

As we enter 2026, we would like to wish everyone at FTC a happy new year; as always, we will be working for residents and communities in Faringdon and will continue to keep town members informed. 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. Our surgeries are running again this year on the second Saturday of the month in Faringdon Library from 10am – 11am.

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.

- **Faringdon Leisure Centre, ATP:**

Football Foundation: The team are looking to explore ways of shortening the timescale with Football Foundation, whilst the tender exercise takes place. Should funding not be forthcoming the CIL funds towards the project are expected to be sufficient for its delivery.

Cabling for lights: A ground survey was conducted to establish the final route of the lighting to the leisure centre distribution board.

Lease: A Delegated Authority has been signed off with the Cambrian Learning Trust.

Tender: The tender process will open shortly whilst officers await approval of the leases for works and operation.

- **Faringdon Leisure Centre Decarbonisation** – 500 KVA substation and GRP unit is fully installed, works took place during September for energisation and during November for internal electricity meter upgrade. Confirmation on MPAN and live utilities charging currently being agreed with IDNO and GLL to enable works programme to commence.

- **South and Vale Local Food Action Plan (FAWG)** – Faringdon has been identified to receive training, information and resources to residents to help them to eat more healthily, improve their wellbeing and skills, and maximise their food budgets.

- **Move Together** – The Move Together team have been out in the community on various outreach sessions promoting Move Together and engaging with local communities who need physical activity support. Faringdon will receive post-natal classes in Jan and active buggy sessions in conjunction with The Place.

- **Connectivity**

Belmont Estate to Fernhill Gardens: No further update to report.

Belmont Estate to Coleshill Drive: Officers are investigating landownership with VOWHDC.

- **Folly Park Paths and Carpark** – No further update to report.

- **Brackendale:** Officers are continuing to pursue the waste problem in the carparks.

- **Abandoned Property:** Enforcement is being considered on 2, Park Road

- **Faringdon Leisure Centre Maintenance Issues:** Already reported and GLL are actioning.

- **Planning** – 5 Liddiards Row P25/V0744/HH has been called in and awaiting committee date.

District Update

Neighbourhood Planning Event – National Changes and Local Support – save the date 28 Jan

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council are holding an afternoon event on Wednesday 28 January 2026 (2:00pm–5:00pm) in Didcot (venue to be confirmed). The event is primarily targeted at town and parish councillors and clerks and will explore how neighbourhood planning fits within a changing national planning context and why it continues to matter. Further details and registration information will follow.

The event will focus on:

- how recent and proposed national planning changes affect neighbourhood plans,
- the continued value of neighbourhood plans in decision-making, and
- the support and guidance available to parish and town councils preparing or reviewing neighbourhood plans.

Joint Local Plan (JLP) Examination

On 3 December 2025, we confirmed to the Inspectors that we want to resume the local plan hearings and are awaiting their response. The Government intends to remove the Duty to Cooperate early in the new year. For plans like the JLP already at examination, this means the legal “pass/fail” test will go, but we’ll still need to show effective cooperation as part of the soundness test. This can be addressed during examination if needed. See the latest information here [Joint Local Plan 2041 Examination - South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council](#)

Oxford Growth Commission Interim report

[Neale Coleman's Interim Report](#) was published on 15 December. It identifies barriers to growth and sets out 47 recommendations to improve infrastructure and speed up development. The Commission will continue its work through 2026, with a final report expected later, within a year.

Planning Reforms

Government has released a raft of [new guidance](#), including details on the forthcoming 30-month process for preparing new-style local plans.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

A [draft revised NPPF](#) was published on 16 December 2025 for consultation until 10 March 2026. It aims to create a more rules-based system and accelerate delivery of 1.5 million homes this Parliament.

What this means for South and Vale

Although Government policy and the local plan system are changing, there is no direct effect on the Joint Local Plan. For the JLP, we do not need to immediately meet new national policies, adopt the new housing numbers, or switch to the new plan-making system. Those changes will apply to a subsequent local plan. If you have any questions about the planning policy updates or JLP please let us know.

Save the date for our next Visitor Economy Connect

Visitor Economy Connect is a networking and support session focused on the visitor economy, aimed at engaging local hospitality businesses. Due to the success of our previous events, we want you to join us at our next forum. Further details and a registration link will be shared in the new year, but for now, put Wednesday 28 January, 10am - 12pm, in your diary.

Share your views on NHS 'commissioning intentions'

The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board has developed 'commissioning intentions' for the new Thames Valley ICB to support its strategic priorities around improving care and investing in the right services. To find out more and have your say on these plans, visit the BOB ICB engagement platform at '[Your Voice BOB](#)' view the '[Developing the NHS Thames Valley](#)' section which includes details on the '[Thames Valley Commissioning Intentions 2026 - 2030](#)' (you might need to register on the site if it's your first visit). You can leave your comments in the discussion forum on the webpage – closing date **11 January 2026**.

Unlock free support to thrive on Oxfordshire's high streets

Delivered by Enterprise Oxfordshire, Helping High Streets focuses on businesses operating in traditional high street settings – from rural market towns to Oxford's bustling city centre. The programme recognises the vital role these businesses play in community life and the wider economy. Businesses operating from a high street location, such as retail, leisure, hospitality and service businesses, are eligible for this programme. Register [here](#).

Reservoir FAQ

We've created a useful FAQ for Thames Water's proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) as we know this is an important topic for both council members and our residents.

You can access the FAQ document [via this link](#) (please note this document will download to your computer when clicked).

Spring season now on sale at The Beacon!

Shake off the January blues with these fantastic shows coming to The Beacon next year...

Darren Walsh: Do You Like Puns? – Friday 30 January 7.30pm

♪çøū ←flippin' heck! Witness a pun Goliath in person, as Darren Walsh brings his 8ft frame and award-winning act on the road.

The Americana Revue – Saturday 31 January 7.30pm

A unique, exciting live music stage show celebrating many of the world's best loved U.S. artists and some of the most inspiring songs of a generation. Two hours of timeless, multi-million selling #1 chart hits!

Check out [The Beacon's website](#) to see the full spring season and to book!

Contact Details

Email: bethia.thomas@whitehorsedc.gov.uk Phone: 07906 821680

Clr Bethia Thomas Liberal Democrat Member for Faringdon Ward



Email: lucy.edwards@whitehorsedc.gov.uk Phone: 07718 123061

Clr Lucy Edwards Liberal Democrat Member for Faringdon Ward