

**Parish Council Report for period up to 12 June 2019**  
**Cllr Graham Bridgman (West Berkshire Council, Burghfield and Mortimer Ward)**

**West Berkshire Council**

**Extraordinary and Annual Meetings**

We held two consecutive meetings on 21 May and another on 30 May.

**Extraordinary Meeting on 21 May**

At the first meeting on the 21st we confirmed the conferring of the position of Honorary Alderman on the late Marcus Franks. I wrote about Marcus in the report in April and it was gratifying to see many heartfelt tributes to him and the regard in which his wife and young family was held.

**Annual Meeting**

At the second meeting on 21 May the new Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Leader of Council were elected, and the new Leader announced her leadership team. The new sizes of the various main committees were agreed, memberships appointed, Committee Chairman elected, etc.

I was pleased to see that tributes were paid to the outgoing Chairman, my friend and colleague Carol Jackson-Doerge, for her contribution to the life of the council.

As anticipated in last month's report, I have been appointed as the Deputy Leader of the Council, and I have also retained the Adult Social Care executive portfolio. I remain on the Licensing Committee but have come off the area planning committee, appeals panel, etc.

***Executive and committee sizes***

With the exception of the Licensing Committee and Appeals Panel, which have been kept at 12 members (because they each have a function to permit sub-committees or panels to be formed to deal with licensing applications, council tax appeals, home to school transport appeals, etc, and thus need to have a pool of members available), all committees have been reduced in size, generally to nine members, to reflect the reduction in the number of elected members from 52 to 43.

***Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Council***

The new Chairman is Graham Pask and the new Deputy Chairman is Clive Hooker.

***Executive***

Lynne Doherty is the new Council Leader and the new WBC Executive is:

Lynne Doherty	Leader and Portfolio Holder (PH) for Strategy and Communications
Graham Bridgman	Deputy Leader and PH Adult Social Care
Dominic Boeck	PH Children, Education and Young People
Hilary Cole	PH Economic Development and Planning
Steve Ardagh-Walter	PH Environment
Jeff Cant	PH Finance
Howard Woollaston	PH Internal Governance
Rick Jones	PH Public Health and Community Wellbeing
Richard Somner	PH Transport and Countryside

## Council Strategy 2019-23

At the meeting the Council Strategy for the next four years was adopted, setting out areas for improvement—see <http://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/documents/s74631/14a.%20WB%20Council%20Strategy%202019.pdf>.

### Extraordinary Meeting on 30 May

On 30 May we debated a petition presented to WBC asking WBC “to Declare a Climate Emergency and work towards West Berkshire becoming net Zero Carbon by 2030 “ (sic) and calling on WBC:

“to declare a ‘Climate Emergency’ and:

