

Wokingham Borough **NEWS**

Your magazine from Wokingham Borough Council

Summer 2021

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Great new places to play in the borough



LVS Ascot

A Co-educational Day & Boarding School
for young people aged 4 - 18

A happy, supportive educational environment

Infant & Junior School Open Morning

12 October 2021

Reception Open Evening

6 October 2021

Register at: www.lvs.ascot.sch.uk/admissions/open-days

*Open days adhere to government
guidelines and the lockdown road map.



Keeping in touch with us



www.wokingham.gov.uk



customerservice@wokingham.gov.uk



(0118) 974 6000



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You can access Wokingham Borough Council services in a number of ways:

Online: You can search for information, book, report and pay for services on our website www.wokingham.gov.uk

Web chat: Our web chat is available between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and you can access it from our website www.wokingham.gov.uk

Email: customerservice@wokingham.gov.uk

Telephone: Call us on (0118) 974 6000, and select the relevant option for your enquiry

Also in this issue...

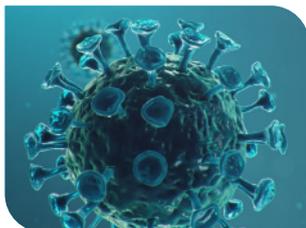


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Our Customer Charter – listening to you to improve our services



Welcome

We exist for no other reason than to serve you, our residents. This is the guiding principle of the council.



We are at the leading edge in many respects – the healthiest, the most prosperous borough and one of the most desirable places to live with the least deprivation resulting in the lowest level of government funding. We are not complacent. We wish to be the best in all respects providing the very best services for you and the best support for those who need it.

We have improvement programmes for everything we do.

We wish to be the local authority employer of choice inspiring pride and fulfilment in all our staff.

Some of the wide range of ways in which we do that are highlighted in this magazine, and I have to say, I am very very proud of our achievements in many areas – the council response to Covid, greatly supported by voluntary partners and businesses, has been magnificent, as has our ability to continue investment in new facilities and services when other authorities have sadly had to cut back.

I am also intensely proud that we have launched plans to promote equality and tackle poverty in the borough – our vision is for a borough that is a great place for all to live, work and do business, and

the key word in that is all. We will not succeed in our aspiration if we leave people behind.

Sound finances are fundamental to providing excellent services for all and to be able to celebrate diversity and support. I am delighted to assure all residents that our accounts are in good shape despite many years of being the worst-funded local authority in the country (see page 5).

Good finances are the bedrock of good services! We will continue to maximise the return on our assets, invest appropriately and seek efficiencies to continue improving what we do for residents.

We want to improve how we engage with all our residents. We will be launching forums, consultations and other ways for you to get involved on massive issues such as the Local Plan Update (which will decide where development can and cannot happen) and how we meet the climate emergency. We need to work with you on these and many other issues and so I would urge you to look at the ways you can get involved (see pages 6 and 7).

John Halsall
Leader of the Council

Editorial: Wokingham Borough Council's Communications Engagement & Marketing Team

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A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, LEARN, WORK & GROW AND A GREAT PLACE TO DO BUSINESS

Our Community Vision for the borough sets out what we will focus on to improve the lives of all you, our residents.

We are committed to working with you and our partners to address and improve what really matters to ensure that this remains a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business.

Our Community Vision was approved last year and covers the period to 2024 / 2025. It focusses on six strategic priorities:

ENRICHING LIVES

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

RIGHT HOMES, RIGHT PLACES

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

SAFE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

KEEPING THE BOROUGH MOVING

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

A CLEAN AND GREEN BOROUGH

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK FOR YOU

- Be relentlessly customer focussed
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

Want the latest news from Wokingham Borough Council straight into your email inbox?

We provide regular updates on Covid-19, traffic & travel, climate emergency and many other topics as well as a general news round-up. To sign up for any or all of these updates, please visit www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'news'

Could the borough council go bankrupt?

With news that some local authorities have had to declare bankruptcy or are struggling to make ends meet, residents are naturally concerned that we could go the same way – but the short and simple answer is no.

In fact, thanks to careful budget monitoring, prudent borrowing and shrewd investments, our finances are among the soundest in the land.

Here's how we are safeguarding our financial future, which is the cornerstone of being able to provide great services.

Close budget monitoring (internal scrutiny):

We regularly monitor and report on expenditure throughout the year in order to keep a close eye on expenditure. Last year, the budget came in slightly underspent and we are currently on a good track this year.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) Resilience Toolkit:

The toolkit was issued by CIPFA in response to general concerns about local authorities' financial stability and provides a measure (a set of financial indicators) against which we can test our resilience. An independent assessment of all these indicators (by the Municipal Journal) placed us in the top 20 in the country overall last year and, since then, all our key indicators have got even better.



Net debt:

All local authorities have borrowed money if they want to invest in new things such as leisure centres, regenerated towns, solar farms and other improvements for the community. But the key is to ensure your borrowing can be funded by the investment return and the assets produced. In our case, the cost of borrowing is not just off-set by the returns we are making, we are actually generating revenue that can be reinvested in services.

Strong reserves:

The recent National Audit Office report on the 'Financial sustainability of local authorities' shows we have reserves that can cover 85% of our spending power, which is twice the national average.

Auditing of accounts (external scrutiny):

Our external auditors (Ernst & Young) have recently signed off our accounts as sound and have raised no concerns with regards to our financial soundness. They have also specifically reported positively on our approach to commercial investments which is in stark contrast to local authorities who have had to declare bankruptcy after ignoring warning signs flagged up by their auditors.

But don't take our word for it:

Go to the National Audit Office website (nao.org.uk) and search for Financial sustainability of local authorities.

Executive View

Cllr John Kaiser, executive member for finance and housing

"With other local councils getting into financial difficulties, it is important to give our residents confidence that we are in a strong position and are not at risk. Thanks to sound investments and careful budget monitoring, our services are not only safe, but we are able to invest in improvements for all."



Council decisions and how to get involved

Have your say:

There are many different ways to have your say on local issues and get involved in local democracy- and we are determined to improve the way we listen to views.

Residents can attend any public meeting – such as those of the decision-making Executive, full council, planning committee – and there are ways to participate in these as well.

During the Covid-19 pandemic these meetings have been virtual but participation has continued and there are always ways to take part. You can ask a question at meetings of Council, Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Audit Committee and Licensing and Appeals Committee. You can also request to speak on applications at Planning Committee.



Executive and full council meetings

The council's Executive generally meets monthly and it is responsible for all strategic decision making for the authority, except for some matters that have to be decided at a full meeting of the council.

Executive is made up of the Leader of the Council and other councillors known as Executive Members, who are each responsible for a specific portfolio – such as transport and highways or children's services. The Executive is equivalent to the Cabinet in central government, although with the key difference that it meets in public.

The Executive makes decisions in line with our overall policies and budget and decisions taken by the Executive can be scrutinised by our Overview and Scrutiny Committees. How our decisions are scrutinised is very important (see separate fact box of Overview and Scrutiny).

The full Council is the forum for debating major issues and there are a number of topics – such as setting the level of Council Tax – that can only be considered by it. These issues cannot be delegated to any other body. Membership of the Council is all 54 elected councillors.

Meetings of the Executive and full council are public and residents can attend either in person or virtually.

Residents can submit questions to both the Executive and Full Council meetings and these are answered by the appropriate Executive Member.



For details on attending these meetings and asking questions please visit the council's website at www.wokingham.gov.uk and search for 'meetings'

Executive members:

- Leader of the Council- John Halsall
- Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Finance and Housing- John Kaiser
- Executive Member for Business and Economic Development- Stuart Munro
- Executive Member for Children's Services- Graham Howe
- Executive Member for Environment and Leisure- Parry Bath
- Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services- Charles Margetts
- Executive Member for Highways and Transport- Pauline Jorgensen
- Executive Member for Neighbourhood and Communities- Bill Soane
- Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement- Wayne Smith
- Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions- Gregor Murray



For full details of executive members responsibilities visit the council's website at www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'executive posts'

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

We have four Overview and Scrutiny Committees that review the council's decisions and actions:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Their roles are to:

- Make sure the work of Executive is being delivered efficiently and cost-effectively
- Assist with policy development and review existing policies
- Investigate the work of partner organisations or external bodies such as the NHS

Members of the public can suggest topics to be reviewed by these committees either directly themselves or via their local ward member (if this issue affects only a single ward).



