



Holybrook Parish Council

Serving the communities of Beansheaf Farm and Fords Farm

Council Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting	19 th April 2021
Location	Zoom Virtual Meeting
Present	Cllrs. Bedwell (Chair), Collard, Croal, Lenaghan, Littlewood, H. Mistry, Oloko, Somner and Tull. Also present: Pam Kirkpatrick (Clerk) and Caroline Lenaghan (Administration Assistant),
Circulation	All Council and Ward Members

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the Regulations") came into force on the 4 April 2020. The Regulations remove the legal obligation to hold local authority meetings at a specified physical location, by permitting members and others attending the meeting to do so by way of 'remote attendance'. The obligation to hold an Annual Meeting was also removed.

All virtual meetings held by the Parish Council before 7th May 2021 (NOTE: the date could be brought forward if the Government rules are relaxed) are enabled by this legislative change. This Protocol applies to meetings of the Council and/or its Committees, that would, but for the coronavirus pandemic and the Regulations, be held in public. All other Standing Orders remain in place.

No.	Notes	Action
01/21/22	Open forum for members of the public None.	
02/21/22	Apologies for absence Members accepted apologies from Cllr Baker.	
03/21/22	Declarations of Interest relevant to the Agenda Cllr Lenaghan, non-pecuniary, item 11 - Grant Application (Friends of Linear Park); Cllr Littlewood, non-pecuniary, item 11 - Grant Application (Friend of Linear Park); Cllr Somner, non-pecuniary, items: 6 – District Councillors' report, 7 – West Berkshire Consultations and 8 and 9 – Planning.	
04/21/22	Approval and adoption of the minutes of: Full Council meeting on Monday 22 nd March 2021. APPROVED. Proposed by Cllr Tull and seconded by Cllr Lenaghan. (Please note that the minutes will be issued by post to the Chairman following the meeting for signing).	

No.	Notes	Action
05/21/22	<p>Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>177/20/21 i) - Community Infrastructure – Start of public consultation: CIL spending legislation for Parish Councils is as follows:</p> <p><i>‘The parish council must use the CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of the parish council’s area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area.’</i></p> <p>For interest:</p> <p><i>‘Where development straddles the boundaries of parish or town councils’ administrative areas, each council receives a share of the levy which is proportionate to the gross internal area of the development within their administrative area.’</i></p> <p>180/20/21 – District Parish Conference: Members were provided with WBC’s Planning Enforcement priorities.</p> <p>172/20/21 District Councillors’ Report: Members advised that Carters Rise is particularly affected by on verge parking at the present time. Cllr Somner advised that a WBC Officer has been to look at the site and various options are being considered. Updated legislation is expected from Central Government with regard verge parking and it is hoped additional powers are extended to the Police and district councils.</p>	
06/21/22	<p>District Councillors’ report</p> <p>A verbal report was provided which members acknowledged (APPENDIX 1)</p> <p>Responses to questions raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You must make an appointment to attend the recycling centres; - Sainsbury’s Calcot manages its own contracts for the recycling bins located on its land. Sainsbury’s has recently changed contractor; - It will be challenging to provide electric charging points that are suitable for everyone. Cllr Somner will talk to officers and respond appropriately; - Readibus declined to sign a service level agreement with WBC. There are several other service providers who did sign the agreement and WBC has issued a press release on this matter; - Cllr Somner will endeavour to advise the Council when the Pincents Hill planning application is likely to come before the Eastern Area Planning Committee. 	<p>RS</p> <p>RS</p>
07/21/22	<p>West Berkshire Council Consultations</p> <p>i) Environment Strategy Draft Plan. Members AGREED that they welcome the aims and objectives of the plan. However, Members were concerned that the plan is not followed in the planning process with environmental impacts of builds often being ignored. Members would like to see this plan being used as a top strategy when planning applications are being considered by the local authority.</p> <p>ii) Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Members AGREED that keeping the footpaths clear of brambles and nettles should be a priority.</p> <p>Members stated that dog bins are often full. It was explained that WBC’s contractor experienced reduced staffing levels because of Covid but, now, most staff had returned and have worked through the bank holidays to catch up.</p> <p>Members were advised that WBC’s contractor are not accepting any more dog bins or service level increases. Therefore, should the Council wish to increase the number of collections per parish owned bin and/or the number of bins within the Parish the cost would be approximately £6 to 9 per collection (50p currently paid per bin per collection).</p>	