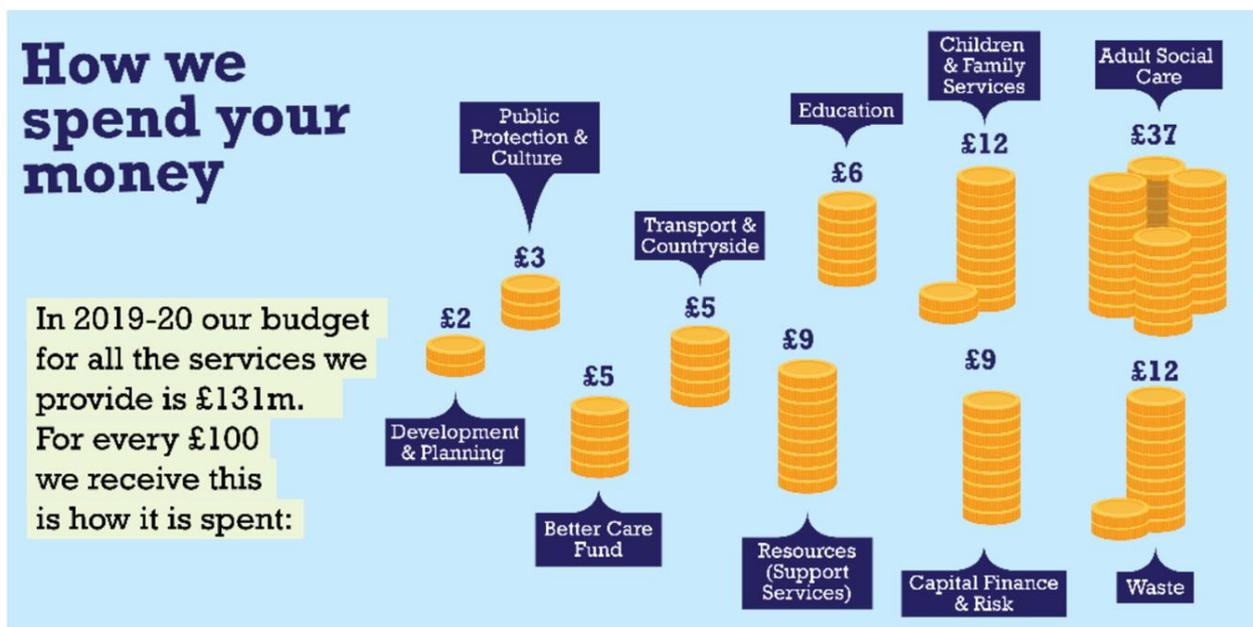
1. Pledge to make West Berkshire carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;
2. Ensure West Berkshire’s economic leadership in the region continues by investing in renewable technologies and capitalising on the growth in renewable innovation;
3. Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible and work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5;
4. Continue to work with partners across West Berkshire and the wider region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
5. Provide an outline strategy by 1st June 2019 to ensure the transition to a zero carbon future by 2030 is initiated.”

It is important to note that the WBC Constitution permits one of three outcomes for a petition: agree it as worded, reject it, or refer it for further investigation. Because we could not agree the wording (eg there was no possibility of an outline strategy being agreed by 1 June – two days later), we (and this was a proposal from the Conservatives, seconded by the Liberal Democrats) agreed to put the issue back to the next council meeting in early July, but in the meantime to have a small working group from all sides of the council (Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Greens) to seek to agree a wording for a joint motion on climate emergency.

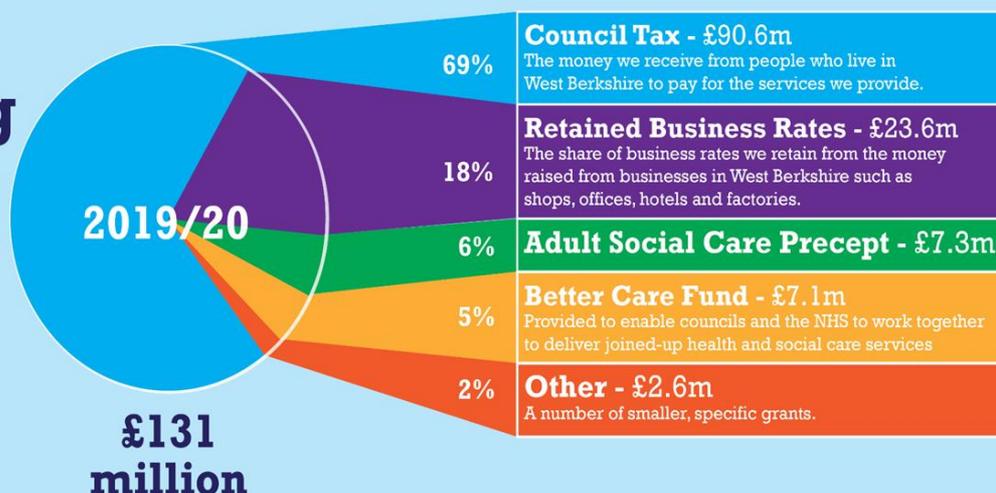
Importantly, during the debate, both Conservative and Liberal Democrat speakers made it clear that they supported the ethos of the petition, but could not agree the precise wording sought.

### Council spending 2019/20

It may be interesting for parish councillors, particularly new ones, to see the following WBC graphics:



# Where does our funding come from?



## Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy (BLIS)

The BLIS is the local response from the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to HMG's 2017 National Industrial Strategy.