For more on the council's Overview and Scrutiny committees visit the council's website www.wokingham.gov.uk and search for 'scrutiny'

Consultation and engagement

We are committed to improving the way we engage with residents and listen to different views on how we plan and run services.

We run formal consultations, such as on planning applications and traffic regulation orders and statutory processes such as the Local Plan, but are also keen to hear from people through more informal engagement.

Recent topics we have engaged on include our Arts and Culture Strategy, Leisure Strategy and of walking and cycling improvements. Later this year we will be seeking views on major issues such as our Waste Strategy and the Local Plan (which will set where development can and cannot take place across the borough).



For more on our consultations and engagement, visit the councils' website at www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'engage Wokingham'.

Find your ward councillor

There are 54 elected Wokingham Borough councillors representing, between them 25 wards. Councillors are elected by the community and they represent public interest as well as individuals living within the ward in which they have been elected to serve a term of office.

Ward councillors are accessible to the public through council meetings, telephone calls, emails or surgeries. Surgeries (Covid-19 permitting) provide an opportunity for any ward resident to go and talk to their councillor face to face.



You can find your local ward councillors by visiting the council's website www.wokingham.gov.uk and searching 'councillors'



Recognising Mental Health Issues Early



We've launched an 18-month pilot project, being run by Oxfordshire Mind, to help people suffering problems including anxiety, isolation and stress.

Among the areas the new service is focusing on is recognising mental health issues early and supporting to prevent conditions deteriorating, ensuring timely referrals to specialists, coordinating the support available for those with mental health issues and promoting awareness of issues in the community.

Oxfordshire MIND has started to see its first clients in Wokingham Borough, who have been referred from primary

care. They are also supporting local GPs and their teams as well as council staff and residents who have completed their Mental Health First Aid training.

Claire Shropshall, Project Manager at Oxfordshire MIND, said: **"Now that our full team is on board we're really excited to fully integrate the Wokingham Wellbeing Service within primary care and voluntary/community settings across the borough. It's a privilege to be able to support residents with their mental health and to be part of the local covid recovery response."**

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY IS NEAR



The Covid-19 outbreak, lockdown restrictions and changes to our usual routines – there is no doubt that the past 16 months have been challenging.

At times of uncertainty it is normal to feel worried, low, stressed or anxious. Those feelings can sometimes get out of hand so if you're overwhelmed by constant, repetitive thoughts – help is here.

The Wokingham Recovery College is a mental health service which gives our residents the chance to access online workshops and training sessions designed to enable you to gain greater ability to manage your life, form stronger social relationships and enhance the skills you need for living and working.

Courses are grouped into four main categories, with the option to focus on particular areas:

- Wellbeing: understanding of your mental health and teaching skills for self-management
- Life skills: aiming to increase knowledge of life skills in terms of cooking, finances, housing etc.
- Creativity: allowing you to explore your creative side through various mediums
- Next steps: exploring next steps such as employment and volunteering

The project is a real shift in the delivery of mental health services, from a focus on reducing symptoms to an empowering ethos of rebuilding lives. The courses are ever-

evolving and adapted to meet the needs of students.

Unlike traditional services which have processes and restrictions on who can access their support, the college is open to anyone over 18 living in the borough. Registrations are easy and operate on a self-referral basis.

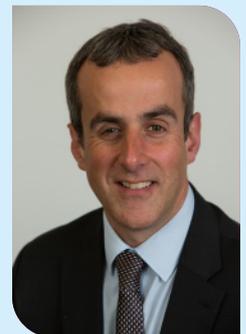


To find out more or complete a registration form, visit www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'the recovery college'.

Executive View

Cllr Charles Margetts Executive member for Health, Well-Being and Adult Services

"The past 18 months have been tough for lots of people in lots of ways and one of the areas that has been hit is mental health. We are reacting to that by offering more help and I would urge anybody who feels they need support to reach out and get it as early as possible: suffering in silence is the worst thing to do."





The borough of art and culture

A strategy to help art and culture flourish

We have worked with local organisations and residents to set out priorities and a clear plan to turn Wokingham Borough into a dynamic cultural hub by 2030.

The Arts and Culture strategy focusses on six key priorities that aim to bring together a range of local and national bodies, as well as towns and parishes, to create a cultural identity for the borough, help bring communities and individuals together as well as looking at how we can use arts to improve local health and well-being. The strategy also look to how the arts can be used to support local economic growth, create new jobs and develop a range of opportunities for children and young people.

Sitting alongside the strategy is a new annual Arts and Culture Action Plan which identifies a range of actions and events that will help make the vision for the borough a success.

The key priorities of the strategy are:

- Enhancing cultural identity and sense of 'place'.
- Fostering social interaction and community cohesion.
- Improving health and well-being.
- Developing opportunities for children and young people.
- Supporting economic growth.
- Maximising partnerships and collaboration.

What's on guide at your fingertips

Do you want to know what arts and culture events are going on – or are you an event organiser yourself?

If so, the Wocca app is for you!

The app provides up-to-date listings of all the exciting things happening in the borough, on-line and live. It was developed by the council and local company Volume as part of the Thames Valley Local Enterprises Smart Cities project to encourage local residents to engage more with arts and culture across the borough.

The overall aim is to help create and shape vibrant communities with high levels of arts and cultural participation, improve the promotion and raise awareness of existing cultural events and stimulate the creation of more local art and culture initiatives.

Anybody organising an arts or cultural event in the borough can get the details added to the app, which can be downloaded on compatible smart phones.

Visit the council's website www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'Wocca'

Arts and Culture Alliance

Alongside this we have worked with several local cultural groups to launch a new Arts and Cultural Alliance to champion arts and culture across the borough.

The Alliance will develop and encourage the new ideas that come from the strategy in order for the borough to grow as a cultural destination.

Individuals or organisations interested in finding out more or getting involved in the Alliance should contact Jodie Sadler, Wokingham Borough Council's Arts and Culture Development Officer, at Jodie.sadler@wokingham.gov.uk

AWARD-WINNING REGENERATION GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH



The ambitious Wokingham town centre regeneration project continued its award-winning success when it was announced as a winner of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Europe Awards for Excellence.

The awards saw the regeneration pitched against development projects from across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, with winners selected for their level of quality and forward-looking approach to development and design. As well as their resilience in light of the challenges imposed by the global pandemic.

“In an extremely challenging year, these laudable projects demonstrate what can be achieved with great ambition and a flexible approach,” said Giancarlo Scotti, chair of the 2021 ULI Europe Awards for Excellence Jury. **“The quality of the entries was extremely high, but the winners stood out as case studies that highlight some of the best initiatives around currently, particularly with regard to housing, sustainability, circular building, regeneration, and community building. We believe that they will prove valuable for ULI members and others in the industry to learn from.”**

As a winner of the ULI European Awards for Excellence the town centre regeneration project will also be automatically entered into the ULI Global Awards with winners set to be announced in October this year.

Other awards won by the regeneration since Peach Place and Elms Field were completed include the Royal Planning Town Institute (RPTI) excellence in planning for a successful economy award, and the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) annual service award for best housing, regeneration or new build initiative.

Elms Field and Peach Place have also been selected for inclusion in the Society for Public Architecture, Construction, Engineering and Surveying (SPACES) Yearbook, with Elms Field shortlisted as a finalist for the Civic Building of the Year award which is set to be judged later in 2021.



Executive View

Cllr Stuart Munro, Executive member for Business and Economic Development

“Winning awards is great and does show the quality of what is being provided, but the real reward for me is seeing people enjoy the regenerated town centre and seeing the businesses within it thrive. As we cautiously recover from the pandemic, we will continue to support all business in the borough.”



Active Travel

We're working on our plans to improve walking and cycling in the borough.

Consultation with the public took place in the spring and thousands of you have given us your views – thank you.

We're now working on the boroughwide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as well as developing our first scheme to be delivered using the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund.

Your feedback from both of these consultations will help shape where we put new cycle routes, improving footways and crossings, creating 'school streets' or reducing the impact of through-traffic in local neighbourhoods.

Keep your eyes peeled for updates later this year.



Footpath improvements

Footpaths on roads across the borough are due for improvements this year.

Denmark Avenue in Woodley is one of the key schemes as part of this, which will improve the area for the hundreds of students and staff travelling to and from Waingels College.

