



WBC Parish Report for February 2023

CLlr Graham Bridgman (West Berkshire Council, Burghfield and Mortimer Ward)

West Berkshire Council

(This report has been deliberately delayed so as to include reference to the WBC Budget.)

Council

Council met on 23 February and 2 March (two meetings). The next meeting is on 16 March.

Extraordinary Meeting - 23 February

This was a meeting to consider one item – a request to approve the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consented Reorganisation Order for the governance arrangements for Greenham Parish, creating two parish wards more closely aligned to population numbers than at present. The proposal was agreed unanimously. Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Budget Meeting – 2 March

The meeting debated the four principal Budget papers – the four-year Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Investment and Borrowing Strategy, the Capital Budget and the Revenue Budget, each introduced by Cllr Ross Mackinnon, the Executive Member for Finance, Property, Commissioning and Economic Development, and each approved in turn.

Agreed procedures, and a lack of any amendments proposed by the Liberal Democrat opposition, meant that the meeting took far less time than in previous years – just over three hours including breaks and public questions on Budget items.

One thing that speeds the mechanics up is electronic (via a display on the microphone) voting. As parish councillors will know, certain financial items – most obviously the budget – require a named vote by law, identifying how each individual votes. Traditionally, asking each councillor in turn takes time (WBC has 43 Members), but now the vote is taken electronically, with the results appearing on screen, the process is far quicker - the Revenue Budget vote took 50 seconds, including announcing the result.

Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found [here](#) and [here](#), and a full breakdown of the WBC Budget for 2023/24 is detailed below.

Extraordinary Meeting – 2 March

This meeting was called by the Liberal Democrats to challenge the readiness of the Local Plan to go to the Planning Inspectorate. The agenda identified eleven alleged issues, but the Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Countryside, Cllr Richard Somner, made it clear that officers had assured him that none of them was a properly valid objection – he told those present that he would circulate the advice note he had been given, which rebutted each in turn, after the meeting (which he then did).

Further, as was pointed out in the debate, the original motion approved by Council in December 2022 was to bring back to a Council meeting any substantive issue arising from the Regulation 19 Consultation, so – if any of the alleged issues held any water at all – such was accommodated in the process in any event.

Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

WBC Budget 2023/24

As anticipated previously, the headline number is a 4.99% increase in Council Tax (2.99% in basic CTX plus a 2% Adult Social Care precept). This is still below some local precept rates set, eg, by Town Councils (Newbury – “Only 6.4%”(Leader of the Town Council), trumpeted by the Newbury Weekly News as “Newbury Town Council approves below inflation council tax rise”, and Thatcham – 8.75%).

The Budget Meeting debated the four papers referred to above in turn and adopted all of the proposals with agreed amendments.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Cllr Mackinnon made reference to the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, and the current events in Ukraine, as examples of challenges to medium term forecasting. He said that WBC has an excellent track record in delivering required savings in recent years without any cuts to frontline services.

Investment and Borrowing Strategy

This Strategy sets out the approved deposit institutions for Treasury investments and prudential limits for those investments, approved sources of borrowing, and recommended borrowing limits for the next three years and a longer term forecast for the council’s borrowing requirements.

The report highlighted WBC’s commercial property portfolio and the investment returns made to the Council. The portfolio is fully let and delivers a consistent return on investment, providing over £1m each year after all costs and repayments (ie £1m that would otherwise have to be raised through Council Tax – roughly 1% on council tax bills).

Capital Budget

The 10-year Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision policy, Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy and proposed use of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) bids for inclusion in the capital programme, were all debated.

The proposals included an investment in infrastructure of £393m over the next ten years, £207m of which will be externally funded. The capital programme is split across the six priorities of the WBC Strategy as follows:

- £24m+ to ensure vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes;
- £172m to support everyone to reach their full potential;
- £616k to support business;
- £145m+ in developing local infrastructure, including housing to support and grow the local economy;
- £27m to maintain a green district;
- £678k to ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships;
- £21m+ for business as usual – supporting WBC services.