WBC is now encouraging local residents and businesses to respond to a consultation on the BLIS Framework Document, which is a working version of the strategy element of the BLIS and will be supported by other documents, notably a full evidence base, a spatial economic narrative, and a set of implementation plans. It seeks to identify the strengths in Berkshire's local economy and to consider what action can be taken to make improvements to enable more people and organisations to benefit from the area's success.

The consultation (see <http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/news?id=110>) is open to 21 June.

## National Highways & Transport Survey

A random sample of the district's residents are being asked for their views on WBC's highways and transport services – from the condition of roads and footpaths to the quality of cycling facilities.

WBC is one of 111 councils to sign up to a special survey on highways and transport, organised by National Highways and Transport. The responses will be compared with the views of other members of the public across England and Scotland, as part of the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction survey, a unique collaboration between Local Authorities across England and parts of Scotland with a common agenda – service improvement.

A questionnaire will be sent to a random sample of at least 3,300 West Berkshire residents from 7 June, with local and national results to be published in late October. The results will enable National Highways and Transport to find out what people in West Berkshire think about these important services and help WBC to assess how it is performing.

## Insulation and Heating Grants

A new range of grants has been launched for WBC residents to help towards the cost of boiler upgrades, full central heating, loft insulation and cavity wall insulation.

Heat Berkshire has already been offering these grants in other areas of the county (last year more than 500 Berkshire residents received a new boiler through the service). Residents are likely to be eligible for a grant if they are on benefits or if their household income (after tax and certain deductions such as mortgage or rent) is less than £35k.

Grants are available for people who own their home for boiler upgrades, first time central heating installation and insulation. Tenants and landlords of privately rented properties are also eligible for grants for central heating and insulation (regardless of the tenants' income) provided that the home has an energy performance certificate rating of A to E, however rented homes are not eligible for boiler upgrades. In many cases the works are completely free of charge, although central heating grants are likely to require a partial contribution from the property owner.

The central heating grants are available for people who currently have no heating system. This includes using open fires or plug in electric heaters, or for people who wish to switch from electric storage heaters to a full radiator heating system. Grant funding can also be provided towards the cost of a new mains gas connection or, in rural areas, the new heating system can be fuelled from bottled gas, and in some cases, by a ground source heat pump.

More information can be found from Heat Berkshire - 01344 515 045 / [www.heatBerkshire.co.uk](http://www.heatBerkshire.co.uk). All works are subject to survey, eligibility criteria and the total pot of funding available.

## **Hidden Carers**

### ***Background***

Across Berkshire, learning from safeguarding adult reviews has demonstrated a consistent theme - some of the adults who died were being looked after by a single family member, with the carer often being a male child of the deceased aged around 40-50. These carers had often lived with their parent or sibling from childhood and were socially isolated – the families were not well known to agencies and did not ask for help, so they had a history of coping on their own. During the course of the review, these family members did not define themselves as being a 'carer,' but rather 'a son or daughter.'

Investigations revealed that unregistered carers often have their own unrecognised needs and little or no knowledge of how to ask for and access help - this could leave their parent with increasing needs and deteriorating health.

So, how we can target and help unregistered carers who do not know they can ask for help?

### ***Campaign***

Following these findings, the East Berkshire and Berkshire West CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups), together with Signal4Carers, are piloting a six month campaign around hidden carers to coincide with Carers Week (10-16 June, [www.carersweek.org](http://www.carersweek.org)).

The aim of the campaign is to ensure that people who are carrying out caring responsibilities recognise themselves as carers and get the help available to them - they may not see themselves as being in need of services and many may feel that they are simply carrying out ordinary responsibilities as part of a family.

There will be messages appearing on the back of local buses and on their interior screens, with the strapline, 'I'm her son/daughter, not her carer'. These will show a Freephone number: 0800 1337851, with calls being answered by Signal4Carers and people signposted to the relevant organisation or service who can help.

## **Local Matters**

### **Members' Community Bids**

As anticipated in a recent email to Parish Chairmen and Clerks, and as followed up with an email to the Clerks today (12 June), the initial 2019/20 round of members' bids has been announced, with a pot of £80k. Bids are up to £5k per member, to be match funded (eg from relevant s.106 or CIL funds), so I now await your deliberations!