No.	Notes			Action								
08/21/22	New Planning Applications: RATIFIED											
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="252 203 520 248">Planning no.</th> <th data-bbox="520 203 724 248">Applicant</th> <th data-bbox="724 203 992 248">Address</th> <th data-bbox="992 203 1554 248">Proposal</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="252 248 520 450">21/00614/OUTD *as adjacent Parish</td> <td data-bbox="520 248 724 450">Pureday Ltd</td> <td data-bbox="724 248 992 450">Former Murdoch's Bath Road Reading</td> <td data-bbox="992 248 1554 450">Outline planning permission for construction of 4 no detached houses with associated parking and roadworks with all matters reserved. Application following planning permission 17/02903/OUTD dated 30th April 2018.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Planning no.	Applicant	Address	Proposal	21/00614/OUTD *as adjacent Parish	Pureday Ltd	Former Murdoch's Bath Road Reading	Outline planning permission for construction of 4 no detached houses with associated parking and roadworks with all matters reserved. Application following planning permission 17/02903/OUTD dated 30 th April 2018.			
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	NO OBJECTIONS.											
21/00762/FULEXT	Bellway Homes	Land West of Dorking Way, Calcot	Section 73: Variation of Condition 11 (Hours of Working) of previously approved application 19/01544/FULEXT: full planning application for the erection of 199 homes.									
<p>OBJECT. Points summarised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There have been no delays in construction; - The works currently being completed are heavy groundworks which are noisy and produce dust; - Bellway has not been a considerate builder with poor site management and anti-social behaviours being displayed. Our residents need some respite from the noise and disruption; 												
21/00800/HOUSE	Mr & Mrs R Slack	15 Piercefield, Calcot	Single storey side conservatory extension.									
NO OBJECTIONS.												
09/21/22	Other Planning											
	<p>Members acknowledged and accepted the following:</p> <p>a) West Berkshire Council Planning Decisions</p> <p>20/02459/HOUSE – 49 Bath Road, Calcot: Proposed part side rear extension. Internal layout changes and garage conversion GRANTED.</p> <p>20/01760/HOUSE – 9 Ballamoore Close, Calcot: Replacement of retrospective decking and built-in swimming pool at a reduced maximum height of 0.45 metres above ground level. The application seeks retention of the air source heat pump for the swimming pool. It is proposed to erect 5 x 1.8 metre high panels on top of the decking on the south-east boundary, 2 x 1.8 metre high panels on the south-west boundary and the retention of the remaining fence panel on the south-west and north-west boundaries adjacent to the decking. GRANTED.</p> <p>21/00208/PASSHE - 1 Calshot Place, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7DA: An application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Larger home extension for single storey rear extension. Dimensions 4.5m from rear wall, 3m maximum height, 2.49m eaves height. Prior Approval is NOT REQUIRED.</p> <p>b) Amended plans of applications already considered by the Council:</p> <p>21/00253/FUL – West Mews, Mill Lane, Calcot: Division of one house into two dwellings. Amended plans submitted. The main changes include: Changes to amenity. NO FURTHER COMMENT.</p> <p>20/03030/HOUSE – 1 Bath Road, Calcot: Two storey front extension, part demolition and part conversion of garage, two storey rear and side extension, replacement and expansion of roof to create loft storage over existing house and proposed extension. Amended plans submitted. The main changes include: Ecology Phase 1 assessment report, Tree Survey, Tree Protection Plan and Tree Constraints, Plan Detailing Soft and Hard Landscaping, Existing and Proposed Site Levels and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement. NO FURTHER COMMENT.</p>											

No.	Notes	Action
10/21/22	<p>Financial Information</p> <p>a) Payments – Members APPROVED the payment of items listed on payment sheet 12-2020/21</p> <p>(Please note that the payment sheet will be issued by post to the Finance Committee Chairman following the meeting for signing).</p> <p>b) Members acknowledged that the accountant has been provided with the preliminary financial information of the 2020/21 accounts. The Clerk and Accountant are working together remotely to complete the year end accounts.</p> <p>c) The Garage:</p> <p>i) Insurance: Members acknowledged that Zurich confirmed there is no additional premium for the addition of The Garage as, in relation to the Council’s valuation report, the overall insured sum for both buildings is already covered. However, the Clerk has requested that The Garage is listed as a separate item on the insurance schedule.</p> <p>ii) Rates: Members acknowledged that the Business Rates department at West Berkshire Council has been informed of the Council’s new ownership of The Garage. No response received at time of writing.</p> <p>iii) The Garage Lease: Members AGREED that, as the Parish Council is now, essentially, landlord and tenant of The Garage, the previously agreed lease, with the Parish Council as tenant, ceases to exist;</p> <p>iv) Assets Register: Members acknowledged that The Garage has been added to the Council’s Assets Register with the notional purchase price of £1.00.</p> <p>d) Payment of regular payees: Members AGREED that, in principle, the Council’s regular suppliers can be paid electronically (rather than by cheque). The Clerk to provide a list of proposed payees to the Council including a list of sort codes and account payment details. The Clerk to check whether enhanced digital approvals can be added to the bank account and that the Council’s auditor is happy with the proposal;</p> <p>e) Parish Allowances: Members confirmed that, for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22, the Chairman is to receive the full agreed remuneration of £50 for expenses related to Parish business;</p> <p>And, that the Parish Council had previously agreed that the only expenses payable to non-chairman members are travel expenses related to Council business beyond the Council’s normal meeting venue (pre-agreed by the Council or Clerk) at a rate of £0.45 per mile. Reasonable parking charges can also be claimed under the same conditions.</p> <p>Members further acknowledged the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel and AGREED that this item will be discussed again in time for the financial year 2022/23.</p>	PK
11/21/22	<p>Grant Application</p> <p>Members unanimously APPROVED the grant application from the Friends of Linear Park to the sum of £350 for new tools and annual insurance. Proposed by Cllr Tull and seconded by Cllr Somner.</p> <p>(Cllrs Lenaghan and Littlewood did not vote due to their declared interests).</p>	

