

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

28 Feb 2013

- 1. Recycling and Landfill:** In 2012, the Vale sent 66% of its waste for recycling, reuse or composting, down from 69% in 2011. Compositional analysis pointed to two main culprits for this increase in stuff sent to landfill: more recyclable plastic and compostable food items going into the grey bins. In real terms, we sent 1630 more tonnes to landfill in 2012. At £80 per tonne, that's £130K more the Vale paid in 2012. Every bit you do helps keep our taxes down.
- 2. Leisure facilities:** The Vale's consultation finished in December. I have brought it to council's attention that there were no consultative questions asked about Botley facilities. This month, I seconded a motion to allocate budget for a recreational needs assessment for our area, but it was voted down. However, the Leader of the Vale Council is open to discussing how the Vale can support leisure and recreation in Botley. In 2009, Sport England and a Vale assessment identified this area as seriously lacking in recreational facilities, especially for teenagers. Since then, we lost the skate bowl, but the MUGA went up, replacing an older facility. Recently the parish narrowly voted not to consider a wheeled sport facility. Maybe we can look at the problem more broadly and find a way forward, or a project that suits, where the Vale can help?
- 3. Grit for minor roads:** I had a letter this month on behalf of a disabled person in our parish who was housebound in the recent snows due to no help in clearing pavements and the minor road they live in. The County's responsibility is to grit roads where reasonably practicable (they emphasize this phrase). They grit the main roads, and supply bins and one 'binful' of grit for use on local minor roads. They will provide more grit to communities, but it's left to towns and parishes to distribute it. In the past few years, most towns and parishes have increased their precept to cover this service, and also to provide help to the more vulnerable residents. But North Hinksey parish has not been willing to consider this. As a result, the County washes their hands of the problem, the parish refuses to take it on, so the people of the parish lose out. I encourage the parish council to resolve this problem to the benefit of the people who live here. Local people are losing out.
- 4. West Way Re-development:** The briefings begin on 28th of Feb. Too late for this report.
- 5. Portas Money:** I reported last month about the planned Christmas-related enhancements to West Way that failed to happen. I enquired of Cabinet Member for Economy Leisure and Property, Cllr Elaine Ware, about the status of the projects to be funded in our West Way (or is it Westway?) precinct. Here's what she told me in January:

In respect of the Christmas items it was agreed that it was too late to deliver these projects as it was so close to Christmas and full potential would not be made. Instead it was agreed that Easter events would be more appropriate and officers and the managing agents for Westway are currently busy planning this with our tenants.

Artistic work has been completed with local children/young people to develop a new logo for the centre and officers are planning to launch this shortly. Redecoration work has been ordered and new benches are also being agreed with the managing agents. Due to the vacant units now being under offer to new tenants the monies allocated to the shop wrapping and community shops are being reallocated to additional smartening up of the gazebos and surrounding areas. Locations for new information boards are being determined in discussion with the managing agents. These boards will be professionally designed using the new branding and logo. We are also looking at providing Wi-Fi for the immediate shops area.

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6. **Electoral Review of Vale of White Horse:** The Boundary Commission consultation on the new district ward boundaries closed in January. Many thanks to the many people who wrote in about the proposed boundary changes here. A browse through the published letters show North Hinksey residents stepped up to be heard: there are letters from John Clements, Sheila Cowley, Martin Hockey, Susan Hockey, Carol Kramer, J Laver, Briony Newport, John Lines, Ruth Muschel, Richard Sills, Gilliane Sills, David Wyatt, Cllr Janet Godden and me. See everything here: <http://bit.ly/YIdBLS>
7. **Community Governance Review.** The Vale has written to town and parish councils with notice of the upcoming, once-in-a-decade opportunity to consider their boundaries and wards. This is planned for June 2013.
8. **Oxford Brookes Master Plan:** The adoption of the Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill master plan as a supplementary planning document to the delayed Local Development Plan is apparently now awaiting the completion by the university of a transport assessment requested by Oxfordshire County Council. I don't know when Cabinet will consider it, but I'm hear it may not be until at least April. 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
9. **Vale Budget 2013-14.** In next year's budget was a curious line item, for charging parishes more of the actual cost of emptying dog bins. I asked about this at Scrutiny; there are three categories of dog bins: 1) bought and maintained by the Vale, 2) bought and maintained by local parishes, and 3) requested by parish or town, supplied by Vale, but excess to what the Vale thinks is needed. It is this last category for which parishes will have increased charges. Currently, parishes are charged about 10% of cost. It goes up to 25% in 2013-14, and 50% in 2014-15.
10. **Public loos will not close:** Cabinet bowed to public pressure not to close the Vale's public loos to save money. Two Tardis-type loos will be replaced, and the two worst standard loo buildings will be refurbished. None of this affects North Hinksey's facilities.
11. **Progress of Local Plan.** Public exhibitions and consultations dates have been announced (see <http://bit.ly/13odvx7>). There are no exhibitions in Botley, and I have complained to the Leader that we are getting unequal voice in consultations. I'll let you know the response I get.

Last month I told you about this Vale statement:

As part of our commitment to keep everybody informed about the development of the Local Plan, we have created an email group called The Vale Community. Anybody signed up to the community will receive regular updates on our progress, as well as special messages from those involved on the front line of the local plan's development, including parish community groups and councils. Anybody that wishes to sign up to the Vale Community, should send an email containing the word 'subscribe' to localplan@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

They've started publishing, so if you're interested, subscribe.

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12. Consultations: There is a new Consultation system. Register to receive notifications of current and relevant consultations and to take part in them. More info here: <http://bit.ly/VrIWrm>. There are four open consultations:

- Housing Allocation Policy. Closes midnight 1st March.
- Local Plan Part One. Closes 9th May 2013
- Reception Customer Feedback. Closes in 2020. Yes, that's right.
- Dorchester on Thames Neighbourhood Plan. Closes 3rd April.

13. 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.

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