



## WBC Parish Report for August 2022

Councillor Clive Hooker, Downlands Ward

### West Berkshire Council

I suspended the distribution of my monthly news sheet this month until the mourning period for the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth had passed, as have all the civic and non-essential public meetings and events conducted by West Berkshire Council.

#### Council

There was no meeting in August. The next scheduled meeting is on 6 October in the Council Chamber commencing at 7pm, if you have a spare minute on the night please watch all, or some of the business on YouTube.

#### Executive

There was no meeting this month. The next scheduled meeting is on 22 September.

#### Economy

##### *Help for Households*

In response to increasing prices and the pressures around the cost of living, HM Government's new Help for Households [website](#) brings together 41 support schemes so that people can access all the help they need in one place.

WBC has created a local version [here](#) that has signposts and links to various sources of local support (assistance with council tax, household support, food and childcare, etc).

##### *Shared Prosperity Grant*

On Monday 1 August, WBC submitted the investment plan for West Berkshire's £1m allocation of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The UKSPF is a new Government fund which will be distributed to local authorities across the United Kingdom to invest in levelling up the country through local interventions. The fund runs alongside a separate £559m adult numeracy programme called Multiply.

WBC has focused the investment plan on the 'Communities and Place' and 'Supporting Local Business' investment priorities, with interventions spread across four main areas of focus. These are town centre enhancements, creating new sports facilities for local people, supporting local culture and heritage activities, and supporting local businesses with advice and guidance.



The fund is heavily 'back-ended', meaning WBC will receive 30% of the allocation in the first two years, with 70% to be released in the 2024-25 financial year.

WBC has also submitted a bid of £3.5 million for the Newbury Lido refurbishment. Delivering the Lido project and improvement work has already begun but, if the extra £3.5 million was secured, it would free up money to spend on other projects which would also benefit local residents.

## ***Tendering Opportunities in the District***

Local businesses and suppliers with a base in West Berkshire, are now able to receive updates on tender opportunities – if they register at West Berkshire In-tend [here](#).

This site includes details of upcoming contract opportunities for services, supplies and works from all areas of the Council, including those suited to SMEs and the voluntary sector.

Separately, the Transport Services team have recently launched a £10m dynamic purchasing system (DPS) to manage home to school and community transport routes. Taxi, minibus and coach operators are able to apply at any point to this framework (running up to May 2032) – and those who successfully complete the assessment process will be able to view opportunities and bid for transport services contracts.

Applications can be made online [here](#).

## **Environment**

### ***Food Waste Collections***



Separate weekly food waste collections are due to start from all households from 31 October 2022. Ahead of the service starting, residents have begun to receive more information about the service on bin hangers this month. Food waste caddies and information leaflets will also be distributed to all households between August and October 2022, some of which will have already been received. Please encourage residents to store the new caddies safely and not to use them for collection until the new service starts at the end of October.

### ***Adult Cycle Training***

WBC has launched Adult Cycling Training to help businesses help their employees save money on commuting expenses and to promote a healthy lifestyle, as well as ensuring that they keep safe on their journeys to and from work.

The Cycle to Work training can help create a healthier, happier and more motivated workforce; all whilst reducing a company's carbon footprint.

A company cycle training day costs £600 (with a £100 discount if the company has an active Business Travel Plan).

The day includes:

- Two qualified and DBS checked Bikeability Cycling Instructors
- Three two-hour adult cycling courses: (each course for a maximum of six staff = 18 staff in total).

For more information contact [activetravel@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@westberks.gov.uk) or visit <https://www.bikeability.org.uk/about-cycle-training/cycle-training-for-adults/>.



### ***Untidy Land and Property Owners told to clean up***



This month, WBC issued seven warning letters to households and businesses whose property was in an unacceptable condition and negatively impacting their neighbours and the community. S.215, Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives the Council powers to take action against landowners whose land or buildings are deemed harmful to the local area. Abandoned vehicles, deteriorating buildings and piles of rubbish could all be examples of breaches.

Those who are suspected of breaching s.215 are first contacted by an Enforcement Officer and given the opportunity to correct the situation. If conditions don't improve Officers will issue a warning notice giving the recipient 21 days to improve the situation. If there is still no improvement, WBC will issue a formal Notice.

Failure to comply with this Notice may result in prosecution at the Magistrates' Court and a fine of up to £1,000.

Since February, 14 warning letters, three Enforcement Notices, and one Stop Notice have been served.

### ***New Group Connect Bus Tickets save time & money***

WBC has made some improvements for family and group travel on buses across the District. Since 1 August, a new Connect Group Day Ticket allows for up to four people to travel together on a bus. This can be any combination of adults and/or children. As with most Connect tickets, there are two types available:

- £10.00 for an urban ticket;
- £16.50 for a rural ticket.

## **Children, Young People and Education**

### ***East Family Hub Open Day***



On 31 August, the East Family Hub, based at Calcot Infants' School held a very successful open day with, for example (see left), the children voting for what they would like the Hub to do.

Cllrs Rick Jones (Chairman of Council) with his wife Val, Dominic Boeck (Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education) and Graham Bridgman (Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing) enjoyed meeting parents and children, and seeing what the Hub gets up to and the services it offers.



### ***Examination Results***

Indicative results this year show 80.4% of West Berkshire students achieved A\*-C grades for their A levels, which is an 8.6 percentage point increase on the 2019 pre-pandemic figure. For the highest A level grades of A\*-A, West Berkshire students' results increased 6.2 percentage points. For vocational students taking Certificates, Diplomas and Extended Diplomas in schools, 56% achieved Distinction or higher grades.

### ***Newbury Sports Hub***

Following a hearing in the High Court on 18 August, a judicial review of elements of the WBC decision to develop the Sports Hub will now go to a full hearing.

Regrettably this will delay the delivery of a high quality, and much needed sports facility, and will almost certainly mean that Newbury Football Club will not have their new home for the 2023-24 season. It will also result in additional costs being incurred for the project and for the council tax payer.

### ***Homes for Ukraine***

The latest numbers indicate that West Berkshire has a total of 211 hosts matched with 529 guests, of which the significant majority are woman and children and young people. The number of guests that have arrived so far is 374, of which 146 are children (and of which 126 have already been found places in West Berkshire Schools).

### ***Current Consultations***

[Phase Two of the Community Governance Review for Greenham Parish 2022](#): closes 9 September 2022

[Moving Traffic Offences](#): closes 20 September 2022

[Need Help with Numeracy?](#): extended until 30 September 2022

[School Streets Schemes - the Calcot Schools](#): closes 30 September 2022

[Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2022-2027](#): closes 4 October 2022

[Lawrence's Lane, Thatcham / Cold Ash – Prohibition of Motor Vehicles \(Experimental Order\)](#): closes 19 January 2023

## **Other Matters**

### **Retirement of Chief Constable**

John Campbell has announced his intention to retire next March, after 35 years in the police service.

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