No.	Notes	Action
12/21/22	<p>Councillor Training</p> <p>i) Members APPROVED the NALC training 'Planning and Power' at a cost of £43.09 + VAT per member for Cllrs Collard, Lenaghan and Tull. The training is taking place on Wednesday 28th July 2021 from 12:00 until 13:15.</p> <p>ii) Members were advised that the SLCC run a number of courses throughout the year that they may wish to attend. If any member is interested in training in any area relating to Parish business they should approach the Clerk to arrange.</p>	
13/21/22	<p>Clerk's Report</p> <p>Members acknowledged a verbal report from the Clerk. The main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Users of mini motorbikes have been causing disturbance at the Burbidge Close end of Linear Park. All incidents have been reported to 101; - It has been requested that the Police undertake an inconsiderate parking operation within the Parish. Members are asked to provide the Clerk with specific locations; - Thames Water completed a free water efficiency check of the Beansheaf Centre. Several leaks were found in the Men's toilets. The repairs were completed free of charge and other water saving methods were employed throughout the centre; - Several residential complaints have been received including: Pooh Bridge safety, misuse of the bus sumps, increase in rodents and issues in May Park. All complaints have been forwarded to the appropriate authority; - Homeless people were identified within the Parish and reported to the appropriate authority. They are now gone; - A further long-standing regular hirer has advised that they will not be returning to the Beansheaf Centre. This is due to a lack of volunteers in their sector; - Aldi and Lidl have been contacted again regarding the significant levels of litter around their buildings. Cllr Somner advised that he is happy to follow this up. Members requested that Sainsbury's and McDonald's are also contacted about litter generated from their businesses within the Parish; - CONFIRMED Cllrs Bedwell and Lenaghan will join the Parish Clerk at a (Zoom) meeting with WBC on Monday 26th April 2021 regarding possible devolution and CIL money spending priorities/projects. 	RS

No.	Notes	Action
14/21/22	<p>Virtual and Face to Face Meetings</p> <p>Members acknowledged that the Government has announced that it will not be extending the emergency legislation to enable virtual meetings. Resultantly, Members AGREED, for the safety and well-being of Members and staff during the continued covid-19 pandemic, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The 2021 Annual Assembly to be cancelled (there is no legislative requirement for an Annual Assembly to be held). The Chairman will produce an annual report to be published on the Council's website; ii) The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to be brought forward to 7.00pm on Thursday 6th May 2021 to enable the meeting to take place remotely; iii) The Full Council meeting for May 2021 (scheduled currently for the 17th May) is brought forward to Thursday 6th May 2021 to commence straight after the Annual Meeting; iv) The Full Council meeting scheduled for Monday 14th June 2021 is moved to Monday 21st June 2021. This meeting will be held face-to-face providing the Government's Road Map is on-track (to be reviewed nearer the time); v) The Clerk and Chair shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council where such decisions cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline and to include such payments as become due. This will be carried out, where possible, by consultation with members by electronic means or telephone. The Clerk will further consult with the Chairman for guidance as necessary. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the Council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the Council after the lifting of lockdown restrictions (currently 21st June 2021). 	MB
15/21/22	<p>Neighbourhood Action Group meeting report</p> <p>Members acknowledged a verbal report from Cllr Littlewood which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police crime statistics; - Confirmation that mini motorbikes are on the Police's patrol plan; - West Berkshire Council are in early conversations with RBC regarding improvements to the entrance to the Linear Park from the Burghfield Bridge; - There has been a delay in the delivery of dog foul bags for the Parish; - WBC has been approached regarding a refreshments van being located in the Beansheaf Centre car park. No councillor raised any particular concern. <p>Cllr Littlewood was advised that Tilehurst Parish Council has a steering group to address anti-social behaviour within its Parish. It was suggested that it might be useful to have a conversation with Tilehurst regarding this.</p>	
16/21/22	<p>Chairman's Remarks</p> <p>None.</p>	
	<p>There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21:43</p>	

Signed: Dated:

Minutes prepared by	Pam Kirkpatrick, Clerk
Minutes dated	22 nd April 2021

APPENDIX 1



Parish Council Report for March 2021

Cllrs Argyle and Somner

(West Berkshire Council, Tilehurst South & Holybrook Ward)

West Berkshire Council

Meetings

Council

The Annual Council Meeting is on 4 May, having been deliberately brought forward from 11 May so that it can be held remotely (more about remote meetings below).

The Annual Meeting will see the appointment of a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council, and the appointment of committee memberships. During an adjournment in the main meeting there will be a series of very brief committee meetings to appoint Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.

Executive

At the Executive meeting on 25 March, Cllr Lynne Doherty, the Leader of Council, announced portfolio holder changes to address the health agenda in the light of the Government White Paper *Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all* and the prospective enhanced role for local authorities in health provision. The Deputy Leader, Cllr Graham Bridgman, will become portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing, Cllr Jo Stewart will move to Adult Social Care and Cllr Howard Woollaston will return to Internal Governance (but retain the Leisure and Culture portfolios).

