

Focus on Parishes with Cllr Bethia Thomas

Faringdon, Faringdon Division **Oct 2024**

Every few months or so I will write a more formal report, as it is the preference of some of my parishes to circulate it as a document on their website or newsletter. Please feel free to do so yourself, and, as ever, please get in touch with any questions in the interim. Many thanks to Katherine and other FTC officers for all their assistance in identifying and resolving case work.



Parish Round-Up

- **Park Road Pavement** – A resident has made a complaint about the state of the pavement on Park Road adjacent to Tucker Park. This has been a longstanding issue, but recently I've been informed by officers it should be repaired in the next few weeks.
- **Lining Work on Pulling Close** – After a complaint by residents parking on Pulling Close the lining and road marking are being renewed and refreshed to avoid confusion.
- **Street Lighting on Highworh Road** – We are frustrated by the length of time it has taken for repairs to the damaged streetlights at this location; please be aware that it is SSE causing the delays and would recommend that FTC take action in writing to the supplier with their views and encourage them to resolve this issue.
- **Adult Social Care S106** – I have followed this up with the cabinet member, and I am waiting a response; I will keep you informed of the outcome.
- **Speed Limits on the A420** – The proposal to reduce the speed limit on the A420 at Faringdon and Shrivenham removing the National Speed Limit and reducing it to 50MPH, will be heard at a meeting in early October, see below for further details.
- **ISG Construction** – You may be aware that this company has fallen into financial difficulties, while some construction at Elms and other local schools had been undertaken by this company, this failure has no effect on schools in Faringdon.
- **Road Maintenance Programme** – I have asked that Canada Lane and Highworth Road are considered for resurfacing in the next scheduled programme of works for the 2025-26 financial year.
- **Wicklesham Quarry Application** – Amendments to this application have come in to the council; they mainly involve the reduction in size of the site footprint; if the application is rejected, any further applications will now go through the district council.

General News

- **Flooding Across the Division:** In late September we experienced heavy rainfall causing flooding in different parts of Faringdon Division, particularly at Buscot and Buscot Wick. I have worked extensively with these communities to make sure they have all the information at hand in case of further incidents. For all flooding information please refer to the [Oxfordshire Flooding Toolkit](#)

- **A420 Speed Limits May Change:** At a decision meeting scheduled for 10th October, the Cabinet Member for Traffic Management will rule on a recommendation to lower the speed limit on the A420 at Faringdon and Shrivenham, removing the national speed limit and setting it to 50MPH. Some roads running off the A420 may reduce from 50 to 40 MPH. This is all part of the Council's 'Vision Zero' Scheme to help reduce death and serious injuries from road traffic collisions.
- **OCC Boundary Review:** The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has published final recommendations setting out new electoral arrangements for Oxfordshire. This means some change for Faringdon Division, with the eastern parishes of Littleworth and Buckland being assigned to another division. The recommendations only become law once they have received parliamentary approval, effective for the county elections in 2025.

Councillor Surgeries

I will be available for face-to-face surgeries between 10.00-11.00am at Faringdon Library on the following dates:

- 12th October
- 9th November
- 14th December

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Cllr Bethia Thomas Liberal Democrat Member for Faringdon Division



Focus on Faringdon

Councillors Lucy Edwards and Bethia Thomas

VoWHDC Report **OCTOBER 2024**



We have been continuing our supportive work for residents and communities. As always, if you have any questions or would like to meet with us, please get in touch – our contact details are at the bottom of this report.

Round-Up of Local Issues

Not all items are covered here, with a selection of the main updates listed below. Please get in touch for further details on these or other items.