In particular:

- £165m will go towards education facilities;
- £6.8m in disabled facility grants will enable residents who need extra help to continue to live independently in their own homes (on top of £4.8m on occupation health equipment, aids and adaptations);
- £6.9m is earmarked for new active travel schemes;
- £3m is identified for land drainage works; and
- £3m will complete the refurbishment of the Newbury Lido.

Cllr Mackinnon also made reference to the CIL community fund and the third running of the scheme to top slice £500k of CIL to invest directly in smaller scale local schemes.

Revenue Budget

In introducing the proposed Revenue Budget, Cllr Mackinnon acknowledged that it had been an extremely challenging exercise for him and finance officers, with inflation is at its highest level for over 40 years.

He said that, in pre-decision consultations, the majority of residents who responded expressed support for a 4.99% council tax rise, but no higher. Demand for WBC social care services (over half the budget spend) required an extra £10m compared to 2022/23.

The proposals included savings and income generation proposals totalling £9.1m, but none of the savings would result in cuts to front line services.

Executive

The Executive met on 9 February and, as well as dealing with public and Members' questions:

- referred the Budget Papers to Full Council for consideration;
- noted the forecast outturn position on the 2022/23 capital programme and approved some reprofiling of expenditure;
- noted the Revenue Financial Performance Report for Quarter Three;
- noted the Contract Award for the North and East Thatcham Flood Alleviation Schemes;
- granted authority for a switch in trading baskets as per the West Berkshire Council Central Energy Contract Procurement Strategy

Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

The next meeting is on 23 March.

Elections

There are two months until district, parish, and town council, elections.

Voter ID

Residents must be registered to vote by Monday 17 April. This can be done online at gov.uk/register-to-vote - and for the first time, voters need to bring ID as well:

- Passport
- Driving licence (including provisional license)
- Blue badge
- Certain concessionary travel cards
- Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- Biometric Immigration document
- Defence identity card
- Certain national identity cards

Residents who don't already have an accepted form of photo ID, or not sure whether their photo ID still looks like them, can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a [Voter Authority Certificate](#).

WBC is in need of staff for the elections, at polling stations and the count. Anyone interested should visit westberks.gov.uk/article/40803/Working-at-an-Election.

Anonymous Voting

Residents whose safety would be at risk if their name or address were listed on the electoral register can register to vote anonymously by downloading and completing an application form on the [electoral commission website](#).

Residents registered to vote anonymously, or who plan to register anonymously, will need to also apply for an [anonymous elector's document](#) (AED). Residents showing their AED will not be required to show an additional form of ID once voting. All applications for an AED will need to be submitted before 17:00 on Tuesday 25 April. When applying for an anonymous elector's document, voters will need to provide their name, date of birth, address and national insurance number. This information will remain confidential and not appear on the electoral register. If someone does not know their National Insurance number, or does not have one, they can still apply.

Once registered to vote anonymously, the council will be in contact by post to explain the process and provide an application for an anonymous elector's document to be filled out and returned, should the individual wish to vote at a polling station.

Planning

£353k to improve planning application process

WBC will receive £353,000 from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in Round 1 of the Planning Software Improvement Fund to begin a major improvement to our digital services and systems used by applicants and the planning service.

The work will make the local planning process easier to understand for applicants, and quicker to administer for the planning service.

The funds will be used to implement a new digital system, PlanX, which will help applicants determine if they need planning permission online. If an applicant finds they do need permission they'll then be able to apply online using the information they have already submitted, making the application process quicker and easier.

In addition to implementing PlanX for applicants, the work will also integrate it with the systems used by the planning service to process applications, reducing the time needed to carry out these tasks.

Community

The Coronation of HM The King and HM The Queen

Details have now been announced of ceremonial, celebratory and community events that will take place over the Coronation Weekend between Saturday 6 and Monday 8 May 2023.