A Motion was brought by the Leader to propose the creation of a Safer Streets Champion at the Annual Council Meeting, and accepted - this Member led role will listen to community concerns and work with Thames Valley Police and our town centre managers to address the issues that street harassment raises. The meeting also considered Motions that had commenced in Council regarding CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) and the demolition of the former Newbury Football Ground Clubhouse.

Other items on the agenda were capital financial performance and key accountable performance indicators, the adoption of the Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan, and the new Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty.

There were again a substantial number of public questions concentrated around the closed football ground and derelict changing rooms at Faraday Road.

The next meeting of the Executive will be on 29 April.

Remote Meetings

As reported last month, The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 cease to have effect on 7 May (hence the bringing forward of the Council's Annual Meeting) and the anticipated court application regarding what "place" means in Schedule 12, LGA 1972 (ie in respect of the place of meeting) has commenced (and WBC will be providing evidence in support).

There is also a call for evidence by the Government seeking to understand the experience of local authorities regarding remote meetings. WBC is providing evidence of the success (as we see it) of our holding meetings remotely and, indeed, WBC has been singled out by the Local Government Association as an exemplar in the field.

WBC is continuing to review how hybrid meetings might be held, and how physical and/or hybrid meetings might be publically streamed.

As always, links to all agendas and public meeting papers are here, and all WBC public meetings are broadcast live on YouTube and recorded so that they can be viewed at leisure - [West Berkshire Council YouTube Channel](#).

Guidance for anyone attending a remote public meeting (eg a parish representative at a planning committee) is here.

Covid-19

The Roadmap Out Of Lockdown

29 March saw the next step of the roadmap out of lockdown.

As the warmer weather arrives this will be welcome in supporting the return of the Rule of Six which allows up to six people or two households to meet outdoors in public and private spaces. It also brings an end to non-essential local travel restrictions. However, typical of a British Easter we seen a dip in temperature over the weekend!

The next step – on 12 April, if the tests are met - will allow essential shops and businesses to open and pubs to open outdoors (and serving a substantial meal – whatever that means - alongside alcohol is no longer a requirement).

The Government has outlined the four tests of Pace, Efficacy, Pressure on the NHS, and Risk of Variants - further information about the easing of lockdown can be found in the Four Step Plan.

Whilst there will be huge enthusiasm that our freedoms are gradually returning, everyone is reminded that social distancing rules still apply and that anyone testing positive for Covid-19 must self-isolate.



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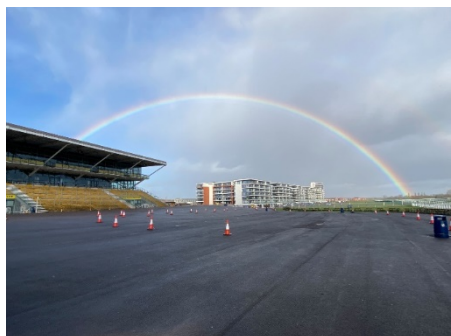
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Local Infection Rates

Berkshire generally continues to see a reduction in Covid-19 infection rates although there remain a small number of new cases being reported daily. At the time of writing the rolling weekly rate in West Berkshire is around 30 cases per 100,000 and has been relatively static for the whole of March. This may reflect the opposing forces of a general reduction in incidence against an easing of restrictions, and we wait to see what happens as further easing measures come into force.

As previously referred to, Berkshire local Covid information about the daily reported cases in the district (and across Berkshire), and the weekly per 100,000 rate (one of the principal factors in any decision making) can be accessed from Berkshire Public Health website.

Vaccinations – Local Position



The Covid vaccination centre operating from Newbury Racecourse has now delivered 35,000 vaccinations since it started in December. This is a huge achievement and well done to the medical staff and volunteers for all they have done. This is not to forget the huge contribution from Pangbourne Surgery in the east of the district, and the availability of vaccinations from the mass centres, in particular at the Madejski Stadium

Whilst the delivery of vaccine for first doses is anticipated to be reduced in April because of the supply chain, the second round of vaccinations for those who were in the early cohorts has commenced. This includes older people in care homes, those over 80 years of age and front line workers.

Anyone in cohorts 1 – 9 who have not yet been invited to receive their first vaccine are encouraged to either contact or register with a GP or book direct.

Further information regarding vaccination can be found on the Berkshire Public Health website.

Vaccinations – National Position

Weekly reports on the vaccine rollout are being published by NHS here, giving data at an Integrated Care System (ICS) level – in our case at the level of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (“BOB”) ICS. Additionally, Government data can be found here.

Community Testing

Rapid widespread testing – also known as lateral flow testing or community testing - is a key tool in the fight against Coronavirus. Lateral flow testing can identify people who are asymptomatic and may be spreading the virus without knowing it.

With around a third of individuals with coronavirus showing no symptoms and potentially spreading it without knowing, regular testing will mean more positive cases within households are found and prevented from entering schools and colleges, helping to keep educational settings safe.

