

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

19 December 2013

1. **West Way Redevelopment:** As I reported last month, most of my working time has been filled with work in support of West Way Community Concern, and the people of Botley who have contacted me about their views of the proposed Doric Plans. I try to respectfully answer every email I receive, and there have been many!

In October and November, I was successful at calling for a closer scrutiny of the procedures followed in the course of the sale of West Way to Doric. Since then, there's been some further successes.

On 11 Dec, West Way Concern presented their own petition with over 2200 signatures to the Vale Council, calling for them to stop the current plans and come back to the discussion table to work out a plan better suited to Botley's needs. I proposed a motion to Council to urge Cabinet to do all they can to encourage Doric to work together with the Botley community to move forward. This was seconded by the Leader of the council, and passed unanimously. (I'm sure you've seen press coverage.) It's not often we see party politics at the Vale set aside to ensure something happens that's best for a local community. Strong negotiation made this one happen.

In meetings with representatives of the Vale, North Hinksey Parish Council, West Way Community Concern and other community leaders about what to expect in the planning application process, we've learned that the planning application is expected by Friday the 20th of December. We negotiated a longer consultation period; it will be for at least 6 weeks (rather than the usual 3), and may even be longer. We'll know exactly how long, once the application is registered. Vale planning officers will notify me when the application is received, and when it's up on the website for viewing. We've also arranged for a hard copy of all plans to be available locally. Consultation is expected to begin early in the new year.

Watch my website or Facebook page; I'll announce things there as I learn of them.

You can keep up to date here: <http://westwayconcern.wordpress.com/>

2. **Lime Road Development:** I've had a site visit to meet the site manager, who told me what's planned for the next few weeks, and I passed that on to residents. I plan to meet with Bovis every few weeks to get a head's up on what's coming up, and pass the word on (via blog and email newsletter). This year, work will finish 20 Dec 13, and resume 6 Jan 14 -- a bit of a break. This week they plan to finish the main road that goes into the estate. That will allow deliveries to be made well back in the site, away from the road. After Christmas, the first job is to take down the two remaining buildings on site, and haul away accumulated rubble. It will be a few days of messy, noisy work. Then work begins on the houses on the west side, nearest the border with the playing fields. See the details on my blog.
3. **Neighbourhood Plan:** the Vale's delayed Local Plan isn't expected to be in force until late in 2014. I wouldn't be at all surprised to see yet another delay. Until we have a Local Plan, we don't have very much ammunition for fighting planning applications that bring to our community development we don't want.

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At the most recent meeting of the Botley Traffic Advisory Committee (BTAC), discussion was around the basically unsatisfactory nature of the traffic in Botley. One instance after another came up for discussion and possible solutions. At one point, Keith Stenning, the Oxfordshire County Council Area Steward for the Vale locality, said, "The biggest weapon for tackling traffic problems is a Neighbourhood Plan. Until you have a Neighbourhood Plan in place, you won't be listened to."

That's both good news and bad news. It's good news that someone from outside the parish has said that it would be good for the parish. I've been encouraging the parish council to explore this for a couple of years. It's bad news in that we don't have a Neighbourhood Plan, but we DO have serious traffic problems, which are likely to increase as a result of current and upcoming planning applications that will bring more cars into Botley.

The recent public meeting was well-organised and well-attended, with panel comprising experts from around the county. There was unanimous support for a Neighbourhood Plan for Botley, and many people volunteered to help do the work. I urge the parish council to authorise this work to begin without more delay. We need a Neighbourhood Plan so local people can decide where housing should go and ensure it fits harmoniously within our area. It's an investment in the future of our community.

4. **New Home Bonus Grants.** The deadline was 30 Nov 13, and once again, there were no applications from North Hinksey parish organisations. That makes three rounds in a row now. Next year, I'll promote them via the Botley Hinksey website and The Sprout. I'd very much appreciate it if the parish council could promote them as well; please include information in your newsletter (if that's still being done) and announce grant application info in parish council meetings when I inform you about that applications are open, so that it gets into the minutes. There are several schemes to cover capital expenses, revenue and festivals. Local organisations are missing out.
5. **Consultations:** To participate, register: <https://consult.southandvale.gov.uk/portal/vale/>
 - Drafting a parish charter; whether to do this to enable Vale and parishes to work more closely together to provide services. Through 6 Jan 2014
6. **My portfolio responsibilities are Legal & Democratic Services, and IT, HR, and Customer Services.** Regular meetings with Heads of Services in these departments keep me aware of what's going on. If I can ever help the council or residents in any of these areas, I'm happy to do it. Please contact me.
7. **Online presence in four ways.** Facebook: [facebook.com/DebbyHallettLD](https://www.facebook.com/DebbyHallettLD) (you don't need to be a registered Facebook user to see this page, but you do in order to comment).
Twitter: twitter.com/DebbyHallett_LD
Various news items and opinions on my blog: debbyhallett.mycouncillor.org.uk/
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