- **Flooding on Coxwell Road:** There is a blocked ditch on the north side of road, towards the A420 that is causing flooding. We have raised concerns with officers and awaiting a response.
- **Bench at Pye Street Park:** Due to resident's reluctance to report the ASB to 101, we will push TVP to issue their own social media posts to encourage residents to report ASB to 101. We welcome communications support from FTC for ASB Awareness Week in November to encourage residents to report ASB.
- **Sergeant for Faringdon:** We are very sorry that Sarah Turpin will be leaving and at this stage there are no plans to replace the role. We have a TVP Annual Update at Vale in November with Matthew Barber and will be bringing this to his attention.
- **Damaged Wall, Stanford Road:** We are still chasing requests to Sovereign to fix the collapsed wall and have brought in senior officers to assist.
- **Adoption of footpaths:** Belmont Estate and Bewley Homes, the last update we had was that this was an enforcement issue – so have asked what the update and forward plan is on this.
- **Wessex Leisure funding:** We have asked for an update on this funding and will provide a further update; we are monitoring progress on the ATP.
- **Boots Pharmacy:** We are investigating the closure and have been informed it is not the related to the district council.

District Update

Next steps in shaping our districts' future: proposed Joint Local Plan Publication Stage

Under Regulation 19 we now invite you to view and comment on the publication version. You can find out more about this publication stage in the [Statement of Availability and Representations Procedure document](#). This is the last stage before the Plan is submitted to a Government Planning Inspector for independent examination. The period for responding on the publication stage Joint Local Plan opens today and runs until Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 11.59pm. [JLP - Join the conversation - South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse - Citizen Space \(southandvale.gov.uk\)](#)

Climate Action Fund

The Climate Action Fund has now been awarded to applicants across the Vale for a variety of fantastic climate-friendly community projects. In total 21 local organisations have been offered support. They were collectively offered just over £141,000 to help with a wide variety of projects which aimed to save energy and resources, help nature recovery or educate residents on how they can help make sustainable choices. Faringdon was awarded the following:

- [Community First Oxfordshire](#) - A project to support access to nature in Faringdon. Aiming to map assets, identify and work with existing community groups and run climate action myth busting training sessions.
- [Faringdon Town Council](#) - An eBike hire scheme to give the community the opportunity to experience eBikes first hand and to realise their benefits.

Homes for Ukraine Grant Scheme

Community organisations can apply for The Homes for Ukraine Grant Scheme with grants ranging from £250 to £2,000. This grant scheme is designed to help fund projects or services that support the successful integration and settlement of Homes for Ukraine guests into their new communities across the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire. The scheme is open for applications and is being administered in partnership with Cherwell District Council. Please direct any queries to Cherwell District Council in the first instance. The form can be downloaded [here](#) If you have any queries regarding the eligibility criteria or the application process or you need help completing the form, please contact: edward.frape@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Successful changes for Customer Services

The councils' ongoing customer transformation programme has taken yet another step forward, after our Customer Service Centre successfully launched a new online account for residents – called MyAccount. You can see both on the councils' website homepages: [Vale](#)

We also have a new email address customer.service@southandvale.gov.uk which will be for any external contact with the Customer Service Centre and replaces the general enquiries email addresses.

We've also introduced a new way of managing general enquiries using our new customer relationship management system – it provides residents with a handy new online form, replacing the previous general enquiry email. This provides residents with a quick and easy way to get in touch via the websites and helps us manage their enquiry better and respond quicker.

Please do report any customer service issue you hear from residents, even if it just in passing, they want to hear!

Help us to ensure voting is accessible for everyone

We want to know what people think of proposed changes for some of our polling stations in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. As part of a statutory review, we're looking at changing the locations of some of our polling stations, to ensure they are accessible for everyone at future elections. We're particularly interested to hear from anyone who faced challenges in accessing a polling station during the 2024 General Election or Police and Crime Commissioner Election.

People can find out more and have their say by visiting:

- Vale of White Horse residents – whitehorsedc.gov.uk/valepolling – comments open now until 21 October.
- People can also send a written response to Electoral Services, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE.

Planning and Licencing Applications

[Faringdon Infant School](#): P24/V2110/FUL While we fully support the change of use of the site to a SEND school provision, we will still review the plans and provide comments to the consultation

[Veterinary Practice](#): P24/V2103/FUL, for development work at 29 Park Road Faringdon including change of use from industrial/commercial unit to a Veterinary Practice with ancillary associated pharmacy & offices to include minor alterations to external elevations and associated parking

[Pavement Licence application for Lotus Café](#): We provided comments to fully support the application.

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