Lateral flow device testing finds cases quickly – in under 30 minutes – meaning positive cases can isolate straight away. This can be the difference between children being able to stay in school, or a class being sent home due to an outbreak.

Testing is only for those without any symptoms - anyone who does have symptoms should book a test here, or by calling 119, or at *Lateral Flow Testing - West Berkshire Council*.

West Berkshire Mobile Community Collect

WBC will be distributing lateral flow device testing home kits across the district from Monday 12 April.

Community Collect is a government programme to make lateral flow device testing home kits available to families and households with children and young people at Primary or Secondary School, or College, including childcare and support bubbles. Lateral flow device testing helps with the process of finding more Covid-19 cases and breaks the chain of transmission.

West Berkshire Mobile Community Collect will be in operation from Monday to Friday, with a different specified route around the district each day. The routes and timetable will be available on the council's website shortly.

Local Outbreak Engagement Board

The Local Outbreak Engagement Board meets on alternate weeks in private and in public. Thus, each fortnight, there is a live broadcast meeting to update residents of the current activities relating to Covid-19 in and around the district (and beyond). Public meetings are available on the Council's YouTube channel and further information about the Board can be found here.

Covid Marshalls

WBC Covid Marshalls are working across the district undertaking a range of duties including advising and supporting members of the public and businesses to follow social distancing rules.

Travelling across the district, working in shifts to cover seven days a week, and using their local knowledge to cover priority areas such as supermarkets and other shops, markets, parks and open spaces they will be even more vital to support our communities and provide the confidence needed as more of us return to our high streets. The cost will be met by Covid-19 funding provided to the Council by central government.



Coronavirus Information on the WBC Website

The Council keeps up to date information for residents and businesses on the website.

Community Support Hub

The WBC support hub can still be contacted on 01635 503579 if needed.

Local Economy

Shop Local

One of the upsides of the Covid restrictions for small businesses has been more of us using local retailers and independent services. As part of WBC's Recovery Plan we are keen to continue to support our local economy and some suggestions about our local providers can be found here.



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Support for Businesses

WBC is continuing to administer a series of grant schemes to support local businesses that have been affected by the national coronavirus restrictions.

Information about eligibility, and how businesses who have not received support previously can apply, can be found here.

Particular elements of the support on offer include:

- A £138k 'Welcome Back Fund' for events and initiatives to ensure the successful re-opening of high streets;
- Access to twice weekly rapid Covid testing for small business employees;
- The offer of site visits from Public Protection Partnership colleagues for advice on Covid-secure trading;
- Regular sector-based advice webinars for each phase of the unlocking;

- A one year complimentary extension to pavement licenses so that hospitality businesses can make use of all fresco dining areas;
- Printable resources including guidance posters for display in premises;
- Implementation of further business rate relief, as announced in the Government's Budget.

Restart Grants

The Government will provide 'Restart Grants' in England of up to £6k per premises for non-essential retail businesses, and up to £18k per premises for hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym businesses. The grants will be paid to rate-paying businesses and will be distributed automatically, so there is no need for businesses to apply unless they have not received grant funding from the Council under previous schemes. WBC will commence processing these grants in April and eligible businesses will receive one of the following grants per premises, depending on rateable value:

Strand one - non-essential retail businesses:

- Businesses with a rateable value of £15k or under will receive a payment of £2,667;
- Businesses with a rateable value over £15k and less than £51k will receive a payment of £4k;
- Businesses with a rateable value of £51k or over will receive a payment of £6k.

Strand two - hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym businesses:

- Businesses with a rateable value of £15k or under will receive a payment of £8k;
- Businesses with a rateable value over £15k and less than £51k will receive a payment of £12k;
- Businesses with a rateable value of £51k or over will receive a payment of £18k,

Education

Secondary School Preferences

98% of Year 7 children in West Berkshire have been offered one of their secondary school preferences, with 89% allocated their first choice (the number of West Berkshire children applying for a secondary school place rose significantly in 2020, with another slight increase in 2021).

Activity Programme Trial

WBC is one of only 17 local authorities around the country taking part in this Department for Education funded trial. Children will be able to eat a healthy lunch over the Easter holidays as part of a special education and activity programme.

15 schools from across the district are taking part in the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme and pupils will go into their usual schools over the Easter break and enjoy a range of fun activities while learning about nutrition. The aim of the programme is to provide enriching, physical and nutritional activities to promote wellbeing. Children will learn about the benefits of 'eating a rainbow' of different foods and have the opportunity to take part in a Family Snack Challenge. There will also be some cookery demonstrations to provide practical knowledge around preparing and making food.

School holidays can be pressure points for some families because of increased costs and reduced incomes. Holiday clubs like the ones that will be held at our 15 schools are a response to this issue.

Free School Meals over Easter Holiday period

WBC has made arrangements to provide Free School Meal (FSM) vouchers to all eligible children during the Easter school holiday period (to 16 April 2021). The voucher scheme is being funded primarily through the allocation of just under £97k to the Council from the extended Covid winter grant allowance provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). WBC is topping up this allocation with an additional £12k+ to cover the full expected cost of implementation.

