Council Report for June 2026

Written by your local Conservative team to keep you up to date.

Councillor Clive Hooker Downlands Ward

West Berkshire Council

Council

There was no meeting of Council this month.

The next meeting is on 16 July.

Executive

Executive met on 11 June to discuss:

- Contract Award for the Highways Term Maintenance Contract
- West Berkshire Local Plan timetable and commencement
- Planning Enforcement Plan
- New Procurement Strategy and "Think Local" Social Value Strategy
- All Age Autism Strategy 2026-2029
- Asset Optimisation Plan

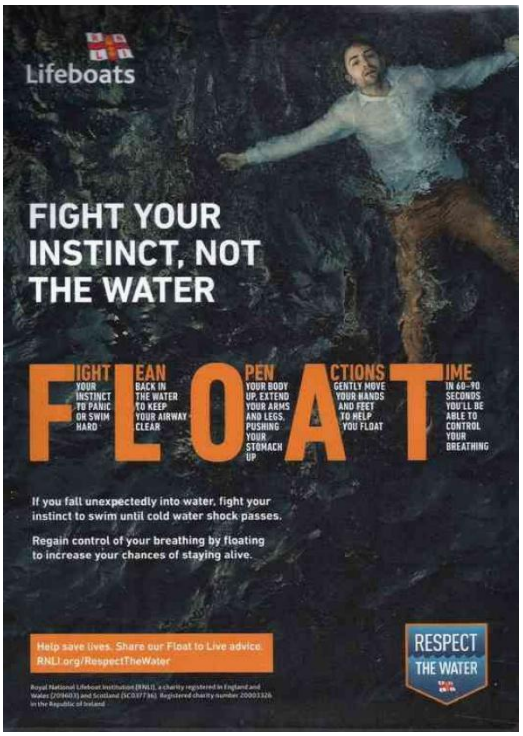
Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found here.

The next meeting is on 2 July.

Public Protection

Heatwaves

With sunny weather and high temperatures forecast over the coming days, many will be looking forward to making the most of the summer. While enjoying the sunshine, it's important to take a few simple steps to stay safe.



The NHS advises keeping curtains closed in sun-facing rooms, drinking plenty of water, avoiding excessive alcohol and limiting time in direct sunlight between 11am and 3pm. If outdoors, seek shade, wear sunscreen and a hat, and remember to drink water. Heatwaves can also affect air quality, particularly for people with heart or lung conditions, so keep an eye on local forecasts and follow medical advice if needed.

Across West Berkshire there are cool spaces which are free, welcoming indoor places to take a break from the heat, sit down,

shelter from the sun, and, where available, access drinking water while resting during periods of hot weather. Find out more about these here.

Residents are reminded to be cautious around open water. Even in hot weather, water temperatures can remain dangerously cold and lead to cold water shock. Never swim alone, be careful of wildlife, avoid alcohol near water and keep a close eye on children. If someone gets into difficulty, call 999, encourage them to float on their back and throw them something that floats. Never enter the water to help.

For a safer way to cool off, why not take a dip at Northcroft Lido and enjoy the sunshine responsibly? Book your swim via the Northcroft Leisure Centre website, the Everyone Active app, by calling 01635 31199 or by visiting the leisure centre reception.

Heatwave and Bin Collections

During high temperatures, collection crews will start earlier than usual to avoid the worst of the heat. Please put bins/containers out the night before collection day as collection may take place earlier than usual.

Help keep everyone safe during the hot weather. If WBC experience any issues to collections they will update the website.

Heatwave and Highways

With temperatures exceeding 30°C, the impact that sustained heat can have on our road network includes some surfaces may become soft or appear to be 'melting'.

While this may seem unusual, it's a natural response to extreme conditions. This happens because dark road surfaces absorb heat, meaning temperatures on the road can reach around 50°C. In extreme heat, the bitumen, which is the binding glue in asphalt for road construction, can soften, making roads feel sticky and more vulnerable to damage from traffic, particularly heavier vehicles.

WBC highways teams are working with contractor Volker Highways to monitor the network closely and will respond where needed to keep roads safe and minimise disruption. In some locations, this may include 'gritting' the roads which involves spreading sand or dust over the road surface. Think of it as a form of 'sunscreen' for the road – it absorbs the softened bitumen and helps prevent it from sticking to vehicle tyres. Most affected areas return to normal once temperatures begin to cool.

Hardworking operatives are carrying out repairs and inspections in very challenging conditions. Working outdoors in high temperatures while wearing full PPE is no easy task, so please give them plenty of space, patience, and a cold drink if safe to do so - a bit of kindness never goes amiss.

If travelling during the hot weather:

- Slow down on affected roads
- Avoid harsh braking and sharp steering
- Leave extra space between vehicles

Unusual road conditions should report via the WBC website.

Keeping Dogs Safe

As temperatures rise, it's essential to protect dogs from heat-related harm. Dogs should not be walked during the hottest parts of the day. Pavements can burn paws, and even short walks can quickly lead to heatstroke. Instead, walk early in the morning or later in the evening when it's cooler.

Never leave a dog in a parked car, even for a few minutes. Temperatures inside vehicles can rise dangerously fast, putting their life at risk.

