

Burghfield & Mortimer Newsletter 8 – July/August 2024



Mortimer Doctors' Surgery and Schooling



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school and house/land to the rear to be used for sport & play

The 2017 Neighbourhood Plan set aside a hectare of land, for a new doctors' surgery and school, with parking for each, on the Tower Farm site behind The Horse & Groom – see pages 36 (10.2.1 point 2 & 3) and 37 of the Plan [HERE](#). That requirement needed to be reviewed in 2022. The review was done by the Neighbourhood Plan steering group, comprising parish councillors and volunteers. It established that: the school's requirement is for outside sport and play facilities only, and should ideally be located directly adjacent to and at the south of the existing school, by demolishing a property; the doctors' have/had no intention of moving to a larger facility; space for school staff parking should remain; and a request from Oaktree Dental Practice to build a larger facility there should be accommodated if possible. The review outcome was summarised in a proposal in the "preferred option"

section [HERE](#) and shown on a plan [HERE](#). This proposal gained public support after public consultations in late 2022/early 2023. The landowner has revised the plan to: 1) increase the number of houses from 20 to 24, for commercial reasons 2) add a community pavilion, to benefit the residents of the 24 homes 3) alter the site spacing and layout following feedback from West Berks Council Planning department and 4) remove the space set aside for a doctors' surgery, to make it all fit and reflect the fact the doctors' have no need for it. This last point is both on record from the medical practice and consistent with the findings of the council's recent "Healthcare in New Developments" report, which states that primary healthcare (eg a doctors' surgery) is "delivered through GP contracts. ..New primary care developments (whether a new building or an extension) need to be GP-led – see section 5.7 on page 6 of the report [HERE](#). The landowner is expected to submit a Planning application in line with the revised proposal for the land shortly.

Garth Club, Mortimer



Garth Club, St John's Road, Mortimer

On 6 June, I and parish cllr. Bridgman, attended meetings between the Royal British Legion and the two possible new trustees – Mortimer Hobby Hall & Repair Café and Royal Berkshire Boxing. It seemed clear that both applicants complied with the trust intent, each offering different community benefit, the first for a range of people and the second more tailored towards youth. The RBL clearly intends to pick one (as it absolutely should) and aims to seek internal approval in mid-August. So, we see this nudge forward, with light at the end of the tunnel, in the spirit of Miss Capron, the club's founder,

Electric Vehicle Charging – Call For Sites



As mentioned in previous newsletters, 4 roadside chargers are to be installed shortly in Omers Rise (1), Hollybush Lane (2) and Abbots Road (1), following calls for interest from residents without off-street parking.

If you live in a street other than those listed, have no off-street parking, and would like a charger in your street so that you can run an electric vehicle in future, please get in touch. The chargers are paid for by a government grant, which will go away and not be likely to return. The money used for installation does not come from council tax and could not be diverted for any other purposes – it is a use it or lose it opportunity. There is more information about the scheme [HERE](#)

Mini Recycling Banks



Mini recycling bank (this one is at East Garston)

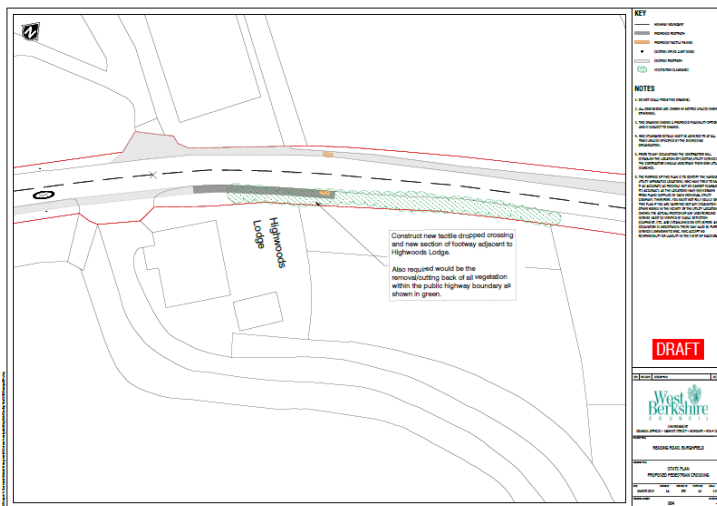
The council continues to seek sites for mini recycling bins that would allow residents to drop off items not currently collected via doorstep recycling, for example plastic food trays. The Mortimer Co Op site manager kindly explored an option there, but it was not approved. The Mortimer school federation is keen in principle, but probably does not have space. Burghfield parish council has suggested land owned by the Asda/Pinewood fuel station, which I will follow up. If you or your group has any ideas of where one could go, please get in touch.