Details on how the vouchers would be implemented were issued to schools and early year settings. Children in school not currently receiving FSM but considered by the school as vulnerable were included and consideration was also given to children aged between 16 and 18 years, and children in cross border education settings.

The FSM voucher provision over Easter is a special extension to the Council's Covid Winter Grant Scheme that ran to 31 March to support residents in Covid-19 related hardship. The scheme went live with a funding pot of £532k derived from a combination of Government Covid grant allocations, which the Council subsequently topped up with additional Covid funding due to the high level of demand.

The Scheme provided 7,660 FSM vouchers for the Christmas 2020 and February 2021 half term school holidays, and has so far supported more than 1,750 people with help to pay for food, utility bills, and essential supplies. To identify those most in need for the Covid Winter Grant Scheme, the Council worked closely with professionals, statutory partners, Parish Councils, Citizens Advice West Berkshire, Newbury Resource Centre and other community and voluntary groups. DWP Job Centre Plus has also been playing an active role to support those newly in financial hardship, such as through a recent job loss.

Environment

Increasing Plastic Recycling for West Berkshire

WBC, in partnership with its waste contractor Veolia, are trialling four new recycling banks to increase collection of plastic waste. The banks will be for the collection of plastic pots, tubs and trays and are now available for use.

The new plastic recycling banks will be tested at the following locations:

- Padworth and Newbury Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Residents will need to book an appointment online as usual before visiting the sites and carry their HWRC permit.
- Station Road car park in Hungerford
- Kingsland Centre car park in Thatcham.

In addition, the site at Sainsbury's in Calcot already accepts a range of plastic recyclables.

Residents will be able to recycle a wider range of plastics in the new recycling banks including: yoghurt pots, margarine and butter tubs, biscuit trays, chocolate and sweet tubs, ice cream tubs, fruit punnets, meat trays and cosmetic pots. Plastics pots, tubs and trays need to be clean and all lids/films removed before recycling. Black plastic trays, plastic film, wrapping or plastic bags cannot be accepted. To check what you can recycle and for more information on recycling plastics go to West Berkshire Council - Rubbish and Recycling - Information.

Currently West Berkshire residents are able to recycle plastic bottles in their green bags at the kerbside, as the materials used in making plastic bottles are easily recycled in UK markets. The plastic recycling banks will initially be operated on a trial basis to help the Council assess how well the public engage with this scheme and to look into the continued availability of markets for these materials going forward.



HWRC Live Webcams

WBC residents can now view the recycling centres through new live site webcams. These webcams will give residents the opportunity to have a look at real-time site conditions before they set off on their visits. View them online: Newtown Road Recycling Centre and Padworth Recycling Centre.

Environment Strategy draft Delivery Plan

The Council has announced the draft Delivery Plan to complement the published Environment Strategy 2020-2030.

The draft is subject to changes being made prior to a formal decision being made by the Executive in the summer. It lays out a framework of actions that will set us on our way to reaching carbon neutrality for the district by 2030 and picks up on the statements of intent made in the Environment Strategy.

Anyone wishing to comment can complete a survey which will be open until 23:59 on Monday 26 April 2021.

The Public Sector Transformational Awards - Finalist



WBC is a finalist in the Public Sector Transformational Awards Green Council category for the 2021 iESE Awards.

You can watch the 'virtual' event announcing the finalists Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021 - iESE Local Government and Public Sector Consultants with the Awards being announced later in the year.

Transport and Countryside

Investment at Theale Railway Station

A multi-million-pound upgrade to Theale Railway station is due to begin this year, with plans set to include:



- Improved accessibility across the station, with a footbridge and lifts to connect platforms on both sides of the tracks funded by the Department for Transport's (DfT) Access for All (AfA) programme. Plus step-free access to the new station building and both platforms which will allow the station to be fully accessible to all rail users for the first time.
- Replacing the existing ticket office with the building located closer to the new footbridge and designed to meet modern accessibility standards in full.
- Upgrading and opening new toilets.
- Expansion of the existing car park to include a new entrance, improved drop-off and turning facility from Brunel Road for taxis and rail replacement buses, electric vehicle charging points, improved facilities for cyclists, motorcycle parking, plus provision of a new car park deck which will increase parking capacity by more than 33% to 300 spaces.
- Overhauling the road and pavement for better accessibility to the station along Station Road and Brunel Road, including wayfinding signage and replacement of width restriction bollards.

Network Rail engineers will start work this summer preceding GWR who will commence their work in November. The project is expected to be completed by summer 2022.

In addition to Access for All this project has been made possible through a £4m grant from Local Growth Deal funding via the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership). This money was secured recently by WBC and GWR which will be put to use very soon when improvements to the cycle and pedestrian routes to the station start as the first phase of the wider scheme.

There will be disruption during this time but it will be kept to a minimum with access maintained to the platforms during the works. Work is scheduled to commence with the road works, pedestrian and cycle routes to the station. This is the first phase of the Theale Station upgrade project. Work on the station site itself will be happening later on this year.