If there is a larger project a PC wants to be considered then I'm sure Geoff, Royce and I will be able to put our heads together...

## **Library Volunteer Organiser**

The Library Service were looking for a volunteer organiser for both the Burghfield and Mortimer Libraries so I suggested they approach the parish councils in the first instance to get the message out.

## **Police and Crime Commissioner**

Items from the latest PCC newsletter include:

### ***Early Intervention Youth Fund***

Following an award of £822k from the Home Office's Early Intervention Youth Fund (EIYF), there is a programme of joint activities to tackle youth violence, vulnerability and exploitation, to be delivered in partnership by TVP, local authorities, schools and charities etc across the Thames Valley.

Funding has been awarded to 14 providers to carry out a range of activities, from broad reach awareness raising in schools to targeted interventions with young people already involved in gangs and knife crime, including:

- 'County Lines' theatre tour– a play touring secondary schools in the Thames Valley aimed at young people to raise awareness of County Lines, grooming, child sexual and criminal exploitation;
- Workshops for young people – sessions for 11 to 16 year olds delivered in schools and youth venues across the Thames Valley focussing on gangs, knife crime and County Lines;
- 'Gang Awareness' training for professionals – interactive workshops for those working on the front line with young people who are being, or are at risk of being, exploited;
- Youth work to tackle exclusions - youth professionals working in schools, supporting staff and young people to reduce exclusions and the subsequent risk of involvement in criminal activity;
- Detached youth work – targeting young people where they 'hang out', giving them access to positive activities to reduce the likelihood of them becoming involved in gang crime and violence ;
- Intensive youth work – tailored intervention programmes for vulnerable young people at risk of, or already involved in, criminal exploitation, grooming, serious youth violence and gangs.

For more information, email [partnerships@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:partnerships@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk).

### ***New Reading Local Policing Area HQ***

Contracts have been exchanged for the new area HQ at Atlantic House, located off Imperial Way to the south of Reading town centre. Occupation of the building is expected to take place in early 2021.

In addition to this building TVP is now looking to secure a visible town centre facility to include a front counter, town centre facing neighbourhood base and office facilities, to support policing of the busy town centre.

### ***Police Property Act Fund***

The PCC and Chief Constable have opened a new grant round of the Police Property Act Fund, with £140k available to community and voluntary groups

The Fund is created from money recovered by the police and the proceeds from the sale of items that cannot be returned to identified owners, including seizures from criminals.

Applications are now invited from local voluntary and community groups who can contribute towards two of the PCC's strategic priorities in the Police and Crime Plan – (i) reducing reoffending and (ii) local responses to Serious Organised Crime and Terrorism.

Examples of projects that may be considered include those that aim to tackle substance abuse, gangs and knife crime, offender management, domestic violence perpetrators, public awareness of serious organised crime, prevent violent extremism and exploitation of vulnerable people.

The closing date for this round of applications is 09:00, Thursday 20 June. For further information and how to apply visit <https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/police-property-act-fund/>.

## **Parishes**

### **Burghfield**

#### ***Planning application - land adjacent to The Hollies***

I have had discussions with WBC Planning, and been in correspondence with the developer, regarding this application, and in particular the landscape buffer between the site and the nursing home. I note that it will now go to Eastern Area Planning Committee due to the number of objections and await that meeting.

### **Stratfield Mortimer**

#### ***Speed Indicator Device***

I have been in correspondence with Cllr Lewis and the Clerk, and with WBC and TVP, regarding the proposal for an ANPR SID – no doubt there will be a further discussion at the SMPC meeting tomorrow (13 June).

#### ***The Street pavement***

I have noted the Facebook posts by Cllr Bull on this subject. Personally, I have been in correspondence for a while with WBC Highways about the stretch from the pedestrian crossing below Kiln Lane up to the bend at the top of the hill and I trust that between us we can push through some improvements.

#### ***Horse and Groom - planning application***

The revised application for a pergola and some external seating has been approved. I have corresponded with the agents regarding certain aspects of the design.

#### ***Birch Lane***

All I can say is that the saga continues, but it hasn't dropped off my radar!

***Graham Bridgman***

12 June 2019