Parts of Shinfield, Twyford, Wokingham, Earley, Charvil and Winnersh are also part of our plans for 2021-22. The improvements with better surfaces help make walking to get around our borough even easier for even more residents.

Some of these projects are being completed alongside road resurfacing. You can read more about that on page 26 & 27.



MY JOURNEY

Our award winning Bikeability training run through MyJourney has secured its funding for 2021-22.

In partnership with the Department for Transport we've been given almost £80,000 to run cycle training in our area.

Bikeability goes beyond the playground and teaches children to ride safely on modern roads across various levels.

We won the Local Authority of the Year 2020 Award from the Bikeability Trust for our work training children in the borough to ride bikes.

The training is the first step for pupils of all ages in our borough, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to learn to ride.

Our MyJourney team will be running loads of fantastic community events throughout the summer to encourage and inspire residents about the benefits of walking and cycling.

They help our residents get on their bikes and teach them about using them safely and confidently. They work with everyone from youngsters to adults who are just getting on two wheels for the first time.

They also run regular Dr Bike sessions, where our trained bike mechanic goes out into the community to offer free bike checks, ensure they're roadworthy and make any free repairs he can.

See what's on in your area by visiting myjourneywokingham.com/events



MAINTAINING OUR SERVICE

Since March 2020, our teams have worked hard to adapt and keep our key services running, de

CUSTOMER DELIVERY



calls handled



web chats handled



wedding ceremonies conducted



births registered



deaths registered



citizenship ceremonies conducted



managed garden waste renewals with new online digital offer

WASTE



tonnes of household waste collected



tonnes of food waste collected



tonnes of recycling collected

ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Despite ongoing restrictions and the impact of Covid-19. Here are just some of our achievements:

PLANNING

1,736

planning applications handled

REGENERATION

13

new organisations welcomed into our council-owned commercial units within Wokingham town centre, including Starbucks, This Little Piggy, Glowfinity, Dabbawalla and more

LIBRARIES

292,000

eBooks, eNewspapers and eMagazines borrowed

HIGHWAYS

144

road resurfacing schemes carried out

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

95%

of Child Protection Plan visits delivered face-to-face

13

children achieved permanent family arrangements

10

new sets of Foster Carers have been approved

Make sure you stay up to date with the latest accurate information

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  @wokinghamBC
 www.wokingham.gov.uk

Climate Emergency

Since declaring a Climate Emergency in July 2019, and adopting the Climate Action Plan in January 2020, there has been lots going on across the borough to help achieve the vision for a net zero carbon borough by 2030.

The last year has seen a massive change to how people are living their lives with the impact of Covid-19 leading to far more people working from home and fewer cars on the road. It's also been an opportunity to focus on projects aimed at continuing this trend and encouraging more residents to start walking or cycling rather than driving in their cars.

We've continued to progress our proposals for new green ways and public rights of way schemes which could see even more of the borough connected together through a network of safe routes, away from main roads, to support local cyclists and walkers. We've also undertaken a major public consultation on our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, helping local residents shape the future of how this work progresses.

Alongside this, greener development has come to the fore with projects like the Dinton Activity Centre showing how great carbon neutral schemes can be proceed. We also have housing schemes like Toutley East and Winnersh Farm which, could see the council showing how the latest green technology and initiatives can be used to deliver more sustainable homes.

Local renewable energy generation has also taken a major step forward with the approval for the first of the solar farms identified in the Climate Emergency Action Plan. Located on council-owned farmland near Barkham. The plan will see

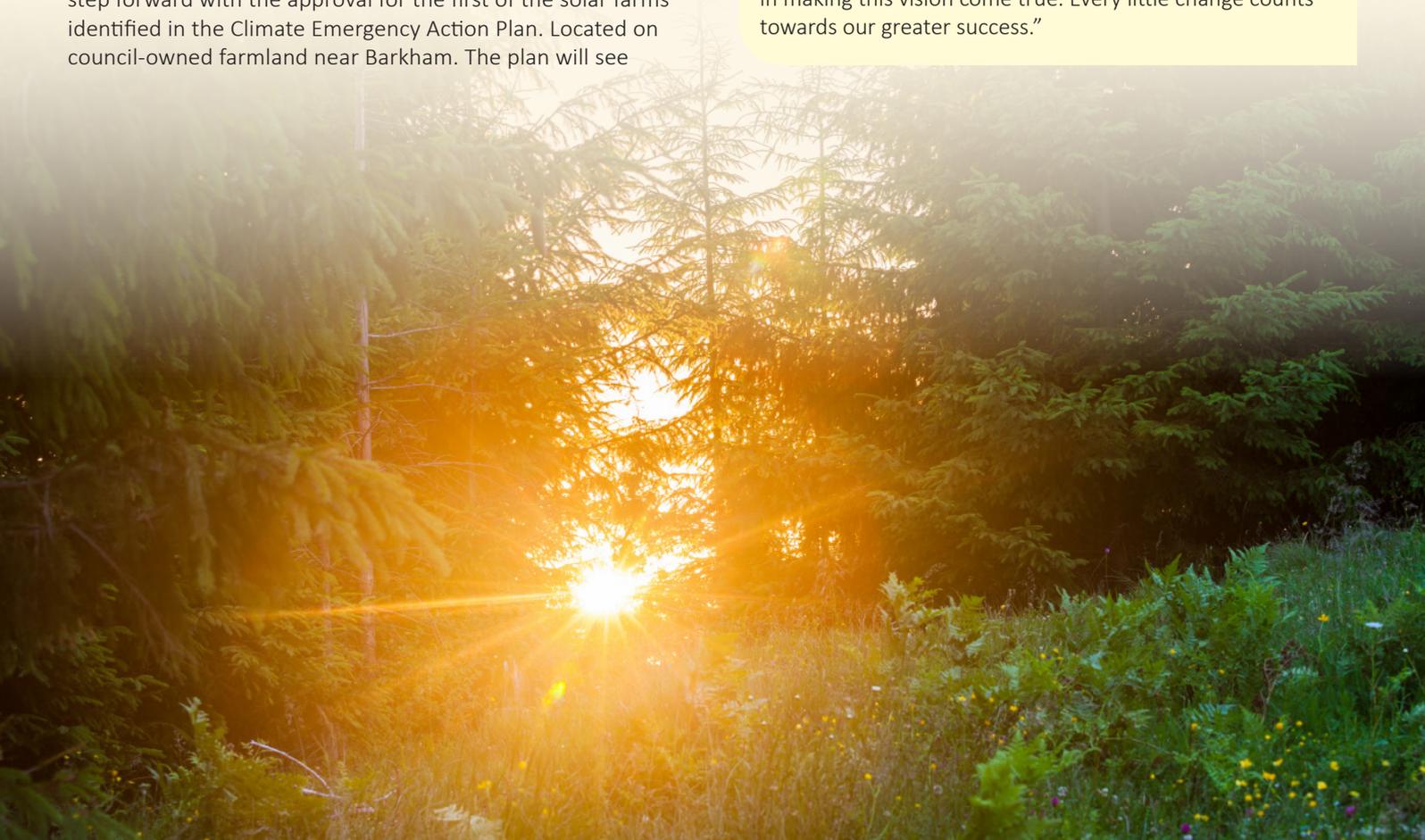
about 72,000 solar panels on the site, providing enough green energy to power over 7,000 local homes and businesses. The plans would also see the creation of a new greenway linking Barkham, Finchampstead and Arborfield, and the planting of over 15,000 new trees to the south of the site.

Plans for wider tree planting across the borough are also in place with a £300,000 grant secured from the Woodland Trust that will see over 250,000 new trees planted in the next five years helping to reduce carbon emissions in the local area.

Executive View

Cllr Gregor Murray, Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions

"It's been amazing seeing more and more projects roll out to help tackle climate change in the local area. However, it is a massive task and we know we can't do this alone. We need everyone to do their bit and urge you to join us in making this vision come true. Every little change counts towards our greater success."



INVESTING IN LEISURE

The significant health benefits of physical activity are universal. From the very young to the elderly- helping to raise achievement in schools, enabling self-care for those with long-term conditions and helping to prevent mental and physical illness across all age-groups. And this is why increasing levels of participation in sports and active leisure pursuits, and reducing the numbers of people who are inactive, is so important to us at the Borough Council.