Improvements to local train stations and the facilities they offer aim to encourage residents and commuters to choose more sustainable ways to travel, helping to reduce the district's carbon footprint.

Active Travel

WBC has launched a set of draft measures to help the public safely make walking or cycling part of their daily travel choices, and is inviting feedback from the community to help shape these plans. The public consultations can be found at Active Travel Consultation.

Designed to encourage 'active travel' by introducing more walking and cycling opportunities throughout the district, the draft proposals include:

- West Berks Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This emerging draft transport policy is about making streets work for everyone, thus helping to make West Berkshire a better place to live, work and visit.
- Crown Mead Cycleways. The emerging LCWIP has identified the A4 as a primary route with high potential for increased cycle trips if appropriate infrastructure were to be provided.
- Western Avenue Cycleways. The A4 Western Avenue in Speen, Newbury has been identified as a high priority corridor for cycling and walking routes. The plan proposes permanent measures to create and improve travel routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
- West Berks Active Streets. These are various smaller scheme draft plans to help improve facilities and grow walking and cycling opportunities in West Berkshire including proposals for restricted access on Lawrence's Lane and Deadman's Lane in Thatcham and Theale respectively. In addition, if any resident would like to submit a specific walking and cycling proposal of their own, or comment on a location which falls outside of the currently identified schemes, they can do so via the Active Travel Heat Map within the West Berks Active Streets section of consultation portal.
- Calcot Schools Streets. This pilot School Zone/School Street Scheme is designed to make the streets around the schools safer and suitable for more walking and cycling, as well as improve the air quality.

The Crown Mead Cycleways and Western Avenue Cycleways proposals are each open for consultation until Friday 9 April. The remainder are eight week consultations that will finish on Friday 23 April.

With the exception of the LWCIP, the implementation of the Active Travel proposals will be funded through the £495k award from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund, following the Council's bid to further develop a lasting, safe environment for walking and cycling.

With their emphasis on promoting health and wellbeing, maintaining a green district and enhancing sustainability, the proposals support the WBC Council Strategy, Environment Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Local Transport Plan and Covid-19 Recovery Strategy.

Wildflower Project

Work has started on a wildflower project to enhance roundabouts and verges at three West Berkshire locations.



The 'Tesco' roundabout on the A339 Sandleford Link, the roundabout on the junction of the A4/B4000 Stockcross Road, and the verge at Cow Lane in East Ilsley will all benefit from the laying of specialist wildflower turf.

WBC has appointed experts Wildflower Turf Ltd to create the eye-catching wildflower displays, whose eco-friendly projects include supplying the London 2012 Olympics, The Hive at Kew Gardens and thousands of other small and large projects around the UK.

The turf that Council will be using is ready planted as a roll containing immature wildflower plants and a healthy root network, to create an almost instant meadow.

This will produce flowering plants from late spring to mid-autumn, creating a strong visual impact as well as helping to feed and shelter bees, butterflies, and all manner of other wildlife, with only limited maintenance throughout the year.

Wildflower turf has already been laid in East Ilsley. The A339 and B4000 roundabouts are also being completed shortly.

Adult Social Care

Care Home Visiting Policy

As anticipated last month, WBC Adult Social Care issued a revision of its care home visiting guidance following the announcement that every care home resident would be allowed one regular indoor visitor, permitted (subject to having a negative lateral flow test) to hold hands with the resident. The recent announcement that residents will shortly be allowed two regular indoor visitors will mean a further revision.

Leisure and Culture

Libraries

West Berkshire Libraries are anticipated to reopen on 12 April subject to the Governments lockdown easing tests being met.

The easiest way to continue to borrow titles is via the apps BorrowBox and Libby, which can be downloaded from the Apple app store and Google Play store, and anyone with a Kindle tablet can download the apps from Amazon. Anyone who has these apps can then search for West Berkshire Libraries and login using their library card number and PIN (members can reset their library PIN here). Customers who need help with this can drop an email to the library, where staff will be happy to help: library@westberks.gov.uk.

Customers who are not already members of the library can join online to get free, instant access to the e-library by registering.

Residents are encouraged to check out the extensive programme of activities for children and adults, which will continue online, and follow the library Facebook, Twitter or Instagram pages (@WBerksLibraries).

Communities

'Surviving to Thriving' - £200k Covid-19 Mental Health Fund

The joint fund established by WBC and Greenham Trust detailed last month has continued to enable voluntary and community sector organisations in the district to apply for grants to fund projects aimed at helping improve the mental health and wellbeing of local residents impacted by Covid-19.

This initiative enables not-for-profit organisations to carry out small, meaningful projects that can help mitigate the impact that Covid-19 has had on mental health and wellbeing in West Berkshire. Requests for grants can be made via The Good Exchange (Greenham Trust's online funding and fundraising platform) and are reviewed weekly. Several successful applicants have recently been awarded funding for their proposed projects and details of these will be released soon.

West Berkshire Lottery

Since its launch in March 2019, West Berkshire Lottery has raised nearly £125k for the local community and nearly £39,000 has been given away in prize winnings. More than 131 local groups have signed up as part of a fun and effective way to raise funds for their valued services in the community. This support has been particularly valued by local charities raising funds during the pandemic.



