central government for both education and healthcare.

There has been much to be pleased with given the size of the change seen in both Watchfield and Shrivenham, however it was clear at a recent Watchfield parish council that there are tensions emerging between some long term residents and the visiting families, and it was very useful to have a police officer and PCSO in attendance to explain their work. Shrivenham and Watchfield parish councils have been working hard to bring people together and make sure that correct information is being shared.

We are in contact with officers at the Vale and Katherine spoke at last week's Vale cabinet meeting to raise the work and commitment of Watchfield and Shrivenham residents on behalf of the Vale and country. Specifically, Katherine asked that as the basic processes involved in housing Afghan families and communicating between partner organisations are working more smoothly, that Vale take a lead in securing long-term specialist expertise to support the villages in creating a programme of events and activities to build positive and lasting community relationships.

We are always open to ideas, so if you feel there are ways the Vale can support your communities, please do reach out to us.

## Fly-tipping.

We are seeing a lot of fly-tipping at the moment, particularly around Compton Beauchamp and other rural back roads. Residents can report a whole range of neighbourhood and environment issues, including fly-tipping or abandoned vehicles directly to the District Council. All details of how to report are on the website: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/environment-and-neighbourhood-issues/>. There is also a phone number that can be used if residents don't have access to the internet: 03000 610610.

Sending photos and giving a precise location for fly-tipping is really important so that the busy crews can locate the problem. The form has an interactive map to pinpoint the location, but the most useful information is to identify the exact spot using the What3Word app: <https://what3words.com/ways-to-use>.

Residents should not try and remove the rubbish or sift through it – the council's Envirocrime team will do that as part of their investigation before sending the clean-up team.

## Tuckmill Meadows Management Contract Finalised

We are delighted that Vale and Earth Trust have confirmed the management contract to support the work of Friends of Tuckmill. This was reported in the Oxford Mail this weekend:

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/24419256.earth-trust-expands-manage-two-oxfordshire-reserves/>

## Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits application for commercial development

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

The applicant has provided further information and assessments in response to the initial consultation. Having reviewed these changes, we drafted a response as an amendment to our earlier consultation response.

To summarise our observations to the amended planning application:

A significant amount of additional material was introduced to the planning application, however we felt materially very little had changed. The changes proposed in this outline application (which are subject to change) by the applicant go a short way towards reducing the visual impact of the development from certain viewpoints, but do nothing to address the impact on traffic, ecology, Local Plan adherence, impact on landscape, highways and access and sewerage and water infrastructure.

Since our second response, we see Natural England has responded but not with an objection, instead they have highlighted conditions that the planning authority should consider if they decide to grant permission, and further highlight a number of areas the planning authority should consider before granting permission. We also see the ecology officer at County has responded, pointing out short comings in the applicant's calculation of BNG, particularly considering the ponds on site are viable and not largely insignificant as the application states.

Our full responses are included at the bottom of the Vale of White Horse consultation response, in the OCC application reference listed.

<https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Planning/Display/MW.0151/23>

## Pars Development, Townsend Road, Shrivenham - foul water drainage

P23/V1518/S73 & [P23/V1515/DIS](#)

We understand from planning officers that the Environment Agency is likely to approve a permit for a private sewage treatment works at the site that will discharge into the field behind (there is no waterway), rather than force a connection to the mains sewer. This is surprising and very disappointing and makes it much more difficult to reject the application to discharge the condition on that development. Once we have further information, we will try to find out more about the reasoning behind the decision, and any options to respond.

## Bourton – Grange farm development

[P23/V2791/FUL](#)

St Guy's and Thomas' Foundation, who own much of the land around Bourton lodged an application for the conversion of a farmyard to 9 residential buildings on the outskirts of the village. Bourton parish council felt the application was not sustainable or suitable and have lodged an objection.

We see that following some discussions with the parish council the applicant has made adjustment to the parking provision and the waste storage facilities. The applicant also suggests they would be willing to accept pre-commencement conditions to add solar panels and EV charging, however we will be following up to determine whether these conditions are something a planning authority is able to enforce.

## Funds

### OCC Home Upgrade Grant

Oxfordshire County Council have Home Upgrade Grant funding that allows home retrofits for lower income residents living in energy-inefficient homes. The grant can be up to £38,000.

The scheme has upgraded 65 homes across the county, with many more already in the pipeline. There is capacity for more to be added, so if you feel someone fits the criteria, please do encourage them to apply.

The eligibility criteria for HUG2 funding is as follows:

- Home owners or private renters
- Annual household income of £39,000 or less OR in receipt of means-tested benefits
- EPC rating of D or below (free survey can be completed if necessary)
- Not heated by mains gas

The scheme is open to applications until October 2024, please see here to apply:

<https://www.welcomethewarmth.org.uk/register-your-interest>

### Rural Funding Available

We are regularly asked by parishes and community groups to help find funding for projects. The Rural Funding Digest is a good source of information; not all funds will be applicable, but it's worth a look if there is a project you would like to move forward: <https://rsnonline.org.uk/rural-funding-digest-june-2024>

## Consultations

### Improving Support for Children and Young People with SEND

Oxfordshire County Council would like feedback from carers and parents of children with additional needs, provision for SENDS has suffered in Oxfordshire for a very long while, so if you know of any families who would be willing to provide feedback it would be worth [sending them this link](#).

Survey closes 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024

### Fernham 20mph consultation

The County Council are consulting on the proposal to introduce a 20mph speed limit within Fernham, replacing the existing 30mph speed limit in its entirety in the process. The proposals are being put forward following road safety concerns raised by the parish. **Responses are due by Friday 5 July** and further details can be found here:

[https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/fernham\\_20mph2024](https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/fernham_20mph2024)