

Report to Midgham Parish Council

District Councillor: Chris Read, Member of West Berkshire Council for Bucklebury Ward

Date: 14-07-2025

Next Executive 18th September

Full Council 17th July

Current consultations that are open are:

- A proposal for two new unitary Councils - Oxford and Shires, and Ridgeway (2 days left)
- West Berkshire Bus Survey 2025

All found on the WBC consultation hub <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/39487/Consultation-and-Engagement-Hub>

Local Plan – SP14 NE Thatcham – “Meaningful Community Engagement”

Sadly the Council voted to pass the Local Plan meaning the development of 2,500 houses at SP14 (changed from SP17) NE Thatcham will go ahead, including the approx. 32 acres in Midgham Parish.

There will be a briefing for Councillors (including Parish Councillors) only as follows on next steps.

The evening will take place on Thursday 24th July 6:30pm – 7:30pm in the Council Chamber at our Market Street Offices in Newbury.

During the evening, Officers will set out the envisaged scope of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the estimated timetable for its delivery, as well as how we intend to engage with the public throughout the process. There will then be an opportunity for questions and for you, as local representatives to highlight to WBC Planning the key areas you would like to see addressed in the SPD and any provide any other comments you would like to make on the SPD and its process.

As the SPD work is at an early stage, the event is an information evening for Local Ward Members and Town/Parish Councils only. Members of the public will get an opportunity to feed into the SPD process in the Autumn. You are welcome to share the information you receive from the information evening with your communities.

Please could you confirm whether you will be attending by emailing Rachael.lancaster@westberks.gov.uk

Green Matters - Electrical reuse scheme launches at West Berkshire Recycling Centres

West Berkshire Council, in partnership with Veolia, has teamed up with Green Machine Computers to launch an exciting new electrical reuse scheme at both Household Waste Recycling Centres in Newtown Road and Padworth.

Residents can now drop off used mobile phones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers at dedicated collection points at either site, giving their old devices a new lease of life.

Once collected, Green Machine Computers will securely remove any data before passing reusable items to The Tech Hub in Hungerford. From there, they will be made available free of charge or at low cost to charities and people in need, ensuring technology reaches those who need it most. Any items that cannot be reused will be responsibly recycled.

This new initiative makes it easier than ever for residents to give a second life to old electricals in a secure and environmentally responsible way while supporting the local community.

If disposed of incorrectly, electrical items like mobile phones, laptops, and tablets can cause fires in collection vehicles and at our sorting or treatment facilities. The Council are delighted to support this scheme to give residents a safe and easy option for redistributing these household items. By reclaiming these items for residents in need, the partnership will create long lasting impacts for the planet and the community.

Making recycling easy is an important goal for our organisation. E-waste is the fastest-growing waste stream and a lot of it is being hoarded inside UK homes (average of 30 unused devices per household). Green Machine partnering with West Berkshire Council and Veolia, we're able to provide a secure and sustainable solution for the ethical disposal of people's devices.

Before visiting the recycling centres don't forget to book an appointment and make sure your permit is up to date.

Have your say - It's your chance to ask questions about the work of West Berkshire Council.

Councillor Jeff Brooks will be answering your questions live in a new event being streamed soon across YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn.

The event begins at **6pm on Wednesday 23 July** and will last for up to an hour.

West Berkshire Council provides hundreds of services used by residents every day as well as delivering infrastructure such as new school buildings, road projects and public spaces. It's all delivered through an annual £250m budget - and led by the Leader and the Executive Members. With important issues facing the Council including a proposal to be part of a new Ridgeway Council and the funding challenges facing local authorities this is your chance to ask questions about the work your council is doing for you.

Questions can be submitted to the Leader in advance by email to asktheleader@westberks.gov.uk and should be received by 4pm on Tuesday 22 July. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions during the event using the comment feature on your preferred platform.

Speaking about the event, Councillor Jeff Brooks said:

"As Leader its important to me to be talking with local people - whether that be an impromptu conversation in the street, a formal question at Council or by going online to answer your questions. This is another way for you to ask something about your local council - whether its about the services we provide, the decisions we make or what its like to work at the Council or be a councillor. It should be a very good event and I hope many of you will be able to join me for it."

You'll be able to see the scheduled livestream and set a reminder on your preferred platform a few days before the event.

Democracy - Postal Votes now need to be renewed every 3 years

New rules for absent voting mean that postal votes will need to be renewed every 3 years.

In West Berkshire, there are currently 19,000 people whose vote is due for renewal by the end of January 2026. The Council's Elections Team should have contacted those people last month, either by email or letter.

Find out more about how to update your postal vote at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote

If you have any questions about your postal vote, you can call 01635 519464

'Ridgeway Council' focus of our next Community Forum - Join us at Theale library and online for our next forum event **TOMORROW!**

Join officers and councillors at 6:30pm on Tuesday 15 July for our next Community Forum, an informative session on Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution. The Forum will focus on the proposal for a new unitary council 'Ridgeway Council' covering the districts of West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. This initiative is part of a broader government plan to replace two-tier local government structures with larger, single-tier unitary councils. This will be one of a number of engagement events that have taken place during the engagement period.

Forums are an opportunity for residents, community members, and stakeholders to come together to discuss local challenges and opportunities that can shape the future of our neighbourhoods.

The aim of this Forum is for you to learn more about the proposal, for us to understand your views on the proposal and what it would mean for our communities.

This event is a chance for existing and potential new residents, and interested community, voluntary and business groups to meet to discuss emerging proposals which will affect the very future of our district and the way local services are provided as part of the Government's proposed reforms. It is also an opportunity for the community to share any topics, concerns, and issues which they'd like to make us aware of as we transition into whatever local government reorganisation and devolution looks like for West Berkshire.

This event is open to everyone and will provide a great opportunity for residents, councillors, local organisations/businesses to come together and talk about the proposals and encourage you to take part in the short online survey which is open until Wednesday 16 July."

You can attend the Forum in person at Theale library, Church Street, Theale RG7 5BZ or join us online via Zoom, making it convenient for everyone to participate.

You will need to register by email to CommunityForumQuestions@westberks.gov.uk and state if you will attend in person or online. Online participants will receive the joining link closer to the time. The event will also be streamed live on our YouTube channel.

Kind Regards

Mr Chris Read

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