

District Councillor Report
Haseley Brook ward
06 May 2025

Cllr Georgina Heritage



My Meetings and Council Activity

Due to local **County elections** there has been limited political activity / decision-making over recent weeks, though statutory services and normal operations have of course continued as usual.

I am privileged to have been elected as County Councillor for the new Chinnor division, which includes the Lewknor & Postcombe parish, part of my ward as District Councillor. For the rest of the Haseley Brook ward, which is part of the Chalgrove & Thame West county division, I'm very much looking forward to working with newly elected County Councillor Judith Edwards (Lib Dem). I've had the opportunity to get to know Judith well in recent weeks and I have absolute confidence in her competence and conscientiousness for the residents of Haseley Brook.

As a District Councillor I have six parishes (and typically six monthly parish meetings) to serve. As County Councillor I will now have several additional parishes and I've noticed that some of their meetings coincide with my District ones. I will need to divide my time accordingly and will inevitably not be able to attend as many parish meetings as I would like overall, but please rest assured that I consider my District and County responsibilities to be of equal importance. I intend to be as responsive as I hope I have always been to questions and concerns from residents in my District ward.

Within the Haseley Brook ward, the proposed **Haseley Trading Estate depot** has understandably been the matter I've received most correspondence about over recent weeks, especially following the public engagement event at Little Milton on 28th April. While I'm confident of the council's good intentions regarding the site and I'm aware there was no viable alternative that would allow a more centrally located site for South & Vale, I fully take on board residents' concerns about traffic and vehicle weight implications, especially on the A329 through the village of Little Milton. I am and will continue to work with the villages to represent them on this, as well as with County Councillor Judith Edwards, to ensure these concerns are addressed.

A concern was raised that I admittedly hadn't previously considered, which is odour from the vehicles. While the estate will not be a waste transfer station and the proposal is for a vehicle depot only, I do appreciate this concern, and officers intend to look into it more fully. I believe certain fears regarding the site can be allayed - one example being visual impact - but I will work hard to get answers to the questions that have yet to be fully addressed, particularly regarding vehicle movements through villages. As I mentioned to a resident at the engagement event, it is ultimately my job to represent them to SODC (not the other way around)!

Joint Local Plan Update

We're really pleased to advise the latest progress of the South & Vale Joint Local Plan - the dates for the start of the public hearings have been published and the first week of hearing dates will cover the following topics:

- **Tuesday 3 June 2025:** Matter 1 – Procedural and Legal Requirements followed by Matter 2 – The Duty to Co-operate
- **Wednesday 4 June 2025:** Matter 3 – The Housing Target/Requirement
- **Thursday 5 June 2025:** Matter 4 – The Employment Land Requirement

This stage of the examination involves our appointed Planning Inspectors (Inspectors R A Bust and C Mulloy) holding hearing sessions to hear from the Councils and other participants about whether the JLP is sound and has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements.

All the hearing sessions will be held at Bee House on Milton Park, OX14 4SB. The hearing sessions will be held in public and anyone can attend in person to watch (subject to capacity at the venue). The sessions will also be available to watch online via a livestream from Bee House.

Our [Joint Local Plan examination webpage](#) contains all the details produced by the Inspectors: the Matters, Issues and Questions ([ID02](#)), Guidance Notes ([ID03](#)) and a draft Hearings Programme ([ID04](#)).

Solar Energy at Thame Leisure Centre

Work has begun this week at Thame Leisure Centre to install just over 150 solar panels, reducing the centre's reliance on fossil fuels and lowering its carbon emissions. The solar panels will cover large areas of the roof space at the centre including the gym and the sports hall. It's estimated that the panels will produce 69,000KWh of renewable electricity for the centre. This project follows other work carried out at the site to improve energy efficiency including the installation of LED lighting.

It's anticipated that the work to install the solar panels should be completed by early summer 2025. As most of the work will take place outside, it is expected that users will experience minimum disruption.

The project has been made possible thanks to a successful bid by SODC for just over £160,000 from Sports England with the Swimming Pool Support Fund – which invests National Lottery and government money each year.

Updated information is available on the progress of the work on the [council's leisure centre webpage](#).

Accessible Moorings in Wallingford complete

The major project to improve accessibility at the riverside - managed by South Oxfordshire District Council, with the support and eager anticipation of the local volunteer-run charity, Wallingford Accessible Boat Club – has now been completed in good time for the summer. The package of improvements has been designed to be step-free to provide easy access to people of all disabilities

and to enhance the whole riverside as an attractive destination for residents, visitors, clubs and river users alike.

Work has covered improvements to the existing access path, roadway, ramp and moorings at the riverside – in addition to the installation of an accessible pontoon designed for river lovers with a disability.

Whilst the facility is available to all, it has been specifically designed to meet the requirements of the Wallingford Accessible Boat Club's wheelyboat, WOW-one, to enable disabled and less mobile people to have equal access to the river. To contact the club for further support or guidance, visit www.wabc.org.uk

To support the Wallingford Accessible Boat Club's activities, the site includes a wheelchair accessible cabin with access to water and electricity. The ambition is to create cheerful artwork on the cabin to brighten up the area.

In a related project, a Changing Places accessible bathroom has also been created at the riverside, next to the existing toilet facilities and is now available for use.

The completion of the work times perfectly with the summer opening of the Riverside site. The campsite opened at the beginning of May and the outdoor pool and splash pad will follow later this month.