At home, ensure dogs have constant access to fresh drinking water, shade, and a cool resting area. Help them stay comfortable by using damp towels, cooling mats, or allowing access to a paddling pool. Always cool dogs down gradually with cool (not cold) water, particularly on their body, paws, and neck.

Watch for signs of heatstroke, such as excessive panting, drooling, or lethargy, and seek veterinary advice immediately if concerned.

Environment

Make your home greener with Switch Together

There's still time to sign up to Switch Together, a trusted scheme helping explore greener home upgrades while keeping energy costs down.

Building on the success of Solar Together, it now offers a wider range of options, including solar panels, battery storage, heat pumps, EV chargers and smarter tariffs, so you can find what suits homes and budgets.

Residents can register to receive a personalised recommendation and support from sign-up to installation. Group buying secures competitive prices, with vetted suppliers for added confidence.

It's free to join, with no obligation. Registration closes on 24 July 2026.

Health and Wellbeing

Togetherness

Looking after emotional health matters at every stage of life. Residents expecting a baby, raising children, or supporting a young person, can get help strong relationships and understanding emotions to make a real difference to wellbeing.

Togetherness offers free, NHS backed online learning to support families. Short, flexible sessions provide practical ideas and expert insight to help understand feelings, behaviour and development, and build confidence in everyday life.

Topics include children's emotions and brain development, managing behaviour, sleep and routines, building positive relationships, and supporting children through change. The approach is reassuring and non judgemental, offering guidance rather than telling families what to do.

Togetherness is for:

- parents and carers
- expectant parents
- families looking for accessible, trusted support
- professionals working with children, young people and families

Culture

Summer Fair at Shaw House

Browse over 60 local stalls located on the Great Lawn and enjoy refreshments from our café, bar and caterers. For our younger visitors there will be creative crafts, face painting, a magic show from Mr Muddle and a bouncy castle - all taking place outside in the grounds.

Dogs on leads are welcome outside.

Shaw House | Sunday 19 July | 11am – 4pm | Entry to the grounds: Adults £2, Children £1 (Free for children aged 3 years and under)

Education

Progress at Falkland Primary School

Construction of Falkland Primary School's new building is progressing well. The blockwork is looking great and it's fantastic to see classrooms and learning spaces really starting to take shape.

As the project progresses, additional time is being allocated for completion, testing, commissioning and safety checks to ensure the new building is delivered to the highest possible standards. Pupils will remain in their current accommodation at the start of the autumn term, with a phased move into the new building planned around October half term.

World Cup

Domestic Abuse

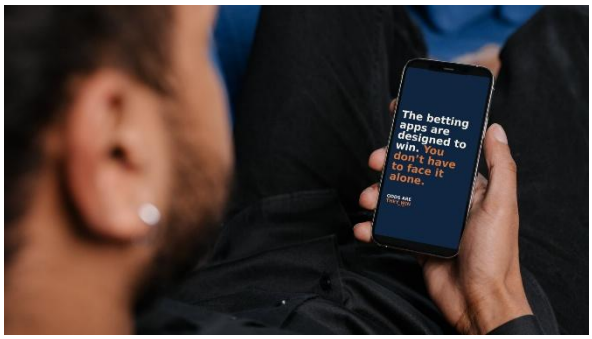
Research shows that domestic abuse incidents increase significantly during the World Cup. Whilst football does not cause abuse, the tournament can exacerbate existing abuse through increased alcohol consumption, emotional stress and 'high stakes' watching behaviour.

If you, a friend or relative are being affected by domestic abuse, please get in touch with Berkshire Women's Aid, our commissioned domestic abuse support service, who help support all genders.

To contact their free, confidential helpline, call 0808 801 0882 or email helpdesk@bwaid.org.uk

Gambling

With the World Cup bringing a surge in gambling advertising this summer, WBC are supporting 'Odds Are: They Win' - a public health campaign highlighting how gambling can affect anyone, at any time, and encouraging people to seek support.



During major sporting events, more than half of televised gambling adverts promote free bets or incentives, and six in ten people in the UK see gambling ads at least once a week. The campaign aims to reduce stigma with a simple message - it is not your fault, you are not alone, and help is available.

In West Berkshire, support is available through GamCare, debt and budgeting advice, mental health services and Citizens Advice. Residents can also access free and confidential support 24 hours a day through the National Gambling Helpline on 0808 8020 133, with live chat and WhatsApp also available. The NHS National Centre for Behavioural Addictions takes self-referrals. If someone is in immediate distress, support is available at any time via NHS 111 (option 2) or 999.

Transport

Robin Hood Roundabout

Work to improve Robin Hood roundabout will begin on Monday 27 July, with a lane closure in place for around three weeks.

The scheme, delivered by Volker Highways during the school summer holidays to help reduce disruption, will widen the north-west corner of the roundabout. This will create two lanes for traffic towards Shaw and the A4 Thatcham, improving capacity and traffic flow.

They'll also be upgrading traffic signals, refresh road markings, clear vegetation to improve visibility, and resurface the carriageway.

Resurfacing is scheduled overnight from Monday 17 August to Friday 28 August. Some delays are expected, so please plan ahead and allow extra time for journeys.

Current Consultations

- Reinstatement of pedestrianisation hours for Newbury Town Centre from 10am-11pm to 10am-5pm– closes 3 July