

District Councillors' Report

Faringdon Town Council

June 2019

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Congratulations to all Faringdon town councillors on your election. We are looking forward to working with you over the next 4 years. We would also like to thank the outgoing district and town councillors for their service to the community.

We will be circulating a monthly report like this one, prior to all town council meetings to keep you up to date with happenings at the district council. With Bethia also being a town councillor there is of course a natural link and David will be attending as many full town council meetings as possible. We're always available via email or phone to discuss anything.

1 Vale Election Results

The Vale of White Horse District Council elections on 2nd May brought in a new administration with the full council now made up of 31 Liberal Democrats, 6 Conservatives and 1 Green. David and Bethia were elected as the representatives for Faringdon ward.

2 Vale Cabinet Appointments

At the Vale Annual Council Meeting on 15 May, Bethia was appointed as cabinet member for Development and Regeneration. She will be able to make good use of her previous experience as town team coordinator for Faringdon. The full cabinet list is:

- Leader - Cllr Emily Smith
- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services – Cllr Debby Hallett
- Cabinet Member for Finance – Cllr Andy Crawford
- Cabinet Member for Community Services – Cllr Helen Pighills
- Cabinet Member for Legal and Democratic – Cllr Neil Fawcett
- Cabinet Member for Development and Regeneration – Cllr Bethia Thomas
- Cabinet Member for Planning – Cllr Catherine Webber
- Cabinet Member for Partnership and Insight – Cllr Judy Roberts
- Cabinet Member for Housing Needs, Community Safety and Licensing – Cllr Ruth Molyneaux
- Cabinet Member for Environmental and Technical Services – Cllr Jenny Hannaby

David will serve on the Joint Scrutiny Committee (shared between the Vale and South Oxfordshire) and will chair the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee and the Faringdon Area Committee.

3 OVO Women's Tour Cycle Race

The district council is working with Oxfordshire County Council and other local councils as well as the race organisers to put on this exciting event. We are delighted to see the level of promotion this is receiving in Faringdon and are looking forward to seeing the crowds out to cheer these athletes through Faringdon at approximately 12:55 on 12 June.

4 Local EU Citizens #DeniedMyVote

It is reported that around 2 million non-UK EU citizens were unable to vote in the EU Parliament elections on 23 May and we were very disappointed to hear voters in the Vale of White Horse were affected. The new council leadership has raised concerns about this with Vale officers who did all they could within the process and time frame set by national government. Local MPs are calling for an inquiry into what went wrong.

5 Volunteer Way Development

Following the objection by the town council to the application for 9 new dwellings at Volunteer Way, on the basis that this is designated as employment land in the Neighbourhood Plan, we have lodged a request for this to be brought before the planning committee if officers are minded to accept it. This will ensure that the application will not be approved without full scrutiny.

6 Planning Application Alerts

We recommend that all parish councillors sign up to receive the Vale planning alerts for applications in Faringdon. Every time a new planning application is received by the district council, you will get an email with a link to all the details. Anyone can register for these — not just councillors.

7 Business support

The Vale and South Oxfordshire councils will shortly be changing how they support local businesses by combining their two services, 'SO Business' and 'Vale4Business', into a single brand called 'South and Vale Business Support'. A new range of events will be offered as part of this service.

On 3 June David attended the Faringdon Business Breakfast Club with Dr Melanie Smans, Economic Development Manager for South and Vale Councils, in order to discuss the needs of local businesses and how the council can support them.

The council is taking the closure of the Honda plant in Swindon seriously and is working on a package of targeted interventions to support affected local businesses and residents.

Bethia will speak at the first in a series of free networking events on Wednesday 26 June at Wrag Barn Golf Club, 7:30–9:30am — a networking breakfast in partnership with the Swindon Borough Council economic development team/Honda taskforce aimed at increasing awareness of the support the council can offer.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/south-and-vale-business-support-vale-networking-business-breakfast-tickets-61777117020>

8 Secondary School Mentoring Scheme and Young Enterprise

Pupils from Larkmead School in Abingdon are celebrating after being announced winners of the Sustainability in Oxfordshire award and runners-up in the South and Vale Area Young Enterprise Scheme.

Starting in October last year, mentors from the Vale Economic Development Team helped the group form a business and plan their tasks and finances. The group came together and used their individual skills to produce, market and sell a sustainable alternative to single-use plastics.

This mentoring scheme is just one of the many ways the council helps connect education and business as part of our business and innovation strategy action plan.

9 Faringdon Leisure Centre

Vale of White Horse District Council is investing £177,500 in refurbishing Faringdon Leisure Centre, starting this month.

The swimming pool changing area, including cubicles, toilets and showers, are the first on the list of improvement works to the centre. The sauna and steam room are also set to be fully replaced.

The current poolside changing area will be closed between 17 June and 19 July for the work to take place. A temporary pool changing area will be created during this time using one of the centre's two squash courts.

The changing area will be gutted to make way for a full replacement of cubicles, lockers, toilets and showers along with new floor and wall tiles in these two areas.

All other facilities will remain open as normal.