

## **Annual report 2020/21 to Parish Councils**

**in Watchfield & Shrivenham Ward from**

**District Councillors**

**Simon Howell and Elaine Ware**

### **Introduction**

The last year has been challenging for everyone in the UK and the whole world. COVID 19 has taken priority over everything indeed this also applies to the Vale of White Horse District Council. The Vale along with other Oxfordshire Councils have worked incredibly hard to provide support to all communities. The villages in our Ward set themselves up into various groups to ensure that those in need were looked after. This was particularly important when dealing with those residents who were shielded. Throughout the year the Vale has continued to communicate with Parish Councils and Community groups providing regular updates and advice. We are extremely proud of our local communities and the effort they have made to keep everyone safe.

### **Planning**

Planning Issues have again been top of our agenda. Since our last report in 2019 Part 2 of the Local Plan has been adopted. This plan ensured that there were no more strategic development sites in the Western Vale up to 2031. Of course the previously approved developments have gone ahead including the 515 dwellings on the Cross Trees Park strategic site on Highworth Road Shrivenham.

Some 150+ planning applications were submitted to the Vale from Ward villages from April 2020 to March 2021 some of which have proved to be controversial.

Work is due to commence in late May on the construction of the new roundabout on the A420 which will provide access to Cross Trees Park and Shrivenham village only. The works are expected to last approximately 4 months.

At the March meeting of the Vale Council it was agreed to develop a joint local plan with South Oxfordshire District Council. This plan will be developed alongside the Oxfordshire 2050 strategic plan.

**NEV** - The New Eastern Villages of Swindon's expansion programme is progressing. It is anticipated that there will be around 8500 dwellings together with schools, shopping centres, medical services etc. Road improvements in and around the White Hart roundabout and Gablecross are currently under construction. The impact of the expansion cannot be underestimated. The disruption is estimated to continue for the next 14 years.

## **Recycling**

The Vale again is in the top 10 UK local authorities for recycling. The collection rate was 63.3% for the year 2019/20 and the Vale shared equal 3rd place with the East Riding of Yorkshire. It is our residents that continue to be mindful of the importance of recycling and the need to help the environment.

## **Climate**

The Vale declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. Since then a Climate Emergency Advisory Committee has been established. This Committee has its own action plan and makes recommendations to Cabinet.

## **Civil parking enforcement**

The project for parking enforcement has been ongoing throughout the year. The current status is that Oxfordshire County Council is awaiting delegated approval from central government to give them authority to implement parking enforcement in Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and the Vale District Councils. West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City Council already operate parking enforcement. The new enforcement arrangements are expected to be operational by the end of this year and will be managed by the county council.

## **Corporate Plan**

The Vale has a new Corporate Plan that covers the period 2020-2024. The Plan highlights how it will serve the communities and has 6 main themes:

- \*Providing the homes that people need
- \*Tackling the Climate Emergency
- \*Building healthy communities
- \*Building stable finances
- \*Working in partnership
- \*Working in an open and inclusive way

## **Policing**

We work in partnership with Thames Valley Police via the Neighbourhood Action Group. Most villages in our Ward have representation on this group which meets quarterly. We have a strong neighbourhood police team based in Faringdon. You may not always see evidence of our local police but you can be assured that the team are keeping a watching brief in all our villages.

## **Conclusion**

We continue to represent our communities and work tirelessly to ensure that your voices are heard. We attend a variety of meetings at the Vale and with other Councils and organisations.

We work closely with Parish Councils and make representations on their behalf when needed.

Although we may not advertise what we do on a daily basis we are always available to provide assistance and advice to our residents.

We are passionate about our local community and will serve you all as best we can.

Cllrs Simon Howell and Elaine Ware  
April 2021