



District Councillors report – August 2023 - Newbury Clay Hill

Ward Case Work:

July and August brought concerns over overgrown hedges in the ward. Stuart visited some parts to see them first-hand and, in one case, obtained tenant details from a landowner. And helped resolve the issues.

Stuart has also highlighted several spots where speeding issues have been reported, and is investigating what WBC can do to monitor this, and engage the community on how to improve this.

Nigel had been busy following up on complaints from residents with regards to the construction traffic coming down from the new Coley Farm development down Stoney Lane in both directions. Case officers are aware and will be monitoring the situation.

Ward residents have also contacted us with regards to buses going north to south from the new estates near Vodafone, the good news is the new X34 route from Newbury to Didcot stops at these new estates and is now live.

Residents have also reported many issues with Dog Waste bins not being emptied across the ward - this has been escalated and will be resolved. But please remember if the bins are full please take it home, or find another bin, rather than piling it up on the bin.

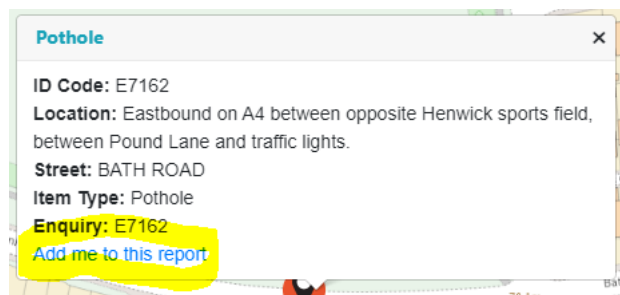
Other information:

Online Problem Reporting

In October 2022, West Berkshire Council introduced this new [online problem reporting system](#) to allow residents (and parish councils) to report problems relating to Highways (potholes, dirty road signs, unemptied pavement bins and non-working street lights) and Countryside (unemptied bins in parks and footpaths). You can access the system [HERE](#) from a PC or mobile device.

You select the problem category from a list and mark the incident location on a map. You can (and ideally should) upload photos for pothole cases but should not try to measure their depth. You'll receive an email acknowledgement, giving an indicative response time. The incident is then reviewed and assigned a priority. A non-working pelican crossing, or a

serious pothole for example, should be dealt with within a few hours of reporting, whilst a less serious pothole may take 28 days. You'll receive email updates as the incident progresses. If it is deemed a duplicate of a problem reported by others or dealt with already, you will be informed. You can nominate other people to receive notifications of the incident's progress.



We don't currently support the use of third-party apps. to raise problems, nor phoned in incidents, other than for out of hours emergencies.

Further streamlining of the systems and improvements to user interface are expected by the Autumn.

Meanwhile if you experience problems using the service, or an unusually poor response time, please let us know – we have already supported a couple of residents who have used the system to report both hedges and a non-working pelican crossing and who have helpfully shared their experiences with us.

Food Waste

If food waste is placed in black general waste bins, instead of the supplied food caddy, it enters land fill and emits methane that is harmful to the environment. This is why the government mandated unitary authorities such as West Berkshire to collect and process food waste.

Since introduction of food caddies (or shared stores), under 50% of residents use them. Whilst this represents an increase compared to the previous food waste arrangement, clearly it is still a low take up.

The waste team fixed “put food waste in the caddy” stickers to the black general waste bins, to try to encourage take up of food recycling. Other council's experiences suggest this to be effective. Whilst we think (and have told the waste team) that the stickers' wording was not the best, its appearing to suggest residents had committed a misdemeanour, we support the rationale behind the action.

We are keen to hear your views on how best to increase the level of food waste recycling. Is it, perhaps, communication of the environmental benefit; making it easier to get food bags; or reducing the frequency of black wheelie bin collection from 2 to 3 weeks that might help best? Please do let us know your or your group's view.

Meanwhile if you are a green waste subscriber, please use *only* your food caddy for food waste because it is important to maintain the segregation of food and garden waste.

Community Forums

August also saw the first community forum! This was on the topic of Farady Road Football Stadium and what the latest updates were, and to seek information and input from the community on what could be built into the future, longer term plans. It was well attended both online, and in person, with great input from all.