Across the Coronation Weekend, there will be opportunities for people to come together in celebration of this historic occasion by spending time and celebrating with friends, families and communities across the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth.

On Saturday 6 May, the Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort will take place at Westminster Abbey.

On Sunday 7 May, a special Coronation Concert will be staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle. In addition on this same day, the Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities are invited to share food and fun together, will take place across the country.

On Monday 8 May, members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas.

Neighbours and communities who wish to arrange a Coronation Big Lunch or a street party, should implement a road closure to ensure everyone enjoys the event safely. WBC's contractor, Volker Highways, have kindly offered to loan organisers' basic road closure and information signs free of charge for events over the Coronation Weekend. This is only available for small scale events on C class or unclassified roads and will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis upon receipt of a completed Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) application.

TTRO applications must be completed by Friday 31 March. No further applications will be accepted after this date. The party must be risk assessed and there must be a nominated person(s) who will take responsibility for the risk assessment and the managing of the party.

Full details can be found online [here](#).

Celebrating West Berkshire's Community Champions

West Berkshire's Community Champions have been celebrated in an awards ceremony at Shaw House in Newbury.

The Community Champion Awards are an opportunity to say thank you to people who have done something special for their local community and honour those individuals and community groups who have gone above and beyond to support residents throughout West Berkshire.



Cllr Rick Jones, Chairman of WBC, was delighted to announce that the 2022 Community Champions are:

- Junior Citizen of the Year: Swara Dasarwar
- Volunteer of the Year: Sarah Johnson
- Community Group of the Year:
Purley Sustainability Group
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Mike Warner

Congratulations to all of the winners and thank you to everyone who took the time to nominate unsung heroes in their communities.

One Year On: a tree for reflection and remembrance

Cllr Rick Jones, Chairman of WBC, planted a Guelder Rose tree in to mark the anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. The Guelder Rose is one of the national symbols of Ukraine and bears vibrant red fruits in Autumn/Winter and delicate white blooms in Spring/Summer. It features in rituals, songs, and traditional Ukrainian embroidery.

25 'whips' have been planted which, in time, will grow to become a wonderful crescent shaped hedge within the Shaw House Community Garden.

(Cllr Lynne Doherty, Leader of WBC, Cllr Jones and Nigel Lynn, WBC CEO >)



West Berkshire Community Fund awards £15,000 to local charities



Seven local charities will share more than £15,000 following successful bids to the West Berkshire Community Fund.

The West Berkshire Community Fund is one of the good causes supported by the West Berkshire Lottery. From every lottery ticket sold, 50p goes towards a cause of the player's choice and 10p goes into the Community Fund.

This year, seven projects have been supported with funding, including:

- St Marks CoE Schools Association - £4,000.
- Time to Talk West Berkshire - £3,538.
- Daisy's Dream - £2,000.
- Home-Start West Berkshire - £2,000.
- Loose Ends Newbury - £1,500
- City Arts Newbury - £1,380.
- Action for Pangbourne Toilets Charitable Trust - £1,000.

Berkshire Youth scoop Mental Health Initiative award

Berkshire Youth have won the category 'Youth Mental Health Initiative of the Year' in the CorporateLiveWire Global Awards 2022/23.

Berkshire Youth help with the transition from childhood to young adulthood, supporting young people to reach their full potential through leisure activities and to make a positive contribution to their communities. Many of the young people they work with are vulnerable or disadvantaged and unable to access help elsewhere.

New map to connect communities

A new map is helping to connect grass roots communities across West Berkshire.

The map is a growing community resource, and offers access to local community groups and organisations who are able to offer help and support, provide opportunities to connect with others or have volunteering opportunities that might be of interest. Groups can also support each other and find ways to work together by connecting through the map.



Along with the main map there is also one to help connect environmental groups and another showing warm spaces that are opening up – providing people with welcoming, warm spaces where people can come to stay warm and enjoy some company with a hot drink or other refreshments.

