

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

27 Mar 2013

- 1. Electoral Review of Vale of White Horse:** This week the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) announced its recommended boundary changes for the Vale. As I reported last month, many local residents wrote in to give evidence of strong community ties in North Hinksey, and this made all the difference. I can report that the Boundary Commission listened to the people, and North Hinksey will remain undivided. We'll be part of a two-councillor ward comprising North Hinksey, Wytham, South Hinksey and Sunningwell. Cllr Dudley Hoddinott (Vale councillor from Cumnor) and I put in a lot of hours lobbying both the Vale and the Boundary Commission to encourage this decision. Other letters were received from County Cllr Janet Godden, The Sprout (Ag MacKeith) and the Harcourt Hill Residents' Association. I thank everyone who write in, and I hope you are pleased with the outcome. Read all about it here: <http://bit.ly/YidBLS>
- 2. New Homes Bonus Grants:** The government now pays local authorities an amount per new home occupied, called the New Homes Bonus (NHB). It's a large amount of money here in the Vale, used mainly for balancing the revenue budget each year (thus keeping local taxes low). The Vale has earmarked part of it for community grants to help local areas where new homes are being built. The north-east area isn't getting much (hardly any, in fact) of the planned new homes development over the next 5-10 years, so the grant money available to us is very small. I believe it's about £9k for the whole area next year.
- 3. Leisure facilities:** The ongoing story. In Nov 12 I reported to you that the parish was losing out on section 106 money from the Tilbury Lane and Lime Road development due to lack of demonstrated need of recreational facilities. In Dec 2012, the Vale's recreation and Leisure consultation finished. In Jan 2013, I brought to Vale council's attention the lack of consultative questions about Botley facilities. In Feb 2013, I seconded a motion at Vale to allocate budget for a recreational needs assessment for our area, but it was voted down. Now, the Vale Scrutiny Committee has requested a report on the results of the consultation; we are interested to know what was discovered about leisure facilities, and how this information will inform their policy and decisions about provision. The report is delayed; I will report more when I know more.
- 4. Section 106 for Lime Road.** The high level planning application for Lime Road development was approved in Feb 13. The section 106 agreement covers the following: Bridleway works: £30k; Cycle stands at Elms Parade: £1k; Education: £1M; Libraries: £28k; Museum: £1700; Pedestrian and Cycle like improvement: £20k (Willow Walk); Public Transport: £19k; Social and Health Care: £32k; Strategic Transport: £175k; Waste Mgmt: £22k. You can see it all here: <http://bit.ly/14luVuk>
- 5. West Way Re-development:** I was asked a question for the Annual Parish Meeting earlier this month about some of the legal obligations Doric has to provide community facilities and to conduct consultations. I sent my answer to the parish clerk. It's also available on my Facebook page, or online: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/131219642/Annual-Parish-Meeting-2013-Speech>. Bottom line, they are committed to a replacement Baptist Church, community hall, and space for a library (but it's up the County to do the library deal, as they currently lease the space). There is no obligation to pre-application consultation, although they are certainly engaging in

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that. Doric's advertised architects include mountfordpigott.com, who have redeveloped areas like ours. You might want to check their website out.

6. **Flooding.** Huw Thomas of Thames water recently wrote to the Vale to address local concerns about flooding in Botley. You can see the whole letter on my Facebook page. Here's a snippet:

...we have identified some further improvements that we can make to the local pumping station in North Hinksey. In order to stop some of the performance issues at the station, caused by the disposal of inappropriate items into the sewers, we will be upgrading both the pumps and their control panel, which we expect to complete by the end of May. We are also starting a regular cleaning programme for the pumps which should help us to manage any excess materials that accumulate.

7. **Oxford Brookes University (OBU) Master Plan:** There's not much change from last month, except for a further delay. The adoption of the OBU Harcourt Hill master plan now awaits the completion by OBU of a transport assessment requested by OCC. It's not expected to go to Cabinet before June 2013. When I hear I will post it on my Facebook page. You can email the Planning Policy Officer, Mark Williams, directly: mark.williams@southandvale.gov.uk.
8. **Vale News.** The latest edition of the online newsletter for parish councils is here: <http://valenews.whitehorsedc.gov.uk>. Link from there to consultation on Local Plan.
9. **Progress of Local Plan.** Public exhibitions and consultations dates were announced in Feb. As there are no exhibitions in Botley, I complained to the Leader that we are getting unequal voice in consultations. I got no direct response. However, I did learn from others that since Botley has no strategic housing sites, we are not considered to be heavily impacted by planned development, therefore not included in the major exhibitions list. That said, there are unmanned exhibits throughout the Vale, and I understand one of those is at our library.

The Local Plan is a 200 page tome with lots of detail about planned developments in many parts of the Vale. Our area has two mentions: the West way Redevelopment, and the Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill expansion. Probably they would expect our local development concerns to be addressed by our Neighbourhood Plan. To read more about Neighbourhood Plans: <http://bit.ly/WT6ro1>

10. **Local info online:** You can easily find current North Hinksey planning applications on my public-facing Facebook page: www.facebook.com/DebbyHallettLD (you don't need to be a registered Facebook user to see this page). I add info as soon as I receive notice of the planning application from the Vale. Included: consultation period, targeted decision date, and a link to the Vale Planning site so readers can see all information about the application.

11. **Anything else you'd like to hear about?** Please ask.