

District Council Report for Faringdon Town Council

Bethia Thomas and David Grant

9/10/2019

We both send our apologies this month, as we are attending the Full Council Meeting of the Vale – unfortunately as both town and district meetings fall on Wednesday evenings some clashes will occur, but hopefully not too regularly.

We would like to change the focus of these reports to concentrate more on issues local to Faringdon which we are able to influence, rather than more general district-wide issues, which, while they affect us all, may not be of direct relevance to the town. We are doing this after receiving feedback from town council surgeries about the topics our residents care most deeply about.

We would be happy if you, as town councillors, could add items to this list with anything that is of concern to you that we could help with; the items listed here have come to our attention through surgeries, district council case work or meetings and other contacts. Please bear with us as we trial this new method of reporting, it may take some time to get used to!

Local Issues in and Around Faringdon

- Lloyds Mobile Banking Service – the mobile bank seems to have found a new location in the United Church. We have very few details of how this came about and are unsure of how permanent an arrangement this is, but we will be able to investigate this further on request.
- S106 Monies – the full list of allocated S106 monies can be found on the Vale website (<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/delivering-infrastructure/section-106-pl-0>). Vale officers have been working on these lists to make sure they are up to date - when it comes to Faringdon projects it is best to look at other lists that may identify other funding streams that may be spent in Faringdon.
- Civil Parking Updates – the TVP commissioner is reporting to the district council this month, and one of the many questions we as a council intend to ask him concerns the ability of the council or a group of councils to fund a PCSO dedicated to dealing with on street parking. Initially we were told that ringfencing funding for a dedicated parking officer would not be possible – we will report on his response next month.
- Car Park and Electric Charging Points – work is continuing on both, we will give a further update next month; we do realise that the state of the car parks is a priority that has long been neglected and we are keen to help move this forward.
- Trees in the Churchyard – a member of the congregation at All Saints has approached us with a query about two of the trees in the churchyard; the congregation wishes the trees be removed, we need to work with various bodies including the town council to come to an acceptable solution.
- The Chair's Community Awards – this was a wonderful day honouring so many of Faringdon's community heroes nominated by the town council. It was wonderful to catch up with Andrew Marsden, Malcom Gee, Al Cane, David and Lyn Williamson and Sjoerd Vogt.

General Vale Issues

- Local Plan Part Two (LPP2) – the decision on accepting or rejecting LPP2 will be taken at the full council meeting this month. Although the plan has no direct reference to Faringdon it has implications for planning throughout the Vale. As the plan was designed by the previous administration the current council feels it has been placed in a difficult situation: faced with the option of adopting a plan that in large part we do not agree with, or rejecting it at cost to the council, risking speculative development and other consequences. Unfortunately, our decision does not stand alone, and we fear that Oxfordshire County Council may use the proposal of South Oxfordshire District Council to withdraw its local plan as a reason not to sign off the 'Housing and Infrastructure Fund' (HIF). This in turn would affect our residents through circumstances entirely beyond our control. We will report on the decisions taken at the next meeting, but if you have any further questions before then, please direct them to David.grant@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
- Other decisions and motions to be discussed at full council of relevance to Faringdon– funding for CCTV equipment across the Vale is being reviewed; scheduled closure to the A34 and re-routing traffic is being recommended to the scrutiny committee – it was noted that the latter is not relevant to the A34 alone, but to other routes including the A420.
- Council leader writes to government on future funding concerns – this correspondence expressed serious concerns regarding the future funding of local government, particularly at district council level. Between 2011 and 2018, there had been more than a 20 per cent reduction in funding from the government, and while ongoing costs have continued to grow, the promised finance reforms have been delayed - more clarity is needed on the government's plans.
- £75,000 available for community groups – local groups in the Vale can apply for a share of these funds as part of our community grant scheme, our festival grants are also available up until February next year. For further details, please email or call the Grants Team on 01235 422405 or visit www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/grants.
- The Shrivenham Pop-Up Business School – is running throughout the week, we hope to hear some wonderful new business ideas coming from it.

For more information including the agenda of the full council meeting reported on here please visit the Vale website at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/>

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