We continue to significantly invest in our leisure facilities – more than £50million- across the Wokingham Borough. In this magazine we wanted to highlight two of our projects which will bring many benefits to the community.

Enhancing facilities at Cantley Park



Work is well under way at Cantley Park to enhance the facilities on offer not only local football teams but also the large number of people who use the park for sport such as cricket, archery, and tennis. There will also be lots of benefits for those that use the park for relaxation either as individuals or families.

Coming to the park soon is a brand new state-of-the-art 3G artificial pitch with floodlights. The existing pavilion is also being refurbished to provide new changing facilities, a viewing balcony and café.

We will also be providing an additional 39 parking spaces, bringing the total to 164, as well as four larger spaces to accommodate minibuses. This will help alleviate parking issues on the site and in neighbouring residential areas. There will also be four electric vehicle charging points.

These improvements have been made possible by a £616,619 grant from the Premier League, The FA, and the Football Foundation, bringing the total investment in the project to £1.6million.

Work is also under way on a new destination play area at the park that will bring interactive and accessible equipment for children and young people.

Carnival – a new flagship leisure, library and cultural complex



The new multi-million pound facility will feature two swimming pools (a six-lane 25m pool and teaching pool with moveable depth floor and splash pad); a larger fitness suite and specialist group cycling studio; large studios which can also be used for events; a theatre and sports hall; a spa, long term health gym; larger café; and viewing areas. There will also be a large library including space for events and activities, a lending library, fun children's zone and space for exhibitions. This is the final stage of our ambitious regeneration scheme in the town.

The next few months will see lots more happening, giving people a glimpse of the larger centre which will open next year. Alongside this there will be lots of groundworks going on to prepare the site for installation of new services and a sub-station later in the year.

Positive partnership results in new Charity and Community Hub

Work is well underway to refurbish and reconfigure office space at Waterford House, which will be the home of the Borough's first ever Charity and Community Hub. It's set to open its doors in Wokingham town centre this year.

The new Hub builds on from the positive partnership developed between the Borough Council and the voluntary, charity and community sector during the Covid-19 pandemic. It will bring a number of voluntary, charity and community organisations under one roof, providing high quality information, advice and support to enable people to access the right services to meet their individual needs and circumstances at the right time.

And there are aspirations to roll out further hubs elsewhere in the Borough during the coming years, as identified in our voluntary and community sector strategy agreed in 2020.



Nurture

Opportunity

Growth



Open Mornings

Friday 24th September

Friday 22nd October

registrar@yateleymanor.com



Yateley Manor

01252 405500

**Come and visit our
family school**

www.yateleymanor.com



OUT & ABOUT

in Wokingham borough

Your guide to our parks and open spaces

Sign up to our
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Connect newsletter for
all the latest information



Parks and open spaces near you

With so much to see and do for all the family, our parks and open spaces offer a wonderful chance to explore nature, spot some wildlife and enjoy some fresh air. Here's where to find our country and nature parks - and a full list of all the parks and open spaces in the borough can be found on our website www.wokingham.gov.uk (search 'parks').

Dinton Pastures Country Park

The park is open daily. It has 7 lakes, 2 rivers, 3 public bird hides and meadows. There is also a cafe on site.

Parking is available. New play park Davis St, Hurst, Wokingham RG10 0TH

Highwood Nature Reserve

The site contains exotic tree species including giant redwoods and monkey puzzle. Dogs are welcome. You can get to Highwood from Kingfisher Drive, High Tree Drive and Southlake.

Nores Hill Wood

Nores Hill Wood is an ancient woodland site, covering 8 hectares and is located next to the Shinfield Park development. There is no car park for this site.

The woodland can be accessed from near the Shinfield Players Theatre on Whitley Wood Lane. Follow the road past the Shinfield Players onto Greenwich Drive and turn left onto Cirrus Drive. A kissing gate is located at the end of the paved driveway in front of you. Shinfield, Reading, Wokingham RG2 9FL

Pearmans Copse

Pearmans Copse is a small area of ancient woodland, in Lower Earley, covering 2 hectares. It contains ash, hazel, and oak trees as well as many classic archaeological features, such as boundary banks and ditches.

It is surrounded by community woodland within and it links with Dinton Pastures Country Park. Dogs are welcome. Pearmans Copse can be reached from Ryhill Way, Lower Earley.

Rooks Nest

Rooks Nest Wood covers approximately 18.3 hectares and has a long history of agricultural grazing which has continued to this day on part of the site. Rich in wildlife and habitat, the site consists of woodland, grassland and fen and predominantly comprises of oak, ash, silver birch and hazel as well as aspen and willow. Barkham Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham RG40 4EU

California country park

A brand-new play area with sensory water play, a woodland adventure trail and tree houses open now. With an onsite café and picturesque walks, California Country Park is a great place for all the family. Car parking is available on site. Car parking charges apply and tickets are available from the ticket machine. Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham RG40 4HU

Warren Wood

There is no car park, but Warren Wood is accessible via Nine Mile Ride, California Country Park, or Warren Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 3RE





Charvil Meadows

There are no parking facilities. The meadows are only accessible on foot via Old Bath Road and Edwards Road, Charvil.

Charvil Country Park

Charvil Country Park covers 75 hectares. The site consists of restored lakes, amenity and species rich grassland, scrub, woodland, the Slade brook and the River Loddon itself.

Charvil Country Park is rich in wildlife and has 2 nationally rare plants: the Loddon Lily and Loddon Pondweed. The site is popular with birdwatchers due to the diverse wintering wildfowl (including Smew) and an active heronry.

There are no parking facilities. Pedestrian access is from Park Lane, Old Bath Road, Vale View and East Park Farm Drive. Park Ln, Reading RG10 9TY

Aldermoors Nature Reserve

Car parking is available at Ashbury Park, just off Tippings Lane, Woodley, RG5 4RY.

Lavell's Lake Nature Reserve

Access is possible from Sandford Lane, Woodley, or from Dinton Pastures Country Park. The car park is open from 9am to 5pm. You can pay in the multi-activity centre which is just across Sandford Lane opposite the car park.

Keephatch Park Nature Reserve

Keephatch Park is a 9 hectare local nature reserve in Wokingham. The park has an active social 'Friends Group'. Wokingham RG40 5PS

The Moors

The moors are an area of wet Birch and Holly woodland and a small meadow on the edge of a golf course, in Finchampstead. The Moors can be accessed from Waverley Way, Finchampstead, Wokingham RG40 4YD

Heathlake

Heathlake is an area of woodland and heathland in the parish of Wokingham Without. The shallow 7 acre lake is the only acid lake in Berkshire which still retains its characteristic flora. A car park can be reached from the Nine Mile Ride - B3430. Belmont Road, Crowthorne RG45 6SA



Bringing green spaces to life as the borough develops

Nature parks on your doorstep

13 new nature parks have been created across the Borough. They have been created as part of the new communities in Arborfield Garrison, North and South of Wokingham Town, and in Shinfield. 1 has also been created in Barkham and another in Crowthorne.

SANGS (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space)

Together these SANGS (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) cover some 120 hectares, bursting with native plants and natural wildlife habitats. Some have car parks benches and bins, others have been left more natural.

New park in Winnersh:

- **Old Forest Road Meadows** - off Old Forest Road, Winnersh, RG41 1LA

New parks in Wokingham:

- **Keephatch Woods** - Binfield Road, Wokingham, RG40 5PS
- **Keephatch Meadows** - Warren House Road, Wokingham, RG40 5RE (nearest postcode)
- **Eldridge Park** (formerly Bell Farm) - Bingham Drive, Bell Foundry Lane, Wokingham, RG40 5QF
- **Keephatch Meadows** (Stoke Farm) - Binfield Road, Wokingham, RG40 5PR
- **Buckhurst Meadows** - William Heelas Way, Wokingham, RG40 1GL

New park in Arborfield:

- **Hazebrouck Meadows** - Biggs Lane and Commonfield Lane, Arborfield, RG2 9LS

New park in Crowthorne:

- **Oakham Woods** - Nine Mile Road, Crowthorne

New park in Finchampstead:

- **Rooks Nest Wood** - Barkham Ride, Finchampstead, RG40 4EU

New parks in Shinfield:

- **Langley Mead** (formerly known as the London SANG) - Hyde End Road, Shinfield, RG2 9EP (nearest postcode)
- **Mays Farm Meadows** - Hyde End Lane, Ryeish Green, Shinfield, RG7 1EP
- **Five Acres Field** - next to Clare's Green Field, Shinfield, RG7 1EN
- **Clare's Green Field** - Ryeish Lane, Shinfield, RG7 1EN (nearest postcode)

Proposed Greenway Routes

The greenways project, which is part of a wider investment in green infrastructure across the borough, will create a network of generally traffic free multi-user routes connecting the new major developments to each other and to the existing communities and places of

interest and employment across the borough. There are eight separate greenways planned as part of the council's strategic greenway network.

