

# District Council Report for Faringdon Town Council

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Despite the August break in council meetings, it's been a busy couple of months since our last update.

A decision on the application for new housing on the former Rogers Concrete site going has been deferred by the Vale's planning committee, Civil Parking Enforcement is imminent, there are many consultations on long term plans that affect us all in the works and we have had a relatively successful conclusion to the Steeds Farm Appeals process.

We know that the main talking point on residents' lips is the disruption to household waste collection and particularly the temporary suspension of garden waste collections. This is not a happy situation and we are sorry for that the service is not at the level expected right now, especially as it is peak gardening season. The issue has been caused by a national shortage of HGV drivers that is affecting many industries including other councils' waste collection services and so the suspension has been necessary in order to prioritise food, recycling and black bin collection. As you will expect, the council is working hard to rectify the situation with Biffa and find ways to make it up to anyone who doesn't receive their contracted service. The council will make sure that all affected residents are duly compensated if the service fails to meet the terms of their contract.

On a more positive note we were very pleased to be able to support The Place with the last part of our Councillor COVID Grants. The funding will allow for the safe provision of a breast-feeding clinic which had been suspended during the pandemic adding to the fantastic services provided by The Place

## Local Issues to Faringdon

- **Funding for leisure returning to Faringdon:** The consultation to determine the needs of the local communities affected by this decision has been delayed however we are re-starting work and town and parish councils representing these communities should be contacted to arrange consultations shortly.
- **Folly Park:** We are aware of many issues relating to the management of Folly Park and continue to work to resolve these. Unfortunately, due to recent unauthorised works, it has been necessary to put in temporary restrictions around the unofficial mountain bike trail that has sprung up in the woodland leading to significant health and safety concerns. We have reported the unauthorised van that has been parked on site and are investigating the future of the statues in the lower section of the park.
- **Civil Parking Enforcement** will go live on 1<sup>st</sup> November. At this point on-street parking rules will be enforced by county council enforcement officers. Please note that parking on pavements will not be enforceable except where it is prohibited by local orders. There will be a publicity campaign ahead of this going live to make the public aware of the changes. We will soon have a full briefing on the way this is to be implemented and will pass on details of this to you as we know more. We anticipate that this may cause some concern so are keen everyone is well informed.
- **Car Parks:** We are investigating the property matter that is affecting the development of the Budgens site, and will report back as soon as we can. There are a number of suggested improvements for the use of the Gloucester Street car park including incorporating a place for waste bins for town centre businesses and lockable cycle storage. This is also the likely location

for an electric vehicle charging point which is part of a joint scheme with other Oxfordshire councils. It is therefore intended to address all of these suggestions in one go when the exact site of the charging point is known.

- **Table Tennis:** We have been working the Pump House Project under the Active Reach Scheme in partnership with Active Oxfordshire for the over 60s and are pleased to say free table tennis sessions will now be available every Monday and Thursday from 2pm – 3pm.

## District Update

### Support for vulnerable residents

As the government is no longer advising vulnerable people to shield following the easing of lockdown restrictions, Oxfordshire's county, city and district councils are working together to contact clinically extremely vulnerable residents to let them know that help is still available and to ask them what future support they may need.

Residents who had been shielding during the pandemic or who are clinically extremely vulnerable will receive a letter with information about support, including information about the Move Together initiative and inviting them to fill in an anonymous survey about their experiences after shielding. The feedback from the survey will help the councils plan the next steps of support for residents who might get very unwell from coronavirus.

### COVID-Safe Transportation

Vulnerable residents in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse have been able to get to vaccination appointments and receive food parcels thanks to £136,363 of funding awarded to local voluntary and community organisations to provide Covid-safe transportation.

The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils were able to grant 12 organisations funding of between £1,000 and £15,000 each to help with the costs of arranging and providing Covid-safe transportation to spend on costs like petrol, wear and tear on vehicles and buying PPE supplies.

### Tree Planting Policy

We are producing a new tree planting policy which will enable community groups to use the district council's land to plant trees. This will be published ahead of being discussed at the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee with a view for it to be approved by cabinet in time for this year's planting season. In the meantime, community groups can use our [tree planting guide](#) to help them make plans.

