

Parish Council Report for period up to 10 April 2019
Cllr Graham Bridgman (West Berkshire Council, Mortimer Ward)
and Cllrs Carol Jackson-Doerge & Ian Morrin (West Berkshire Council, Burghfield Ward)

West Berkshire Council

Marcus Franks

Marcus, our friend and colleague and until very recently a member of the WBC Executive, died far too young last Thursday (4 April) of bowel cancer. He will be deeply missed.

Meetings

Council meets next on 21 May, after the elections on 2 May.

Elections

As councillors will know, there are elections for West Berkshire Council, Burghfield Parish Council and Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council on 2 May. The three of us are standing in the new Burghfield & Mortimer Ward for WBC, Carol and Ian are standing for BPC and Graham is standing for SMPC (all three as apolitical candidates in the PC elections). Nominations for Beech Hill, Padworth, Ufton Nervet and Wokefield PCs were all uncontested, so congratulations to those councillors returned unopposed.

West Berkshire Lottery

Thus far 77 different good causes have signed up for the lottery and the current prediction of annual funding is close to £40k.

EU settled status - help available at Burghfield and Mortimer Libraries

EU, EEA or Swiss citizens, and their families, can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021, regardless of any deal that HMG may or may not make with the EU(!) Settled status is usually given to people who have been living in the UK for five continuous years (there are some exceptions and varied requirements, depending on circumstances).

Library staff can look at the requirements with an applicant and guide them through the online application process. They will check that applicants have the required documentation and assist with scanning and uploading anything necessary to complete the online form, including photo ID. There is no charge for this service but advance booking is necessary - please email library@westberks.gov.uk or book an appointment at the library.

Local Matters

Padworth Household Waste Recycling Centre

As anticipated in last month's report, the Recycling Centre's daily hours of public operation are now 08:00 to 18:00. To remind everyone, this is a trial until 30 September, after which the usage will be assessed.

Grazeley

HMG has awarded initial funding of £750k for feasibility work, to be led by Wokingham BC, on the Grazeley Garden Settlement project (not to be confused with the Housing Infrastructure Bid which has been submitted).

This does not mean that WBC will automatically select Grazeley as a site for development, because the site selection part of the new Local Plan (about which we have written previously) has yet to be done, but the funding will enable some fairly complex preparatory work to look into what is and isn't possible at Grazeley.

Having said this, and as Ian in particular has pointed out, there seem to be many impediments to this project getting off the ground, not least the potential extension of the AWE Burghfield detailed emergency planning zone (DEPZ), about which we wrote last month – possibly cutting into the land owned by WBC and also across the railway line.

M4 Smart Motorway Project (J3 to J12)

There are several overnight full closures (usually 22:00 to 05:00) scheduled to take place during April and for more details see <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/m4-junctions-3-12-smart-motorway/>.

M4 J13 closures

Junction 13 Slip Road Resurfacing

The westbound exit and entry slip roads will be closed at the junction overnight until 14 April, and then from 29 April to 3 May (five nights) and 7 to 8 May (two nights) with signed diversions primarily via the A4 between J12 and J14.

Junction 13 Bridge Refurbishment

The M4 westbound carriageway will be closed between the J13 slip roads over five nights (between 22:00 and 06:00) starting on Sunday 21 April and then between the same times from 26 to 29 April and 10 to 13 May, with a possible contingency from 17 to 20 May.

During these closures traffic will be diverted off the M4 via the exit slip road and sent across the junction to rejoin the M4 via the entry slip road.

Upon completion of the full weekend closures, there will be a series of ten overnight closures to reinstate the joints between the slip roads.

Junction 13 Surface Reconstruction

The entire J13 roundabout will be closed from 22:00 on Friday to 06:00 on Monday each weekend between 7 to 10 June and 12 to 15 July, with a possible contingency from 26 to 29 July. Signed diversions will be in place, as for the resurfacing work.

Parishes

Burghfield

Anti-Social Behaviour

We are aware of a number of incidents of ASB and burglary in the area and have raised this with the Communities Team at WBC as well as Thames Valley Police. Discussions are ongoing and a community meeting has been arranged within the next week to understand what steps can be taken.

One of the key points that has come from the discussions is that it is really important that people report incidents to TVP - if an incident is in progress and there is threat of violence or danger then call 999; but if reporting after the fact call 101, or report online: <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>.

Even if you think someone else has reported an incident it's really important that you report it as well - all the small pieces of information shared can be pieced together to identify a suspect / secure a conviction.

Garlands Close and Bracken Way

There is scheduled to be surfacing work undertaken on Thursday 25 April under a road closure from 07:00 to 17:00, with access maintained for residents.

Hunters Hill / Sovereign Housing

Following the recent Neighborhood Action Group meeting, Ian has been following up with Sovereign Housing on their commitment to install CCTV overlooking a problem area in Hunters Hill. Unfortunately the main contact wasn't responding, so he has escalated this through WBC and is awaiting a response

Co-Op Refurbishment

This is progressing well and the sheeting is in the process of being removed around the scaffolding – the windows should be fitted within the next few days. Unfortunately the kiosk has not been open for the last week and the Co-Op are reviewing options for re-opening this

Stratfield Mortimer

Horse and Groom - advertising and planning applications

Further to last month's report, permission for the amended advertising application has been given. As yet there is no committee date for consideration of the planning application.

SID

Further discussions have taken place regarding the purchase by SMPC of speed indicator (etc) equipment, following Graham's members bid

Proposed parking restrictions

Graham has raised some proposals from WBC for double yellow lines on The Street, (a) opposite the end of Mortimer Lane, and (b) near the station mini roundabout, with Cllrs Dennett and Lewis. He has also been communicating with the WBC Highways Team, but wants to get SMPC's views before penning a response to the consultation.

Footpaths across the Fairground conservation area

Repairs to these footpaths are mentioned on a recent WBC Rights of Way Programme and Graham has raised the issue with Cllr Lewis – hopefully this can move any necessary work (which, after all, SMPC have already agreed to pay for) forward.

And finally...

With the elections upon us, we wish all parish councillors well, and particularly wish to thank those retiring parish councillors for their service to the community.

Graham Bridgman, Carol Jackson-Doerge & Ian Morrin

10 April 2019