The maps can be viewed and suggestions submitted online at: wb-communitymap.adoddle.org/warm-spaces/

Adult Social Care

Crookham Common site transformation underway

A project to transform the former Traveller's Friend public house at Crookham Common is now underway, with groundworks, site investigation and building strip-out works for the site now complete. The former pub is being developed into accommodation for people with physical disabilities, sensory needs, autism and learning disabilities.

The work is supported by WBC's Adult Social Care service, to create additional housing in West Berkshire for people with specific needs.



Cllr Joanne Stewart, Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter (Thatcham Colthrop and Crookham), made a visit to the site this week. They discussed the progress with the team from Transforming PLC who are managing the project.

The next step in the process will see the current buildings transformed, internally and externally, and additional living spaces, gardens and leisure areas created. A village shop will also be retained on the site, with adaptations made, so that it is fully accessible.

Leisure

Ukrainian Art Exhibition

A new exhibition at West Berkshire Museum shares the art, thoughts and words of Ukrainians who have settled in the district over the past year.

One year on from the start of the war, in the War.Art.Hope exhibition, three Ukrainian artists - Nadia, Natalia and Luda - speak about their experiences and how they use art to sustain themselves and bring hope to others.



Showcasing the work of the artists, and featuring a series of three emotional short films (alongside films from Nadia and Natalia, a third tells the story of the Brickmans, a West Berkshire family who host a young couple, Max and Katya, through the Homes for Ukraine scheme), the exhibition is at the West Berkshire Museum in Newbury until Sunday 26 March.

Shaw House public opening

Shaw House has reopened for public open days until Sunday 24 September. Shaw House will be open at weekends from 11:00 – 16:00, and during school holidays 10am - 4pm. Entry to the House, grounds and exhibitions is free.

Northcroft Lido update

The transformation of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre in Newbury is well underway.



The £5.7m project will see the creation of a new, 50 metre Olympic sized pool, a splash pad and water slides to make the Lido a great attraction for swimmers, relaxation and family fun.

The water slides were recently given the green light by planning, so it's full steam ahead to have this amazing new leisure facility open for summer.

(< Cllrs Lynne Doherty and Howard Woollaston went to view the progress so far)

Environment

£57,000+ grant for active travel schemes

WBC has been awarded over £57k from the Capability & Ambition Fund, which is administered by Active Travel England, HM Government's new executive agency responsible for boosting cycling and walking.

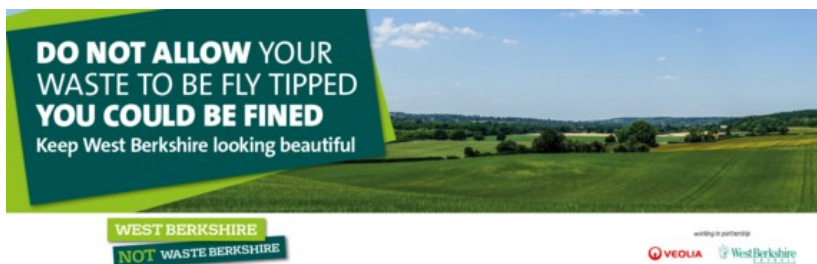


The funding will enable:

- bespoke training for staff on latest guidance and standards;
- data and evidence collection at two sites, to inform business case development for potential future improvements between Calcot and Theale, and in Old Bath Road in Newbury;
- evolution of a design for and consultation on, possible Phase 2 footway and cycleway improvements on A4 Western Avenue, eastwards from the Oxford Road/Waitrose roundabout towards Chestnut Crescent and Winchcombe School as part of an emerging wider network; and
- an initiative to increase awareness of the School Streets scheme already running in Calcot, with the emphasis on driver education.

The award will assist WBC in evolving its ambitious programme of schemes to encourage and enable more cycling and walking in the District, in particular in towns and urban areas. This programme is in line with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan adopted by the Council in June 2021.