### Proposed Planning Reforms

Following a motion agreed at the Vale of White Horse District Council meeting last month, Council Leader Emily Smith has written to the government to request that it scraps its proposed changes to planning laws in the United Kingdom which could have serious implications for local communities across the country.

Her letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, calls on the government to:

- undertake a review of permitted development rights which allow development to happen without the need for planning permission
- maintain the rights of local residents to engage and comment on individual planning applications
- support the rights of local people, through robust Neighbourhood and Local Plan processes, to influence how their communities develop
- enable councils to set strong local planning policies to maximise protection for the environment and reduce carbon emissions

### [Ox-Cam Arc](#)

People across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are being urged to have their say on the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, a government led project which will have an impact on both districts in the future.

The Arc includes the area between Oxford and Cambridge and aims to make economic, social and environmental improvements across the region by 2050 and beyond.

The government has announced a 12-week public consultation on the future of the Ox-Cam Arc and people are being encouraged to help to create the Spatial Framework's vision for the area to 2050 under the following themes:

- The Environment
- The Economy
- Connectivity and Infrastructure
- Place-making

### [White Horse Community Lottery](#)

You can now buy tickets for our new community lottery. For every £1 ticket sold, 50p goes to registered good causes and 10p into the White Horse Community Fund which supports the voluntary sector, the way in which the community fund is to be spent is yet to be determined, though a variety of options are being considered by cabinet.

The first lottery draw is planned for the 18<sup>th</sup> September and each player has the chance to win £25,000. Players choose their preferred good causes from those registered, so we encourage all local good causes to take up the opportunity – it is not too late to register

## Major Planning Developments

### [Planning enforcement](#)

As always, please keep us informed with any potential issues relating to conformance with planning conditions at new developments such as the land South of Park Road and South of Highworth Road. We are in continual contact with the team to ensure that regulations are complied with, but the more eyes on the ground the easier it is to identify issues quickly.

### [Land South of Steeds Farm Appeal \(P18/V0259/O\)](#)

The appeal inquiry is now complete and we are pleased to report that, while we may not have got everything, we have managed to secure the majority of the disputed contributions including:

- The full 35% affordable housing onsite
- Sports hall
- Swimming pool
- Athletics
- Health and fitness
- Squash
- Tennis
- Multi Use Games Area
- Public art

We'd like to thank the Town Council for its contributions to this lengthy process.

There will also now be electric vehicle charging points included as a condition and traffic light improvements to the Coxwell Road junction with the A420 and significant contributions towards education are included as part of the undisputed part of the application.

### [Rogers Concrete \(P20/V0855/O\)](#)

The application for new housing and a much-reduced amount of employment land was brought before the Vale of White Horse planning committee during August. We spoke alongside the Town Council and local business owners to object to the loss of this strategic employment land.

Following lengthy consideration, the planning committee decided to defer the decision in order to gain further information.

We are continuing to follow this up and look forward to working with the town council when this returns to committee.

### [South of Park Road Phase 2 \(P21/V0984/RM\)](#)

Most of the questions have been addressed with this application, however there are still a few outstanding ones under review. These include the public footpath crossing with the road and clarification on the different site levels. We also still have a call in request to take this to committee if officers are minded to accept it as we are yet to receive a satisfactory explanation as to how the applicants intend to address Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Policy 4.7B to minimise energy consumption.

### [5 Lechlade Road, Old Gas Works \(P20/V3172/RM\)](#)

Planning permission for 14 houses has now been granted following updates to address concerns of the Town Council. We are pleased to see that these homes will be built with energy efficient electric air source heat pumps rather than gas boilers.

### [Fernham Road \(P21/V0576/O\)](#)

There is no significant update on this application so there remains significant concern about how the development links to the neighbouring estate and the lack of environmental information. We have therefore maintained our temporary 'call in' to the district planning committee until these can be adequately addressed.

### Councillor Surgeries

All being well, we will be looking to restart face to face councillor surgeries again soon. In the meantime, we are very happy to take phone calls and emails from residents and town councillors at any time.

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