

District Councillor Debby Hallett's Report to North Hinksey Parish Council

15 Sep 2011

1. The Vale has recently revised the terms and conditions of their garden waste service (brown bins). They want to make it clear that the fee is a contribution to running costs and that collections will be suspended for two weeks over Christmas, to enable Biffa to collect the extra household waste produced at this time of the year, when very little garden waste is created. In the past when they've tried to manage the two it has resulted in lengthy delays to collections of rubbish and recycling.

There will be an extra collection of garden waste during a week in spring, which they'll publicise nearer the time. Plus, to increase efficiency and effectiveness, new customers will only be able to pay via direct debit, and existing customers will be switched over before their service is next renewed. They hope some customers will switch now but gives all customers up to 12 months notice of this change.

2. You can sign up for a free waste text message to let you know if your collection day has changed due to bank holidays or bad weather. To register send a text message with the word "waste" and your collection day to 07797 870371. For example, "waste Thursday".
3. The cabinet member for communications has announced: "We decided to stop publishing the council's residents' magazine Unvald in order to save £39,600 a year. Instead, the council will be making better use of other ways of communicating with residents, including via its annual leaflet in March with council tax bills and the tags that are left on all bins in the district to let residents know about revised waste collections over Christmas and Easter. This year the distribution slot that had been booked to deliver Unvald in late November will instead be used to deliver next year's waste calendar as the current calendar runs until December. The following year we will include the waste calendar in the booklet we send with council tax bills. We will be reviewing the way we communicate with residents in two years time."
4. Residents in Yarnells Hill approached me about the coaches that take children to Matthew Arnold School. They understood coaches were supposed to use the main approach via Cumnor Hill and Arnolds Way, rather than Yarnells Hill and Lime Road. Queries to the school and transport service providers, via the Oxfordshire Highway & Transport steward for our area, Laura Hutchins, found no contracts or agreements regarding the route to be taken by the coach drivers; they can take whatever route they like.
5. An increase in the cost of scrap metal has meant that thieves have been targeting lead on buildings and vans with catalytic converters. Thames Valley Police advise businesses and van owners to take some simple steps to help prevent these kinds of thefts:
 - If you own a van with a catalytic converter, get a catalytic converter marking kit (these are available on line at <http://bit.ly/mYPpJj>).
 - If you have lead on the roof of your business or property, use anti-climb paint to prevent access to the roof and put up signs to say that the paint is being used.
6. Local Government Boundary Commission for England has confirmed that it has included a Further Electoral Review (FER) of Vale of White Horse in its work programme. The goal is to reduce the number of councillors from the current 51 to around 34. The FER will commence in March 2012 and should last no more than a year allowing for the implementation of any new electoral arrangements prior to the next district council elections.
7. Oxfordshire County Council encourages all parishes in the Vale to develop community emergency plans. The county intends that these plans would identify key contacts within a parish or town that should be notified by emergency services in the event of an incident, as well as buildings that could be used if

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residents need to be evacuated. This information will also be shared with the district council. The county is also holding a series of events for parish about emergency response and winter, to which your parish councillors have been invited.

8. The Vale council has welcomed plans from Thames Water to start work improving the drainage problems in Cumnor Hill and Botley. Thames Water has written to the council to outline its plans to carry out work to upgrade the sewerage system in Botley. This work is due to start in January 2012 and should be completed by the end of next year. This also means that planning applications, which have been on hold because of the sewerage problems, can be determined now that the drainage improvement works is due to start. Since October 2007, the council has been unable to permit any planning applications for new housing in the OX2 0, OX2 9 or OX1 5 postcode areas because of a holding objection raised by Thames Water due to the ongoing drainage problems. Thames Water has confirmed that as the planned work will be carried out shortly, it has no objection to the council permitting applications for new housing in the area subject to a condition being imposed on planning permissions stipulating that no new houses can be occupied until the drainage improvement works have been completed.

Contact Stuart Walker, (01235) 540505, stuart.walker@southandvale.gov.uk

9. Is there a public area in your neighbourhood that could do with being cleared, cleaned or painted? If so, Thames Valley Probation could help. They run the Community Payback scheme, where offenders who have been sentenced to an Unpaid Work Requirement are given jobs that benefit the local community. For example, placements could involve:

- clearing overgrown public areas
- removing graffiti (on public rather than private property)
- conservation work
- painting and decorating (especially schools and other community/charity facilities)

This scheme is particularly keen to take on placements where offenders work alongside volunteers from the community. This helps offenders to understand the value of the work they are doing.

If you know of an area where you think Community Payback could assist with, please email the details to Karen Brown, Community Safety Projects Officer, Karen.Brown@southandvale.gov.uk.

10. Town and parish council forum 2011. The Vale has invited town and parish councils to attend a town and parish council forum to be held during the evening of Wednesday 23 November 2011 at Wantage Civic Hall. This is the first of its kind in the Vale. It's expected to be a well-attended event providing town and parish councils the opportunity to meet with other parish councillors, councillors and officers from the district council and local public sector representatives.

The evening includes a buffet and networking session, service information stands, an address from the chief executive and an opportunity to discuss current issues and how organisations can work together to tackle them.

If you're interested in attending the forum or would like more information contact Anne Hall, Corporate Strategy, 01491 823311, anne.hall@southoxon.gov.uk