Fly Tipping



Fly tipping, which can range from a small single bag to an entire truck load of rubbish, is a blight on the countryside and costs tax payers' money to clear up.

In 2022, there were 966 incidents of fly tipping reported to us, which amounted to 136 tonnes of waste.

Residents should always ask questions of anyone removing their waste. Legitimate businesses will answer them:

- where are they taking the waste?
- what is their waste carrier's license number?
- what are their contact details?

If they don't ask the right questions, residents could be fined if their waste is fly tipped.

Children and Families

98% of children get a preferred secondary school place

98% of Year 6 children in West Berkshire have been offered one of their secondary school preferences with just over 88% being given their first choice of school.

See the [national statistics](#) for Secondary and Primary School applications and offers 2022/23.

Fostering in West Berkshire

WBC pride themselves on making sure children in care and their foster families feel supported and part of the community. By fostering, residents are able to provide a safe environment and a family life to a child unable to live at home. The warmth and passion could help them reach their full potential and write the next chapter of their lives.

Foster parents won't be left alone throughout the application and assessment process, WBC specialists guide and support throughout. There are different types of Foster placements, and officers will work with any prospective foster parents to decide which works best.

Residents who can offer short or long term care or even some emergency or respite support can call WBC on 01635 503429 or email the team on fostering@westberkshire.gov.uk

Monthly virtual information sessions via Teams are available also, please contact the team for the links.

- 28 March 13:00 – 14:00;
- 25 April 10:00 – 11:00;
- 30 May 18:00 – 19:00;
- 27 June 13:00 – 14:00.

Health and Wellbeing

Creative Walks

Wellbeing Walks (previously Walking for Health) is a long-established programme encouraging everyone to walk for about an hour and a half at least once a week.

Creative Walks are an addition to the scheme and will be running for a limited time in Mortimer and Hungerford throughout March:

- The Croft Hall, Hungerford at 10:00 on Tuesday 7, 14, 21 and 28 March;
- The Library, Mortimer – 10:00 on Wednesday 15, 22 and 29.

The walks will be led by local artist Simon Jardine and will promote physical and mental wellbeing with an opportunity to do something creative - each walk will include short stops to paint, draw or photograph areas of interest and conclude with a creative class along with tea and coffee.

The walks are informal, relaxed, friendly, and suitable for adults (but not families, or children). Free art equipment is provided.

Places must be booked in advance, and to book (and for more information) please contact Gemma Taylor: gemma.taylor@westberks.gov.uk

New measures to protect women and girls from domestic abusers

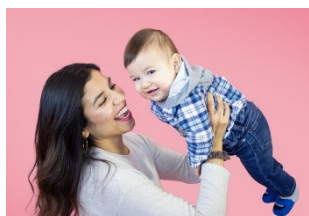
On 20 February HM Government [announced](#) new measures to protect women and girls from domestic abuse. The new proposals will help to provide protection from harassment, aggression and violence, and focus on preventing domestic abuse.

Additionally, for those at risk of, or suffering from, domestic abuse, the Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) scheme will be being piloted in 18 jobcentres and jobs and benefit offices across the UK. The scheme is already in operation in over 5,000 pharmacies across the UK in over 88 cities, towns and villages. A new [postcode checker](#) will tell people their nearest location to access the service.

The Government will also require police forces to treat violence against women and girls as a national threat, as set out in a new strategic policing requirement published today. This means tackling these crimes will be as important as tackling threats like terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse.

The National Police Chiefs' Council is also writing to every police force in England and Wales to reiterate the expectation that forces must proactively identify the most dangerous domestic abusers in their area to prevent them from committing further crimes.

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust New Maternity Strategy



The Trust has recently published its new five-year [maternity strategy](#) setting out its principles and vision to deliver excellent quality of care for all women, birthing people (the Trust's description), babies, families and communities.