For more information on the proposed routes and the progression of our Greenways Project, visit our website and search 'greenways'

Please be respectful of the countryside and help keep our spaces clean and safe. We're committed to conserving the environment to the benefit of people and wildlife. There are generally bins (including for dog poo) within our parks, although we do ask that visitors try to take any rubbish home with them.

Whilst we welcome dogs at most of our parks, please ensure that you respect our other users by keeping your dog under control at all times.

BE CAUTIOUS, BE CAREFUL, BE KIND

Covid-19 is still with us. Be mindful of others as restrictions ease:
Choose to wear a face covering · Respect others' space · Sanitise your hands
Do not enter if you have Covid-19 symptoms

For more information visit www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'parks' and 'greenways'
Here you will also find links to the What3words website, which shows the main entrance points for these new parks.

Local resident champions community cleans-ups

Tony Howells has been hard at work drumming up volunteers to join our Adopt a Street scheme, in a bid to keep our borough clean and green. The scheme is now more than 600 members strong and continue to go from strength-to-strength.



Tony, 63, is a Winnersh resident who is passionate about tidying up the borough's streets, which he has been doing regular for more than two years.

Last autumn he started a Facebook group which has gone from strength to strength and means hundreds more people are now litter picking in their areas across the borough.

"I've been litter picking since I was a child in Yorkshire and have kept doing it throughout my life," Tony says.

"I didn't start the group meaning for it to grow like it has but now we have more than 500 people signed up and they're all litter picking regularly.

"When you look down a street after you've done it, it's just so rewarding when you see the difference. There's a sense of community spirit with there being so many people willing to do it."

If you join the Adopt a Street scheme we'll arrange for you

to have all the bags you need, plus pickers and hi-vis jackets, then we take it away when you're done.

"Everyone is given what they need to get started," Tony added. "You get some health and safety advice and people are always very safety conscious but there aren't lots of rules about where you can do it."

There are also local groups across the Borough including Earley Adopt a Street Initiative, Woodley Adopt a Street Project, Twyford Adopt a Street and groups run by parish and town councils.

» Want to join one near you? Visit www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'Adopt a Street'

Executive View

Cllr Parry Bath, Executive Member for Environment and Leisure

"We're incredibly grateful to all of our Adopt a Street members for their continued hard-work and dedication, supporting our mission to keep the borough clean and green. I want to personally thank them for the time they have spent collecting rubbish and keeping community spirit alive."



Our zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping

We continue to ramp up our efforts to fight fly-tipping. We operate a zero-tolerance approach to this criminal activity that blights our borough and regularly enforce fixed penalty notices. This year we secured four additional CCTV cameras which are rotated around the borough supporting our efforts to catch offenders in the act.

We need your support to continue to crack-down on fly-tipping. If you are disposing of waste, we ask that you do responsibly. Ensure anyone you use to remove waste from your property has a proper license and is authorised to do so.

Why not make use of our local recycling centres, including Longshot Lane, Bracknell, or Smallmead, Reading? Simply 'Click & Tip'.

Visit: <https://re3.fccenvironment.co.uk/click-tip-services/>



RECYCLING ROUNDUP

All residents now have their waterproof green recycling bags and should be using them for their recycling.

Over the Spring we delivered two bags to each household and since May residents who need more have been able to obtain extra bags from our community hubs.

The bags help us to tackle the problem of wet paper and card which is not accepted by recycling processing plants and has hindered our recycling rates since late 2019.

By making this change it ensures the paper and card you put out stays dry and meets the right standards.

Keeping the bags sealed at all times will keep the wet weather out and will help us to boost our borough's recycling rates even higher.

Large cardboard boxes should ideally be broken down or folded so they are small enough to fit into the bags. If, however this is impractical, then cardboard can be left to the side of your recycling bags for collection but be aware of wet/windy weather.

If you need extra bags, you can check our up-to-date list of where to get more on our website, search 'collect more recycling bags'. This will also include opening days and times so you can find a location and time which suits you.

This includes some of our offices and libraries as well as some community locations but the exact list will change over time depending on Covid-19 restrictions.



Repurpose your black boxes

Now the waterproof bags are in use there will be a few spare black boxes at home. Why not repurpose them if you can and put them to good use elsewhere at home?

Here are some ideas from us and some inspired idea from our community:

- Hedgehog home
- Wood storage
- Planters
- Growing vegetables
- Storage in the shed/garage/loft
- Keep in the boot of your car for trips to the bottle bank
- Give them to a neighbour who wants them for any of the above



The power of food waste

We launched our food waste recycling service in April 2019 and since then it's meant more than 11,000 tonnes have been recycled.

Our borough is now regularly seeing more than 500 tonnes of food waste being recycled each month which is brilliant news but we can do more!

All those banana skins, egg shells, vegetable peelings and more really add up when all residents participate.

Everything we collect is turned into energy to power homes or into fertiliser to help grow crops.



500 tonnes, the equivalent in weight to five blue whales, the largest animal on the planet, will power 20,180 homes for a day or 55 homes for a year.

But we want to see even more people taking part in food waste recycling. No amount is too small and everything is provided to you by us to make it easy – search 'food waste caddies' on our website to find out how to get what you need to get started

In case you've forgotten, here's what can go into the caddies:

- All cooked and uncooked food
- Tea bags and coffee grounds
- Vegetable peelings, banana skins, apple cores
- Pet food
- Out of date food not in its packaging
- Cooking oil in sealed plastic bottle- this needs to be in the outdoor food waste container on collection day

We do provide free liners to go into the internal caddies from our hubs, but newspaper, kitchen roll, old bread bags, old carrier bags or using no liner is fine, as all the liners are removed before the food waste is processed.

Thank you for increase in recycling

Food waste features highly in the Borough's recycling data which was released by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs earlier this year.

The latest data showed the borough had increased by 9.8 percentage points to 50.3 per cent for 2019-20 – the second largest increase across all councils in England. In April 2021, our recycling rate was 53.7 per cent that's two per cent higher than last April's!

The sharp increase is due to how you have responded to the introduction of the council's food waste recycling service in April 2019.

The increase was second only to the Isles of Scilly, which saw an 11.2 percentage point increase. Only four councils across the country saw an increase of more than five percentage points during the data collection period.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our residents for recycling as much as they can.

Working together to do this will help us achieve our collective goal of a recycling rate of 70 percent by 2030, as we help the borough towards its goal of carbon neutral by 2030.



NEW SCHOOLS PROGRESS



We continue to make good progress on the new primary schools being built in Arborfield and Wokingham.

The new facility in Arborfield Green, which opened this month (September) will be run by Farley Hill Primary School which is relocating from its current site. The school's name has been retained at its new location.

It has specialist areas for design and food technology, PE and dance, as well as a 3G sports pitch which will be available for community use.

Construction of the 210-place school at Matthews Green, Wokingham, continues on land off Queens Road.

This will be run by The Keys Academy Trust and is due to open in September 2022. It will be called St. Cecilia's Church of England Primary School.

A 500 sqm community centre is part of the project, with the school and community centre sharing facilities if and when needed. It's part of the North Wokingham major development.



Ongoing free school meal support for young people

The last year has been difficult for so many of us, but particularly for children and young people and their families. For a five year old, they have now spent a fifth of their life under Covid restrictions. While it's important that we follow the rules and stay safe, we recognise how hard it's been on our young people and their families.

We have used our Covid Winter Grant to support 2,200 children and young people through food vouchers, 75 care leavers and 330 families and individuals so far. But we want to do more.

That is why we as a council decided to cover the costs of free school meals all year. The government's Holiday Activities and Food Programme grant is funding six weeks of the school holidays this year and we as a council is funding the other six weeks.

