

District Councillor Report – 30 April 2025



Summary

Edition 10 of the Newsletter is [HERE](#). Next issue out shortly.

Annual Meetings

Burghfield and Beech Hill

I spoke at Burghfield and Beech Hill Annual parish meetings. At Beech Hill, we discussed the Ridgeway Council proposal, Waste Strategy/bin collection, mobile libraries, their example of 'devolution', reporting problems via mobile app and the speed sign. At Burghfield I covered the council's Skate Park funding, EV charging and the waste strategy.

Mortimer

On 28 April I attended Mortimer's Annual Parish Meeting. It was a pleasure to see Chris Morsley accept this year's Community Award for his sterling and understated work over the years.

Following news from the chairman that money that 3 parish councils pay towards **Willink Leisure Centre** would end because it could better be spent on "other things", a member of the public expressed concern about the possible impact of that decision on leisure services. I suggested the answer is that at present we don't know. It came as a shock to the council. I plan to discuss the issue with Nigel Foot, our portfolio lead for the area, who has offered to meet the 3 parish councils on this. At the parish meeting Cllr Bridgman indicated that all 3 need to agree before a meeting will go ahead. I'll share future developments in the next newsletter/on [my web page](#). I should add that whilst I sit on Mortimer parish council too, I missed its most recent discussion about this. I had previously offered to broker dialogue between it and the council officer(s), when concerns about a forum were raised a few months ago. Although that offer was declined, I still contacted our Sport & Leisure manager to get her perspective. She explained that the forum had been suspended during Covid, that she/colleagues

was working to get it back running and that she was keen to ensure that parish councils are able to provide input to the running of the centre. She outlined to me the purpose of the forum and separately welcomed any concerns being raised with her without waiting for the next forum. The forum re-started in January and parish councils attended...

A request for additional bus services was also raised at that meeting, specifically the idea of linking it with the Mere oak park-and-ride, to allow people to, for example, get to/from the hospital bus. Although Mere oak is geared to drivers, it's a welcome suggestion. I'd recommend anyone who is a bus user to sign up for the newsletter via [my webpage](#) or follow me on [Facebook](#) to stay informed on the results of this initiative, and see future surveys.

Parish Council Forum

Today (30 April) I've given Mortimer parish councillor Lock a lift to our regular "District Conference," that updates parish councils on various topics and seeks feedback on them. The interim Chief Exec. gave (I think) an excellent explanation of the government's aspiration regarding creation of mayoral authorities (not round here for now), merging of "two-tier" authorities into unitaries (again not here) and the possible merging of unitary authorities to create ones that serve about 500,000 people. It's that last point that is taken on by the council's support of [this response](#) to the government. A parish council gave feedback that the forum was a welcome interactive session, whereas in the past it had felt more of a talk/lecture.

Waste Strategy

At the District Parish Conference, staff members Kofi Adu-Gyamfi, Service Lead for climate change, Emily Ashton-Jelley Principal Environment Delivery Officer, and Cllr Stuart Gourley, portfolio lead for Highways and Environment, outlined the intent and supporting data behind the new Waste Management Strategy. Kofi and Stuart covered the facts that: whilst the district's recycling rate is relatively high, so is its total waste amount; about 42% of current black bin waste could be recycled; our black bins are larger capacity than several other councils, Bracknell Forest reports little problems with its move to a 3-week black bin cycle, but ultimately the council invites residents who cannot cope with the latter, for whatever reason, to contact us. I encourage you to read the slides if you were not there and send me any questions. Assuming there is a recording available, you'll see/hear me put some resident/other perspectives that I've heard, to the team on their behalf. There's a chance for you to discuss any aspect at one of these drop ins. Or just contact me direct:



Recycling drop-in sessions



We're holding drop-in sessions to support our residents to recycle more and to answer your questions.

Theale Library

Friday 2 May - 14:00-17:00

Lambourn Library

Friday 9 May - 10:00-11:30

Thatcham Library

Monday 12 May - 09:30-12:00

Mortimer Library

Tuesday 13 May - 14:00-17:00

Newbury Library

Wednesday 14 May - 09:00-12:00

Hungerford Library

Wednesday 21 May - 09:30-12:00

Burghfield Library

Thursday 22 May - 10:00-12:00

Pangbourne Library

Thursday 29 May - 09:30-12:00



www.westberks.gov.uk/rubbishandrecycling



West Berkshire
COUNCIL

Highway Improvements

The council's recently approved 3-year highway improvement and maintenance programme starts now. Years 2 and 3 of the programme are subject to change after our annual road condition survey. This is a significant programme of work totalling almost 65km of various types of treatment on our roads.

Year 1 work includes: Reading Road from Hollybush Lane to the Goring Lane mini roundabout/Three Firs Crossroads; The Hatch from 70m. south west to 70m. north east of the Theale Road junction; Pingewood Road South between Amners Farm South and the railway bridge; and Goring Lane from 250m. to 300m. east of the Lockram Lane junction.

Some disruption will be inevitable as we coordinate this with the other demands on our road space and we will be sure to coordinate with other planned projects and utility works to minimise disruption. The council staff ask for your patience and understanding whilst they undertake this work. I'll notify local works just before they happen on my [Facebook page](#) and on [X \(Twitter\)](#). If you need to report any concerns or problems during the work, please do so via the "[Report a Problem](#)" web site.

Other Interim Updates

I'm also attending a (WBC) full council meeting to appoint a new chief executive as well as the annual meeting of the council administration (the Lib Dem councillor group), where people agree their roles for the next council year.

The Planning Inspector appointed last year, to establish if the council's new Local Plan was, or could be with modifications made, legally valid, has issued his report. It asks the council to adopt it – more [HERE](#) (it will be covered in the [next newsletter](#)). The council will consider adopting the plan on June 10.

I'm expecting news from our planning department about issues I've mentioned I'm looking at concerning the Windmill Court Mortimer redevelopment plans.

I thank Jay, Mortimer's parish council custodian, for the work cutting the West End Road car park hedge in preparation for the electrical recycling bin, and Danielle, the Clerk, for her support. The bin itself will be provided and serviced by West Berks Council's contractor.

I continue to work on other issues that residents have raised with me, including objections to planning applications, and to liaise with our Highways team who are heading up a task group, which includes the Environment agency and Canal and Rivers Trust, to support Burghfield Bridge residents with their issues.

I've just received a note from our MP about the sad closure of Mortimer sub post office. I've said I am happy to meet but asked her to indicate what she thinks councils (district or parish) can actually do about what seems to be a commercial decision by Co-Op.

On 8 May, I'm attending the VE Day 80 commemoration in Newbury, for personal reasons. I hope this ward's commemorations go well.

Report written by

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30/4/25