Supporting the Trust's [clinical services strategy](#), the new strategy outlines the guiding principles to be followed, to best meet the needs of the community served and to ensure an equitable and accessible service.

It sets out six key priorities for the next 12-18 months:

- understanding clinical outcomes based on meaningful data;
- staff-led improvement initiatives;
- developing compassionate leadership and promoting psychological safety;
- equitable service user feedback;
- training and effective learning;
- provide a working environment to enable staff and enhance patient experience.

Current Consultations

[Digital Inclusion Survey January 2023](#): closes 12 March 2023

[Draft Local Transport Plan \(LTP4\) Strategy 2024-39](#): closes 22 March 2023

Parish Matters

Highways

Three-Year Improvement Programme

The draft programme, due to go for Portfolio Holder sign off on 16 March, includes the following:

Road Name	From	To	Length (m)	Proposed Treatment
<u>2023/24</u>				
Burghfield				
Reading Road/Holly Bush Lane Traffic Light Approaches				
	<i>Three (NE, SW & SE) approaches to Traffic Lights</i>		<i>150</i>	<i>Re-Texturing</i>

Unnamed Road from Hangar Lane to Hose Hill

<i>Hose Hill</i>	<i>125m NW of Hose Hill</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>Re-Texturing</i>
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Stratfield Mortimer

Burghfield Road

<i>St Catherines Hill</i>	<i>50m N of St Catherines Hill</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>Re-Texturing</i>
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Longmoor Lane (Estate Service Road)

<i>Longmoor Lane</i>	<i>Longmoor Lane</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>40mm Inlay/Overlay</i>
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The Street

See comments below

West End Road (inc Mini Roundabout)

<i>Victoria Road</i>	<i>Football Pitch Entrance</i>	<i>780</i>	<i>40mm Inlay/Overlay</i>
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Wokefield

Goring Lane

<i>50m E of Oates Cott Entr</i>	<i>110m E of Oates Cott Entr</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>Re-Texturing</i>
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2024/25

Burghfield

Burghfield Road

<i>Berrys Lane</i>	<i>District Boundary</i>	<i>1,462</i>	<i>Surface Dressing</i>
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Field Farm Road

<i>Mill Road</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>622</i>	<i>Surface Dressing</i>
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Stratfield Mortimer

Birch Lane

<i>West End Road</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>Surface Dressing</i>
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2025/26

Burghfield

Deans Copse Road

<i>Hose Hill</i>	<i>Burghfield Road</i>	<i>2,455</i>	<i>Surface Dressing</i>
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Reading Road

<i>Hollybush Lane</i>	<i>Goring Lane roundabouts</i>	<i>463</i>	<i>40mm Inlay/Overlay</i>
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The Street/Cross Lane Railway Bridge

Having received the draft report referred to above, I went back to WBC Highways to ask about two other stretches of road.

The Street

The 2022/23 Programme had included a plan to surface dress 1963m of The Street from the Station Road Roundabout to Goodboys Lane. I know that there has been initial patching works so asked when the rest of the work was planned. Apparently the issue had been sub-contractor availability, but the work should now be carried out in 2023/24.

Railway Bridge

I also raised the issue of the poor road surface on the stretch of road just east of the railway bridge on Cross Lane (where it becomes Bloomfield Hatch Lane). The response is that this work forms part of WBC's routine maintenance work (business as usual) and that the road surface in question has been identified as requiring action.

WBC Highways are hopeful this will be done in the coming months "*but we do need to gain the permission of Network Rail given the proximity to the railway*".

Parking near schools

There have been complaints about parking near both St Mary's Burghfield and St Mary's Mortimer Schools. These have been raised with Highways and I've been promised parking enforcement action in both cases (and know that there was police activity recently in relation to St Mary's Burghfield).

Burghfield

Dean Copse Road/Burghfield Road T Junction

Following an email from a resident and Facebook posts about a car in the ditch opposite the end of Dean Copse Road, I have very recently raised the issue of highway safety at that junction with WBC Highways.