For the Easter holidays we gave £30 food vouchers for each eligible pupil along with an activity pack full of fun exercises, games and recipes to help families fill the holidays with exciting activities.

For the June half term, we gave £20 food vouchers for each eligible pupil and for the summer holidays, we have been offering a combination of food vouchers and holiday clubs.

Executive View

Cllr Graham Howe, Executive Member for Children's Services

"As we recover from Covid-19, we will continue to focus on ensuring that all children, including the most vulnerable, receive the education and support they deserve to do well. Continuing to build partnerships with other organisations working with children and young people will be key to achieving our aim to be a good or better Ofsted-rated authority."



LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The local plan will set out where and how growth will take place in the borough up to 2038, including plans for new and improved employment, schools, roads, parks, shops, community facilities, and homes. We aim to adopt the new plan in 2023 as required by the government.

Last year we consulted on a draft plan, which set out our proposals for growth and policies on topics including climate change, flooding, nature conservation and design quality of new homes.

The strategy for development in the borough proposed in the draft plan included a new garden town at Grazeley. However, an unexpected change to the emergency planning arrangements around the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield last year means that the Grazeley garden town may no longer be achievable.

We are exploring alternative sites and masterplanning is being used to look at potential opportunities of two areas: one just south of the M4 corridor between the villages of Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham; the other being an area of land within the existing South Wokingham development.

We are looking to consult on a revised strategy in Autumn and will welcome the views of all residents.

➤➤ Read more about the local plan on our website www.wokingham.gov.uk (search 'local plan update').



WOKINGHAM AUCTIONS
Antiques • Art • Interiors



Antiques Valuations

Every **Tuesday 10am–1pm**

at Holme Grange,
Heathlands Road,
Wokingham, G40 3AW.

Every **Wednesday 9am–11.30am**

at Caffè Amore,
Longacres Garden Centre,
Bagshot, GU19 5 JB.

Every **Thursday 10am–1pm**

at The White Lion Antiques Centre,
Hartley Wintney, RG27 8AE.

Bring along silver, jewellery, art, watches, oriental items, etc, for possible inclusion to auction, without obligation.

For larger items send photos to:
info@wokinghamauctions.com
or call **Pascal McNamara** on
0744 680 2450.

Probate and Insurance valuations by appointment.

wokinghamauctions.com

New California Country Park play area

This spring saw us open our new play area at California Country Park.

Thousands of youngsters from our borough and beyond have already enjoyed the fantastic new facility, which is split into two main spaces.

The Wild Wood is designed to physically challenge older children and teenagers. It includes three different tree houses of varying heights and level of challenge wrapped around existing pine trees.

There's a rope and pole agility course climbing pyramid and a zip wire, as well as sound cushions and carved woodland animals at ground level to add interest for younger children.

The Sensory Garden is designed with younger children in mind, although most of the equipment is suitable for a range of ages and abilities, including a variety of imaginative water play equipment.

It provides a space where children can investigate and discover their world through creative play or test their physical abilities in more active play.

There's also swings, hammocks and a range of interactive equipment, as well as additional seating for parents and carers.

It follows other improvements to the café, public toilets and car parks in preparation for the new play area, as well as changing places facility for disabled users.



Multi-million-pound activity centre to open its doors

The brand-new £2.4 million-pound Dinton Activity Centre will open later this year. The centre will be the borough's first net zero carbon building supporting our mission to make Wokingham a carbon-neutral borough by 2030.

The building has been taking shape over the past year with seventy-five percent of the build taking place offsite using modern methods of construction by modular building specialist Reds10. Modular construction significantly reduces the carbon emissions in the construction process.

The two-storey building will provide state-of-the-art facilities, as well as an activity hall, changing areas, and teaching spaces. In addition, you can treat yourself to tea and cake at the first-floor coffee shop which opens out onto a spectator terrace

overlooking the lake. Outside you can make use of our new bridge and cycle parking.

The eco-friendly exterior timber cladding has been expertly designed by HLM Architects to complement the tree lined landscape of the park. The material will weather over time to sympathetically blend with its natural surroundings and is also certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as a sustainably sourced timber.

Bookings are now open for boat hire, sailing lessons and paddle boarding classes. So why not make a splash this summer while enjoying the brand-new facilities?

Visit: <https://www.dinton-pastures.co.uk/activities/>

Tackling homelessness



We've recently received more than £1.3million in grants to bring warmth, shelter and a settled roof over the heads of those who are forced to sleep rough or are homeless in the borough. This funding couldn't be better timed, as the impact of Covid-19 on our economy both locally and nationally means that more of our residents will need our help.

Homelessness is devastating for individuals and families and can have long term consequences for those affected. That's why tackling homelessness and reducing rough sleeping are key priorities for the council.

The council is starting a three year pilot Housing First scheme to support rough sleepers to get the help they need with the aim of ending their homelessness for good. This money will allow the council to purchase five one-bedroom self-contained homes.

The grant will also fund temporary accommodation to those most in need.

The council has also appointed a Rough Sleeper Coordinator to work with our partners and the voluntary sector to develop housing pathways for rough sleepers in the borough.

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"We poppin, so you can pop out"

NEW LOW CARBON HOMES PROPOSED FOR BOROUGH

The beginning of June saw the outline planning application submitted for 130 new homes, including a number of affordable homes, at the Toutley East site to the north of Wokingham.

The plans also include proposals for a new specialist dementia care home on the site to meet increased local need, dependent on agreement to the final business case. It has been included in the outline application to help speed up the delivery of the home, once final approval is given.

Subject to planning it is hoped that the Toutley East development will become a showcase for low carbon

development by introducing a range of initiatives such as solar panels, air source heat pumps and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.

Noise barriers and extensive landscaping are also proposed to minimise the impact of road noise from the A329m on the site as well as help address flooding naturally and create a lovely open area for residents to enjoy.

The plans are set to be considered at planning committee later in the year and can be viewed at www.wokingham.gov.uk by searching for planning application 211777.



Moving into new homes this summer

Work on the ambitious Gorse Ride regeneration project is moving quickly ahead as the first phase, Arnett Avenue, welcomes some of its first new tenants.

With a mix of 46 privately owned, affordable shared ownership and social rent houses and apartments, it's proving a massive hit with those who have started to move in this summer.

Alongside this work is also moving apace on the second phase of the regeneration scheme which was granted planning consent in December 2020.

Experienced contractor Wates has been appointed to help us deliver the remainder of the regeneration, with work carried out in phases to minimise disruption on those still living in the area, as well as helping ensure

residents can move smoothly into their new properties during the coming years.

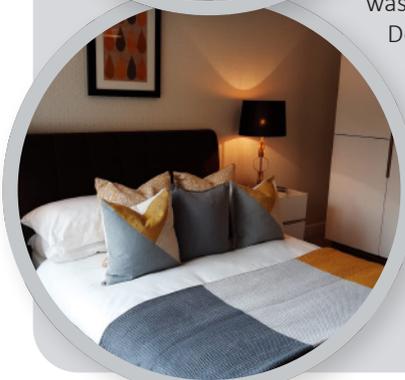
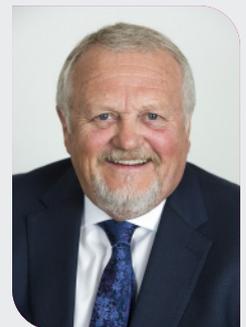
The second phase of the regeneration will see 178 poor quality properties replaced with 249 brand new energy efficient homes, a massive 74% of which will be affordable homes.

The proposals also include a new landscaped village green, as well as a range of low carbon initiatives, such as new air source heat pumps, and electric vehicle charging facilities, to help support our ambition to be carbon net zero by 2030.

Executive View

Cllr John Kaiser, Executive Member for Finance and Housing

"The Gorse Ride regeneration is a real showcase for how we have worked closely with the local community to deliver the high-quality affordable homes our residents need, incorporating many of their ideas into the scheme, and ensuring the designs would create the Gorse Ride the community deserves."



CONTINUING TO IMPROVE OUR LIBRARIES

Despite the challenges of supporting residents throughout the Covid pandemic, our library service has continued with its plans for improving and expanding what it has to offer.

The most visible thing we're doing is relocating the main library in Wokingham to its new home at the Carnival Hub in summer 2022. The new library will make much better use of space and provide more opportunities for the library service to grow and offer new services and activities. Co-locating with a fantastic new destination leisure and cultural centre should attract even more people to use our popular library services.