More info can be found here: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/community-forum-faradayroad>

Recycling News

The Government is investigating possible enhancements to waste collection, in three areas: Extended Producer Responsibility, in which producers would contribute to the cost of collecting their packaging waste, Deposit Return Scheme, a cash incentive system, that adds a refundable deposit to drinks bottles and cans and consistent collections. Of these, the first two look set to be introduced in 2024 and 2025 respectively, whilst the third is delayed partly because some councils object to the suggestion of free garden waste collection. We understand that the current 5 levels of roadside recycling separation that exist today here (garden, food, plastic/cans, bottles and paper/card) will suffice if/when additional items are collected at the roadside.

Meeting Us

The Clay Hill West Berkshire, and Newbury Town Council ward team hold regular ward surgeries, usually on the first Wednesday of the month between 1800-1900 alternating between the Riverside Community Centre, The Cock Inn, and The Swan. Please feel free to pop in and say hello, or come along to feedback on ward, town or district related issues.

Members Bids

We invite town and parish councils, and community groups, to put forward suitable projects for funding under our Members Bid scheme. This Dragons Den style scheme offers a matched funding of up to £15,000, each financial year. Whilst we prefer to support projects that benefit wide sections of the community, we also like proposals to be clearly costed and ones that can be, if approved, delivered no later than April 2024. We will consider supporting multiple lower cost projects – for example 3 costing up to £10,000 each of which we provided half the funding. Thanks to those who have submitted proposals already. If you have an idea, please get your pitches to us in writing as soon as possible and no later than 15 September. If you are a community group, with an idea, please seek your parish council's support, but ultimately please do not miss the boat if you have a proposal.

Newbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

Newbury Town Council has re-formed it's Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group (NDP SG). New Town Councillors are now on the Steering Group, following the recent election and a new Lay member has been appointed. The NDP SG recently held its first meeting. The 'Topic Sub-Groups' have been appointed (these 'Sub-Groups' gather evidence in support of policies the NDP SG have developed). The Terms of Reference of the NDP and all minutes of the NDP SG meetings can be found under the Newbury Town

Council NDP section of the NTC website. The Newbury NDP does not cover housing allocation within the Parish.

- A Neighbourhood Plan cannot control (limit) whether a town or village needs to take a new house allocation – this is managed by a [Local Plan Review](#). If a Local Plan Review dictates that a town or village need to take an allocation, whilst a Neighbourhood Plan cannot stop it, it can let the community choose where needed homes are built, their types and design. It can also, to an extent, specify what supporting facilities are needed to support such houses. For the avoidance of doubt the [next Local Plan](#), intended to be valid until 2039, does not make any demands for Mortimer or Burghfield Common to take new housing.
- A town/village will only have one approved Neighbourhood Plan at any given time. In Mortimer's case, the current Neighbourhood Plan was the one approved in 2017. When that Plan is update relating to school/dentist/doctors' is approved, that update will become the Plan version. When the wider update to the Plan, that seeks to reflect new government policies and community needs, is approved, estimated by Autumn 2024, that will become the Plan version.
- The terms Neighbourhood Development Plan and Neighbourhood Plan are equivalent – both are valid although the trend is to use the latter. "Development" in town planning terms, means "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land". Development need not include house building.

Flooding and Drainage issues

Stuart and Nigel have been getting to grips with the complex but vital issue of flood prevention and drainage challenges within our Ward. As residents will know, flooding issues have dogged Clay Hill for many years. It is clear to Stuart and Nigel that we cannot look at flooding issues in Clay Hill without considering how surrounding areas, including other Parishes, feed surface water into the Lambourn and Kennet. An overall strategy for the District is needed. This is something Stuart and Nigel will be focusing on as a priority. We are fortunate to have knowledgeable and experienced residents in the Ward who can pass on their experience to us and help us get up to speed on this important problem.

Current Open Consultations

Consultations of that might be of interest are below:

Draft Statement of Licensing 2023-2028 - <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/draftsolp2023>

West Berks Bus Survey - <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/wbbussurvey2023>

Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan - <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/coldashnp>

All consultations can be found here - <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

Thanks for reading,

Stuart Gourley and Nigel Foot

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