Electronic Prescription Transfer - Mortimer



As mentioned in [issue 7 page 5](#), I raised the Little Village Pharmacy's lack of electronic access to prescriptions, with NHS representatives at the March Health Scrutiny Committee ([HERE](#)), as part of a [review of Pharmacy](#) provision generally. Julie Dandridge, Deputy Director and Head of Primary care and Medicines Optimisation · Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, took an action to investigate and report back on how this issue could be resolved. In June, she informed us that the problem arises because Mortimer and one other practice in the area, use a clinical system that does not support electronic prescription transfer. The two practices should move to a new clinical system called EMIS by October this year. She hopes that once this system is "embedded" the option of electronic transfer of prescriptions will become activated for Mortimer. I will keep you posted on next steps. Meanwhile at the council's June healthcare meeting, we discussed [THIS](#) report into primary healthcare. It gives insight into the challenges in health provision, its confirming that new surgeries are only ever GP-led, such that Mortimer, for example, is not getting a new one. There's more on that point [HERE](#). The report also reveals a change to the planning review process, such that NHS bodies now review proposals for 10 or more dwellings. There was also a discussion on funding health facilities [HERE](#)

Hermits Hill, Burghfield



We're at the exploratory stage of the possible introduction of a road crossing on Reading Road (Hermits Hill) near Highwoods Lodge, to help pedestrians cross more safely, with improved visibility, and to improve access between Burghfield Common and Burghfield Village and help users from Guide Dogs for the Blind. I've just shared the plan with Burghfield Parish Council for feedback but noting that funding options are yet to be explored

Planning Appeal – The Hollies, Burghfield Common

Following a High Court decision, the appeal against refusal of Planning permission for 32 homes, including affordable housing, parking and landscaping, is now being considered by a new/different Inspector. The deadline for representations from interested individuals ended on 28 June. More details [HERE](#). More details to follow when I hear it.

Getting In Touch

If you'd like more information on anything in this newsletter, or have any other council issue to raise, please get in touch. I'm at The Baobab, Mortimer from **10-11am** whilst Vicky is at Burghfield Library **10-11.30am** on [each first Saturday](#). Next drop-in is on [Sat 6 July](#). We both represent the whole ward comprising Burghfield, Mortimer, Wokefield and Beech Hill.



Meet Nick at The Baobab (10-11am) & Vic at Burghfield library (10-11.30am) each first Saturday!

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Parades & Parties

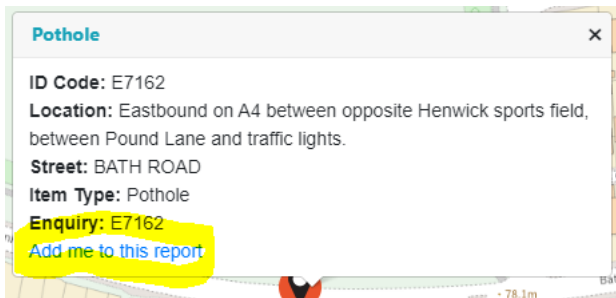
It was a pleasure to join the Transport Through The Ages event in Mortimer, organised by Eric Howell and team. It rounded off a great week for us, the family having trekked over to see our son perform at [Ushuaia club, Ibiza](#) (I think the link is only available to followers on "Insta") a couple of days earlier. Whilst of course we are biased, most who saw his set at [the late Queen's Platinum](#) two years ago would probably have found this latest event outstanding. Next up locally: [Burghfield Community Sports Day](#) on 7 July.

