

District Councillor Report  
Haseley Brook ward  
01 April 2025

Cllr Georgina Heritage



**Meetings and Council Activity**

For the Haseley Brook ward, the biggest news item over the past month has been the announcement from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse councils that they are the new owners of Haseley Trading Estate and, subject to planning, the site will be used as a long-term vehicle depot for waste and street cleaning fleet. This is something I was admittedly nervous about initially, as I was concerned that without full explanation, local residents may assume that the estate is intended to be a waste transfer station. It's very important to me that our residents can feel assured of transparency and our parish councils are fully informed. With this in mind, I contacted Andrew Busby, Head of Development and Corporate Landlord, who was in agreement and gave me the opportunity to work with him and other officers in their communication plans. As a result, I was pleased that Andrew Busby and his colleague Andrew Waterman offered to attend the March parish council meetings of those villages closest to the trading estate. The parish councils in this ward which are not in such close proximity received a separate communication, and there will be lots of opportunity for engagement and for questions to be answered.

To clarify, the new site would be used as a depot for parking waste and recycling collection vehicles, street cleaning vehicles, and for vehicle maintenance. There would be no storage or disposal of waste. The current vehicle depot in Culham is due to be redeveloped for new homes, and the existing contract and lease expires in 2026, so the councils have spent a very long time searching for a suitable new location to ensure statutory waste collection services are not interrupted in any way.

The plan is to redevelop and retain one of the existing buildings and make improvements to the site, which will include improving the screening with planting and managing the adjoining woodland, which has suffered some neglect in recent years. They will also be reviewing their vehicle movements to keep the impact on the surrounding areas as minimal as possible.

The new owners intend to be good neighbours and show respect to the surrounding villages. If you have any questions about the intentions for Haseley Trading Estate I am very happy to assist in getting them answered for you.

Subject to planning approval, the new depot would operate from the summer of 2026. There will be lots of opportunities to engage and ask questions, including a public drop-in event on **28 April at Little Milton Village Hall between 3pm and 7.30pm**. There is no need to book.

There is also a link to information about the site here: [Haseley Trading Estate - South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council](#)

## **Everyone Active Grant**

We're so pleased to have been able to increase our grants offer as part of this year's budget, and the Everyone Active offer has proved so successful that I requested we continue it, as it was originally budgeted as a shorter-term grant. The scheme is now open, and community organisations can apply for up to £1000 for projects that will help communities become more active or sustain activity. For example, for leisure or playground equipment, to run training courses to help improve physical/mental wellbeing, or even to help set up a community garden.

Locally, Thame the Disc (ultimate frisbee) have benefitted from an Everyone Active grant, and I'd love to see some Haseley Brook organisations benefit from the funding, so please spread the word.

The grant scheme will close once all the budget is spent, or at midday on **Monday 26 May**, whichever is sooner. More information about the grant scheme can be found here: [Everyone Active grant scheme - now open - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Organisations are also welcome to contact the council's Community Enablement team on 01235 422405 or email [grants@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southandvale.gov.uk)

## **Local Government Reorganisation Update**

Such updates are inevitably becoming a regular feature of my monthly reports, and this month I have the opportunity to introduce Ridgeway Council, a proposal to create a new council that reflects the make-up of our rural and market town identity and maintains local representation.

[An initial proposal](#) has been submitted on behalf of West Berkshire Council and the district councils in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse for the creation of a new unitary council that would see the three areas combined. The move is in response to the government invitation following its announcement in December 2024 to end two-tier authorities like those in Oxfordshire.

As part of the shake-up of local councils, the government has also indicated all unitary authorities will need to serve around 500,000 residents or more, which will require West Berkshire Council - which covers around 170,000 people - to merge with neighbouring councils.

Ridgeway Council forms one half of a two-unitary council proposal for Oxfordshire, with the other half made up from the district council areas of West Oxfordshire, Oxford City and Cherwell. West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council have confirmed they will be developing the North Oxfordshire Council half of the proposal, complementing the Ridgeway Council work being carried out by West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and the Vale, coming together to create a proposal for two unitaries covering what is currently Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

With strong demographic and economic similarities and significant historic ties between South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire, the three councils have now produced a detailed interim proposal document, which is available on their new website dedicated to keeping the public informed about the proposal at [ridgewaycouncil.org.uk](http://ridgewaycouncil.org.uk). The proposal is being developed under the title 'Ridgeway Council' which is named after the famous 5,000-year-old trail that travels through the heart of the three council areas.

At their respective Executive and Cabinet meetings, members from all three councils agreed to support the submission of the interim proposal. Following the government's request that Oxfordshire authorities submit interim proposals together, the County Council has submitted an outline proposal for the Ridgeway Council and North Oxfordshire Council to the government, alongside two other options being developed in Oxfordshire which include a county-wide Oxfordshire proposal.

There will be opportunities in the coming months to hear the views of our communities before the final proposal is submitted, and the councils will also continue working positively and collaboratively with the other authorities in Oxfordshire.

## **Fly Tipping**

With so many parish litter picks taking place across the district in recent weeks, I'm aware of the extent of fly tipping in Haseley Brook and have been engaging with the Waste Team to assist some of the parish councils in my ward with problem areas.

I hope residents will at least be encouraged to know that there are now stricter penalties for fly-tipping, littering, and for householders who fail to ensure that their waste will be disposed of legally. This is part of a national crackdown on anti-social behaviour and the new penalties begin on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Key changes include:

- **Householder duty of care breaches:** on-the-spot fines will rise from £300 to £600.
- **Fly-tipping:** maximum fixed penalty notices will increase from £400 to £1,000.
- **Littering and graffiti:** fines will rise from £80 to £500.

Under the law, householders must ensure that their waste is disposed of legally and responsibly. Even when hiring someone to remove rubbish, you remain accountable. If someone's waste is found fly-tipped and they have failed to verify that the person or trader was legally authorised to handle it, or they failed to retain documentation, they could face an on-the-spot fine. If you're intending to have waste removed from your property, please follow this advice:

- **Check waste carriers:** always verify that the person removing your rubbish is a registered waste carrier. Use [the Environment Agency's public register](https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register) - [environment.data.gov.uk/public-register](https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register) or call 03708 506 506.
- **Keep Records:** obtain a receipt or transfer note with details of the waste carrier, their contact information and where your waste will be disposed of. Also, record the vehicle details, such as make and registration.