A senior officer has reviewed this junction, and the Amners Farm Road junction with Burghfield Road, and concluded that signage and lining works are needed at both – I wait to hear timescales.

Burghfield Road (M4 Bridge - Amners Farm Road to Berry's Lane) - overnight closure from 13-25 March

From National Highways - South East: "We will shortly be carrying out essential joint repairs and resurfacing on the bridge which takes Burghfield Road over the M4 near Reading which may impact local residents and services."

The closure is scheduled overnight (21:00 to 06:00) on weekdays, with two-way lights during the day (06:00 to 21:00) and over the weekend.

Opening of The Hub at Garland Junior School

I am looking forward to attending this opening on 23 March - a new building to enhance teaching across the curriculum as well as provide a home for the school's breakfast and after school clubs.

Stratfield Mortimer

Tower House Farm

There are two current planning applications – for Phase 3 (the final phase containing the majority of the affordable housing) and for a retaining wall between the housing and the public open space.

The latter application raised particular questions since it is a significant departure for the original outline (one continuous slope down the hill) and I soon had discussions with Cllr Morsley, as Chairman of the SMPC Planning Committee, about it. I then arranged with the planning officer concerned for a site visit, to include Cllr Morsley, to discuss matters with TA Fisher. This has now happened and the SMPC Planning Committee will be discussion the application on Thursday (9 March) after which I will decide whether or not to seek a call-in of the application to committee.

Draft Local Transport Plan, Buses and Mortimer Station

Cllr Morsley has also raised some aspects of the draft Local Transport Plan, currently under consultation (see above), with me, in particular the reference to a "bus interchange at Mortimer station".

Part of the [evidence base](#) for the draft Plan includes:

- "Additionally, there is no bus service to Mortimer Station." (at 6.1.2);
- "The BSIP sets out a number of aspirations for: ... Providing new services, particularly to Thatcham/Mortimer stations ... improved network/facilities at ... Pangbourne and Mortimer stations." (6.4.4);

I was able to point her at the [BSIP](#) (Bus Service Improvement Plan) agreed last year, which includes:

- "There is no bus service to Mortimer Station." (4.3.10);
- "Areas where we see the need for new services include ... Mortimer Station: The station is a little way from the village, and only has a small car park, leading people to park on the rural approach roads. A

peak-time shuttle from Mortimer, Beech Hill and other nearby settlements would improve this situation. The station is also included in our DRT plans.” (DRT = ‘demand-responsive transport’) (7.3.2);

- “The areas we are looking at include: ... B. South East: This includes the villages of Aldermaston, Beech Hill, Padworth, Stratfield Mortimer and Sulhamstead. Current bus services in this area (where they exist) are not suitable for many journey purposes.” (7.4.2);
- Areas of bus priority that we wish to pursue include. (sic) Again, where Active Travel improvements can be made at the same time as improving bus travel, these will be implemented ... Mortimer Station: The station in Mortimer is a little over one mile from the nearest bus stop. If a facility can be put in for a turning circle near the station, it will enable local residents to access trains to both Reading and Basingstoke.” (7.5.3).

Ravensworth Road – drainage

Following a reference from Cllr Dave Kilshaw who had been contacted by a resident, I took up the issue of the blocked gullies in the neck of Ravensworth Road (and consequent road flooding) with WBC Highways and they are determining who is responsible.

King Street – closure 8/10 March

King Street will be closed on the 8 to 10 March, from 08:00 – 17:00, from Victoria Road to Windmill Road to enable Volker Highways to carry out essential drainage work on behalf of WMC.

Residential access will be maintained throughout and although the road will be closed at the junction of King Street and Victoria Road, I am told that drivers will be able to access the Co-Op car parks by speaking to the contractors.



Graham Bridgman

Council Member for Burghfield and Mortimer

Deputy Leader of Council and Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

6 March 2023