But we are not stopping there. We're also relocating Twyford Library from its current home in a port-a-cabin into the renovated Old Polehampton Boys School. This project has been a long-standing ambition of the local Polehampton Trust who own the Old Boys School building and provide charitable support each year to local groups in the Twyford area. We must remember and thank Dave Turner, from the Polehampton Trust, who sadly passed away this year but for many years has championed creating a community use for the Old Boys School building.

It has been some years since the Council was able to open a completely new library within the borough, but later this year we will be introducing a small library facility within the new Shinfield Community Centre, which is being developed as part of the essential infrastructure for the housing development in the area. The new community centre is being delivered and managed by Shinfield Parish Council.

Looking further ahead, there will also be a new library within the community facility being built as part of the housing development in Arborfield.

We have also been adapting some of our popular events so that residents can enjoy them even during the recent lockdowns. Our Authors into Schools events in October and February were delivered online this year, with approximately 13,000 attendances across the two events, and our regular Rhymetime and Storytime sessions on Facebook are regularly viewed by more than 1,000 people.

Please sign up for the monthly library newsletter by visiting www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'Subscribe to updates' or check our Facebook and Twitter accounts for regular updates on the existing and new services offered within our libraries.

Executive View

Cllr Bill Soane, Executive member for Neighbourhood and Community Services

"Libraries play a vital role in our community and I am immensely proud that we are expanding them and what they offer in the borough. We will continue to invest and improve our libraries in order to make sure they keep attracting visitors and provide the services they want."



ROADS ROUNDUP

More than sixty roads across the borough have been earmarked for maintenance improvements over this financial year.

We're investing almost £5million to improve road surfaces on the more than 740km of roads we look after.

More than £13million has been earmarked or spent on road maintenance across 200 different schemes since April 2019.

Key transport routes are the cornerstone for this programme and include Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, Wokingham Road; Earley, Hyde End Road; Spencers Wood, Denmark Street; Wokingham, King Street Lane; Winnersh; and Lodge Road, Hurst.

The majority of the programme is being undertaken between May and October, with work overnight at disruptive locations to keep journeys moving on key travel routes.

Residents on impacted streets will always get a letter a few weeks in advance of work starting advising on any closures, access arrangements, start and finish dates, working hours and the type of work we'll be carrying out.

If you're interested in weekly updates, sign up to our traffic and travel newsletter or check the programme via our website, search 'road repairs'.

Executive View

Cllr Pauline Jorgensen,
executive member
for highways and
transport

"We know residents want to see congestion cut and their journeys to be smoother, especially as we come out of the restrictions of recent months. We're investing in and improving our road infrastructure across our entire area, helping us to keep the borough moving smoothly for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists."



Winnersh Relief Road

The final phase of the Winnersh relief road opened to traffic in May. The extension of Longdon Road now connects to Hatch Farm Way, taking traffic from the A329 Reading Road through to the B3270 Lower Earley Way North.

The new relief road is an important step towards improving the resilience of the borough's road network by helping to relieve the existing congestion at the Winnersh Sainsbury's crossroads.

The road will also adjoin the North Wokingham distributor road and provide an alternative route for traffic travelling through the area once the final phase opens next year.



Barkham Bridge

A new bridge in Barkham now allows a continuous flow of two-way traffic along the B2249 Barkham Road, removing a significant congestion bottleneck at the old one-way bridge.

The historic bridge has been retained and transformed into a new pedestrian footpath over the Barkham Brook.

The project included important ecological measures for bats and otters in the area. A foraging route for bats connects the Barkham Brook and the northern woods, with bat boxes installed adjacent to the brook. Otter mesh has been installed to discourage them from crossing the road and an otter ledge installed on the new bridge.

Cutting congestion

We continue to rollout intelligent transport technology across the area to help us respond to issues on our roads before and as they happen.

Our ambitious programme of new low-energy, connected traffic signal controllers, sensors and cameras is underway. Fifty sites are being installed this year and our pilot congestion reduction corridor projects, using artificial intelligence and variable message signs to provide real-time traffic information, will start to make a real difference to journey times.

We'll also be installing intelligent parking systems to tell you where to find the right spaces for your needs.

There will be new smart pedestrian crossings and speed monitoring equipment, which will combine to make your journeys safe and efficient on key routes in the borough where they will have the most impact upon air quality and carbon reduction.

Park and ride improvements

We are currently investing almost £10million in two park and ride projects in the borough. A new facility is being created at Coppid Beech and the Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride is being expanded.

Both projects are supported with funds from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Local Growth Deal with Government. The LEP is supplying £6.6million for the projects, to support sustainable transport in the area.

The projects, which include electric vehicle charging points, will help the council towards its goal of a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

At Winnersh Triangle more than 100 new spaces are being added, along with a new landscaped pedestrian waiting area and a new pedestrian link between the railway station and the car park. Frasers Property, which owns Winnersh Triangle Business Park, is also backing the project with funding.

Coppid Beech will see a 250-space park and ride created, with services set to be used for employment trips during weekdays, and leisure trips during weekends. The council is looking for opportunities to link the park and ride to other parts of the borough including Twyford.

Both projects link to existing bus routes, with Winnersh Triangle also linking to the Winnersh Triangle train station to help residents to travel around the borough as well as into Reading and Bracknell.

Listen | Learn | Improve

making a difference to you



Making a difference to our customers

Listening, Learning and Improving



We provide hundreds of services to you and we're continuing to work hard to improve the experience when you interact with us.

We aim to put the customer at the heart of all we do, so making sure we include your voice when planning any improvements, is critical in making the customer experience the best it can be.

Earlier this year we launched an online survey which measures the overall level of customer satisfaction on our website and from telephone calls. We will shortly be rolling this out to emails too.

It's now really easy to give us feedback. When visiting our website, you can rate the usefulness of the information by selecting one of three faces, ranging from smiley to sad, and answer a few quick questions. This will help us know what works, what doesn't and if anything needs to be improved. But it's not the place to complain or request an individual service – these can be done via an online form: www.wokingham.gov.uk/contact-us/tell-us-about-a-problem/

Once you've selected an appropriate face for feedback, a pop-up box appears, and you can enter the reasons for the rating. There is also an option to leave a more detailed comment. No personal data is collected.

Feedback is similar on the phone too. We will text you a link to a survey where we ask you three questions about how your call was handled.

Since we've launched this system your feedback has been invaluable. We've already made some immediate changes:

You said, we did

- You told us you were unable to find out when your new recycling bags would be delivered so we improved the website search box
- You told us you weren't able to log in to your new Libby account so we sent out clearer communications when the e-library service changed
- You made us aware of broken webpages so we have worked with Gov.uk to update 117 of our broken links

Following feedback, we are also making improvements to a number of our processes and online services so that they are easier to use.

So please continue to tell us what we are doing well, so that we can do more of it. But also let us know what we can do better too.

Customer Charter

We've developed a charter, linked to our Corporate Plan, outlining the level of service customers should expect to receive. The charter is a set of standards and behaviours we promise to adopt and uphold when dealing with you. It sets out how we will:

1. Be open, honest and manage expectations
2. Support and care for people as individuals
3. Be responsive, friendly and helpful
4. Get it right first time and build on successes
5. Listen, learn and work as one team to resolve issues

If you are happy to talk to us more about what we are doing in terms of the Customer Charter we would love to hear from you. We're in the process of gathering feedback on each area mentioned above, and it would be good to know how you think we are doing. If you are interested in giving us feedback, please contact visit the website.

Major Developments update

South Wokingham

Planning permission has now been granted for the main part of the development south of the railway line. This area will include around 1,800 new homes, a new primary school, community and sports facilities, parks and play areas, and the remainder of the new South Wokingham distributor road.

Montague Park, the first phase of the development north of the railway, has become a thriving new community with a primary school and a well-used nature park that includes a community orchard. Currently nearing the end of construction is a local centre with shops and businesses on William Heelas Way, with the local shop due to open soon.

Shinfield Parish

A number of exciting developments are taking place in Shinfield Parish, including a new community centre, a British Museum Archive facility and a temporary Hollywood style film studio.

The University of Reading announced a deal with a US film studio investor to develop a major film studio and digital creative hub last year. Since then, a five-year temporary planning consent has been granted to allow four sound stages and four workshops, with parking and landscaping, and improvements to the public right of way along the western boundary. Shinfield Studios hope this first phase will be ready for use this autumn.