Out of every £1 West Berkshire Lottery ticket purchased, 50p goes directly to the lottery player's chosen charity and 10p goes into the Council's good cause fund, used to further support the local community. Players can win weekly cash prizes up to the £25,000 jackpot for just £1 per ticket from the West Berkshire Lottery website. In addition, tickets purchased by 24 April will be entered into a national prize draw for a chance to win a £1,000 Currys PC World Gift Voucher.

Communications Channels

As well as Twitter there are also a number of Facebook pages

which the Council uses, for example:

- West Berkshire Council;
- West Berkshire Community Support Hub Group;
- West Berkshire Libraries.

The WBC website also contains more about the CSH and useful information for residents and businesses:

Residents	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-residents
Business	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-business
Community hub	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-communityhub
Broadcast meetings	West Berkshire Council YouTube Channel

Linked to all of these initiatives is the WBC Customer Service telephone line: 01635 551111.

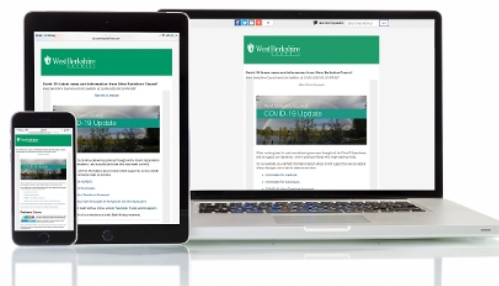
Newsletters

WBC news direct to inboxes

WBC has launched a new email subscription service to make it easier for residents to receive news and information about council services.

Residents can sign up to receive information on a range of topics - from general news to specific updates on Covid-19, the environment, waste and recycling and business news.

It's easy to subscribe - simply fill in your email address and select the topics you would like to hear more about. You can manage your preferences at any time through the link above or by following links in the emails you receive.



Other Matters

May Elections

Elections for the Thames Valley PCC and for town and parish council vacancies are to be held (delayed due to Covid-19) on 6 May 2021:

- Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner;
- Lambourn Parish Council (one seat in the Lambourn Ward and one seat in the Upper Lambourn Ward);
- Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council (three seats);
- Newbury Town Council Clay Hill Ward (one seat).

Polling Stations will be subject to stringent Government Covid safety measures to ensure electors can vote safely.

However, WBC is aware that many people will prefer to vote by post, particularly if they are vulnerable or shielding. Applications for postal votes must be received at WBC's Market Street office in Newbury by **5pm on Tuesday 20 April**.

If residents haven't registered to vote (eg if they have recently moved to the district) they will need to do so here.

Residents can ensure that their electoral details are up to date by emailing vote@westberks.gov.uk

West Berkshire Energy Switch

WBC has partnered with independent experts in group buying, iChoosr UK who will manage a 'reverse auction' and switching process to get the best possible energy deal.

People can register with the West Berkshire Energy Switch Scheme to obtain a free, no obligation, personal offer and to see how much money they could save by switching.

The Collective Energy Switch auctions are held each year in February, May, and October. The next West Berkshire Switch is open for registrations now and the reverse auction will be held on 18 May with participants starting to receive their personalised offers for consideration from 31 May 2021.

So far, over 10,000 households across West Berkshire have registered to the scheme, with those switching saving a total of £691,213 on their energy bill - in the last scheme, residents who signed up saved an average of £270 per year against standard tariffs by switching supplier.

Berkshire Healthcare Governor elections

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust will be having elections for nine Public Governors later in the year, including for one seat representing West Berkshire. The Trust has produced a short leaflet on becoming a governor.

Potential governors need to be members of the Trust before they are eligible to stand in governor elections. It's quick and easy to become a member. The link to the online membership application form is [here](#).

Nominations will open on 12 April.

Members Bids

Members' Community Bids are now open for applications. These are for capital bids of up to £5,000 for each Member. Details will be sent out of the application process and criteria.

The closing date for applications is 23rd June 2021. The decision panel will be held in early July and successful applicants will be advised shortly after.

Members have 12 months to spend the grant award. If the project has not been delivered within this initial timescale, there will be one chance to apply for a 6-month extension.

Parish and Neighbourhood Matters

Land East of Pincents Hill

The planning application is still under consideration and we are awaiting further details from officers as they discuss the application with the developers.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Litter Picking

A visit to the Little Heath fields recently has shown a disturbing amount of litter which has presumably been added to over the Easter holiday period, as well as Rugby posts being pulled out and thrown out of the field. An email has been sent to the school to make them aware. There is also early planning for a socially distanced litter pick to be arranged towards the end of April. Full details will be available via social media and will also be shared with parish councils and the local schools to help

Section 116 Highways Act 1980: Stopping Up of Mayfield Avenue Calcot Berkshire

Following a complaint made by local residents, action is being considered to close the 'gaps' between Mayfield Avenue and the Bath Road. Ongoing incidents in this location of anti-social behaviour, loud noise in the early hours of the morning and dropping of cans and bottles has led to this action being considered.