Frequently Asked Questions

Reporting Highways and Countryside Problems

The [online problem reporting system](#) allows residents (and parish councils) to report problems relating to Highways (potholes, dirty road signs, unemptied pavement bins and non-working street lights) and Countryside (unemptied bins in parks and footpaths). You can access the system [HERE](#) from a PC or mobile device.

You select the problem category from a list and mark the incident location on a map. You can (and ideally should) upload photos for pothole cases but should not try to measure their depth. You'll receive an email acknowledgement, giving an indicative response time. The incident is then reviewed and assigned a priority. A non-working pelican crossing, or a serious pothole for example, should be dealt with within a few hours of reporting, whilst a less serious pothole may take 28 days. You'll receive email updates as the incident progresses. If it is deemed a duplicate of a problem reported by others or dealt with already, you will be informed. You can nominate other people to receive notifications of the incident's progress.



The council doesn't currently support the use of third-party apps. to raise problems, nor phoned-in incidents, other than for out of hours emergencies. If you experience problems with the service, or an unusually poor response time, please let us know, forwarding the relevant incident email(s).

Overgrown Hedges

When the council receives a "report-a-problem" enquiry (per the above process) it starts an (up to) three step process:

- 1: It writes to the landowner asking for the vegetation (or other nuisance/obstruction) to be removed within 14 days. It also informs the initial enquiry of its action and closes the incident. The council aims to check the issue at the end of the grace period.
- 2: If no action was taken, the council writes again, citing the Highways Act, asking for action to be taken within 14 days.
- 3: If action is still not taken the Council will take action to remove the nuisance and look to recover costs from the landowner.

Unfortunately, the council is dealing with a high level of customer enquiries across all highway issues, and there are a number of vacant posts within the team, such that it is having to prioritise its workload. In some cases, the follow up of these nuisance and obstruction incidents is triggered only by further complaints.

Issue Tracker

Some issues raised by residents and their status (for closed issues see older newsletters):

Topic	Raised	Action	Status
Alleged encroachment/planning infringements/other	27 June '23	Heard concerns over alleged encroachment/Planning/other issues and residents understanding of what the council has/is doing about it.	6 Oct: Residents updated. 10 Nov/20 Feb: internal status reviews/action planning with cross functional teams within council. Continuing to liaise with residents on status and actions.
Drainage – apparently faulty surface water drainage pump	28 Feb	Liaising with resident and council officers	28 March: resident advises WBC confirms a split pipe and will arrange repair
Flooding of homes	Various dates since Nov' 23	Discussing flooding/drainage issues raised by diverse residents and Mortimer parish council with officers.	See separate item in this and previous reports – examples comprise: a street and The Street Mortimer and roads within Burghfield.
Windmill Court	Oct' 22	Understanding residents' requirement/engaging with housing association, summarising the proposal for residents. Pursuing concerns of residents that wish to return to the new facility and remain in suitable accommodation in Mortimer in the meantime.	Nov '23: Invited public comment on plan. Jan '24: told residents what moving costs the Housing Association will pay. Mar '24: raised concerns over reported threat of eviction both with the association and our Exec to progress.
Repairs to The Bever Mortimer Housing Association property gutters etc	23 Dec' 23	Alerted to concern on apparently poorly organised refurbishments to housing association properties,	Jan '24: raised case with council's Housing Association team. 5 March: put housing team in direct contact with resident to liaise over repairs
Online transmission of prescriptions between Mortimer Dispensary and Little Village Pharmacy	1 Nov '23	The Little Village Pharmacy's (formerly JHoots) asked for help gaining electronic access to prescriptions, instead of an employee needing to walk regularly to/from dispensary at the surgery.	19/2/24: tabled issue for inclusion in Feb Healthcare Scrutiny meeting with the Integrated Care Board. 2/5/24: see item in this report.
Overgrown hedge – unexpected closing of incident.	15 Mar '23	Resident (Mortimer parish councillor) raised an overgrown hedge incident, and it seemed to become closed for no good reason.	15 Mar: raised with senior management. 18 Apr: raised with maintenance team. My next move is to discuss with a specific officer