North Wokingham

Work on the eagerly awaited local centre at Matthews Green is progressing well and is due to open soon. The new hub will include a supermarket and other local shops. There will also be two new play areas close to the local centre- one across the road in the park and a larger play area to the north of the new school and community centre.

Arborfield

The new community at the Arborfield Garrison site is coming together well, with the new primary school due to open in September and exciting plans to transform the former Ministry of Defence Sports site at Arborfield Green into a new sports hub. A new pavilion will form a focus for the local community and create a vibrant space for residents and local clubs. The project will also include an upgrade to the football, tennis and cricket facilities, which will help with the demand for local grassroots sports pitches and courts.

Executive View

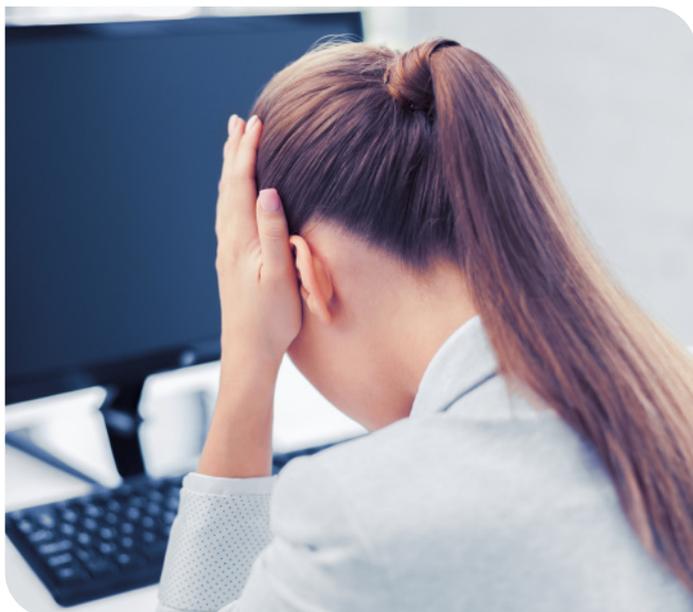
Cllr Wayne Smith, executive member

"We know there has been a lot of change in the borough in recent years but with each piece that gets planning permission, is built and then used by our residents, the vision from our 2010 local plan comes together. We are creating thriving new communities that also bring much needed new facilities and open spaces to be enjoyed by our existing residents too."



Committing to long term support for local domestic abuse support services

A new domestic abuse support service has been launched this month in Wokingham Borough and is being run on our behalf by Cranstoun.



Cranstoun has experience of delivering domestic abuse services across the country for victims and their children as well as supporting those who want to break the cycle of abuse and change their behaviour. Whilst working in partnership with domestic abuse charities, Cranstoun developed and delivered the first full perpetrator intervention programme for substance users in the UK, the Men and Masculinities programme, and expanded the scope of their intervention to hold high-risk perpetrators of domestic violence to account, known, as the Drive programme.

Domestic abuse is a priority area for us and in recognition of this and increasing demands on services, funding has been significantly increased.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality, or background. Domestic abuse does not only occur between couples. It can also involve wider family members, including parental abuse by an adolescent or grown child. It can exist between older siblings, or the wider extended family, including elder or 'honour'-based abuse.

Investing in the domestic abuse support service is vital to ensuring effective support options are in place and available to protect vulnerable residents in line with our aims to enabling safe, strong communities and changing the way we work for our residents.

The new service will be available to all residents including a focus on increasing accessibility for BAME, male, LGBTQ+ and victims who have a disability or are older.

The services Cranstoun will provide include:

- a helpline for individuals and practitioners
- access to specialist independent domestic abuse advocates
- outreach, children and young people support, group-based programmes
- refuge support
- perpetrator interventions

Wendy Taylor, Assistant Director of Services at Cranstoun, said: **"We are delighted to have been awarded the contract to deliver the domestic abuse services in the borough of Wokingham. This will include support for victims to access confidential advice and support and perpetrator programmes that tackle the root of abusive behaviour. We believe in empowering people to make positive changes that lead to healthier and safer lives."**



www.flair-homehelp.co.uk

Services

- Shopping
- Housework
- Support Work
- Laundry
- Sitting Service
- Companionship
- Check Calls
- One off cleans
- Outings
- Appointments
- Activities

Full list of services available online

A professional, highly reputable and friendly home help service that goes the extra mile. All ages and needs are fully catered for.

Continuity, peace of mind, competitive rates, fully trained, insured and DBS checked staff.

For further information on any of the services we provide please contact us.

Debbie

debbie@flair-homehelp.co.uk
07904 488 790 or 0118 375 4784

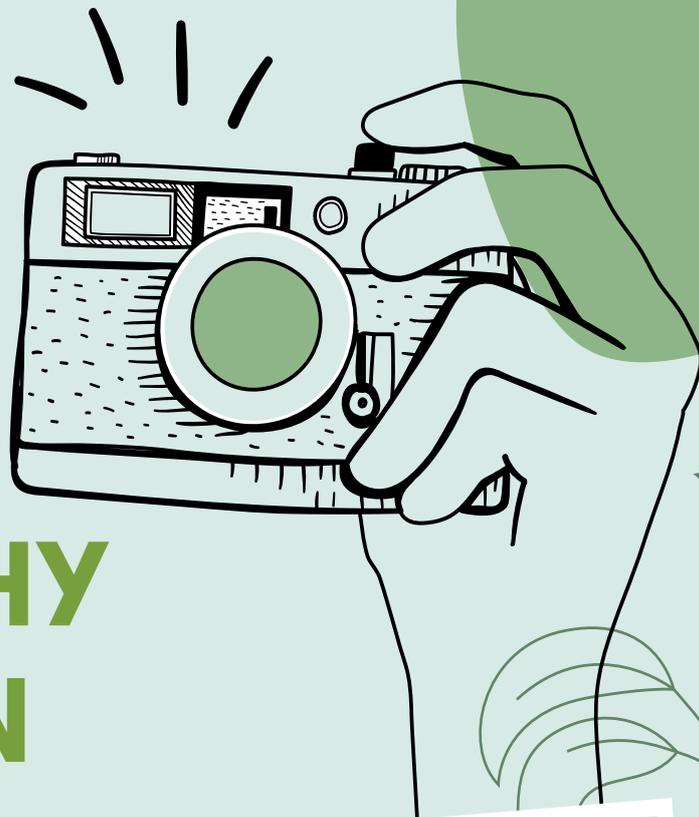
Mary

07745 226 179
9.00 am - 5.00 pm



Support with
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AND WOKINGHAM

#YOURNBS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



Share what environmental sustainability means to you at home or in your community.

Do you live in or near our branch towns? Do you care about your local environment?

If the answer is yes, then the **#YourNBS Sustainable Community Photo Competition** gives you the chance to show your photographic skills and inspire others to lead more sustainable lives.

Whether you have an SLR camera or a mobile phone, photos taken in the home or in your local community are welcome;

- a pic of your vegetable patch, your composter, your 'bee friendly' garden or a stylish shot of your plastic-free kitchen;
- pictures of local sustainable community projects or environmental volunteering work.

The winning photographer will receive a large print of their winning image, a **£50 gift voucher of their choice** and have their image featured on the cover of our 2022 members calendar – 11 other photos will be selected as highly commended and will also be included in the calendar, the highly commended entrants will each receive a **£20 gift voucher of their choice**.

Competition opens Monday 2nd August 2021.
The competition closes at 23.59, Sunday 17th October 2021.

Visit our website www.newbury.co.uk to enter.
Terms and conditions apply.



Call: 01635 555700 | Visit: www.newbury.co.uk

A close-up photograph of a person's hands pouring water from a silver electric kettle into a wooden coffee dripper. The dripper is placed over a glass carafe containing coffee. The background is slightly blurred, showing a kitchen counter and a glass jar.

You can boil a kettle with food waste.

It only works if you recycle it. Your food waste is sent to an anaerobic digestion plant where it breaks down, releasing biogas. The gas, rich in methane, is captured and converted into electricity on site, which is fed to the National Grid.

A kitchen caddy full of food waste can generate enough electricity to boil 9 kettles.

Be a part of this powerful process.

Start recycling your food waste now.



More information at: www.re3.org.uk

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