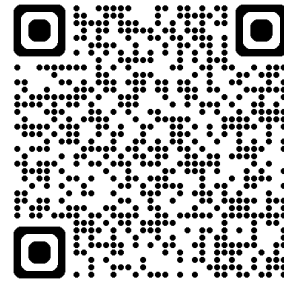


April & May 2026

VOWH District Councillor Report
for Ridgeway Ward

You can now view this report (and previous ones) at
<https://steady.page/en/a-view-from-the-ridgeway/>



Council planning and land charges system changes

The planning and land charges system recently underwent a complete replacement overhaul, bringing a modernised planning system online to better handle local applications. A Town and Parish Council Forum was held in April for town and parish councillors and following feedback from several attendees changes are being made to the format of the consultation and notification letters. This system is still bedding in so any issues please check the [FAQs](#) and if the issue remains do not hesitate to raise directly with the Customer Services who will be able to assist or, if you prefer, email me.

Nature and Climate Action Fund – Now open

As mentioned previously, if you are part of a local group planning a project that helps tackle climate change, improve resilience to heatwaves, flooding or droughts, or helps restore nature in our district then this fund could help. It has funding of between £250 and £10,000 for such projects. Previously it has funded a wide variety of proposals from secondary glazing at a local museum to a floodplain meadow restoration. This scheme will **close for applications at midday on 29 June 2026**. [More information is available on the council's website](#).

Follow in the footsteps of Kingston Lisle

In March 2025 Kingston Lisle Parish Council used the previous tree-planting scheme to obtain a licence to plant 16 fruit trees on Vale of White Horse District Council-owned land in the village. A year on, the young trees provide a great habitat for insects and wildlife, and the village is looking forward to its first harvest from its new orchard later in the year. [Read how the council have now made it easier to create nature recovery projects on district council-owned land](#). Projects can now include planting of shrubs, sowing of wildflower meadows to encourage pollinators, and installing man-made habitats such as insect “hotels” and bird and bat boxes to help increase the local wildlife. If you have an idea, contact your parish council or email me.

Spring Clean - it's not too late!

In March, the district's Waste team loaned out more than 1,300 litter picking packs to volunteers and groups in 60 locations across South and Vale for a major community tidy up as part of the Great British Spring Clean. All the bags of litter were then collected by Biffa for safe disposal. If you want to arrange a litter pick in your village, see [how the district can help on the council's website](#).

BinDays - a new app

The council have launched a new web app for people to find out when bins will be emptied. If installed on a smartphone it remembers your postcode for easy access next time. (BinDays replaces Binzone which the council is no longer able to support, due to updated internet security standards.) [More information is available on the council's website.](#)

Survey on waste and street cleaning services

An annual survey was at the end of April giving residents another opportunity to have their say on everything from household waste and recycling collections to street cleaning and local waste reduction initiatives. [Take part in the 2026 Waste and Street Cleaning Survey now](#) The survey is open **until 4 June 2026**.

And finally on waste

A reminder that the council is working for you to keep our Vale tidy and safe and that businesses remain legally responsible for their waste, even if they pay someone else to remove it. [Too good to be true £20 waste deal costs barber shop owner £2,200](#)

Renting changes

From **1 May**, The Renters' Rights Act came into effect. This brings about the most significant changes to the private renting sector in nearly 40 years. Importantly, these changes give tenants greater stability and security. It will also break down barriers that can prevent some people and families from renting altogether. Key changes include an end to 'no-fault' evictions and fairer rent rules. Other changes include rent increases legally limited to once per year and every tenant having the right to request a pet, which the landlord cannot unreasonably refuse.

The council will have new powers to enforce new standards required for landlords and their properties.

If you are a landlord, the change in the law will affect how you manage your tenancies. Find out more at gov.uk/rentingischanging

The district council is also offering support and advice to landlords – visit our website at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/renters-rights-act or email housing@southandvale.gov.uk.

Cost-of-living support and advice

From May to December this year, the Community Hub Team will be hosting roadshows, visiting local community organisations across the district. Council officers will be on hand to provide advice on housing support, energy and heating grants, and other ways to help manage household costs. The roadshows also give you a chance to share feedback to the councils and help shape future support and services.

The first stops on the roadshow will be:

- **Thursday 28 May**, 2.30-4pm at Church Hall, St. Peter & St Paul's Church, 81 West Way OX2 9JY
- **Wednesday 15 July**, 2-4pm at Vale Community Impact Pop-Up Café (Petypher House), Kingston Bagpuize OX13 5FR

You are welcome to drop in to the roadshow venues at any time, no bookings are required. More dates and locations will be announced over the summer with details being shared on the councils' social media platforms and websites.

What I've been up to

Thank you to those of you who have been contacting me raising issues with the booking system for our local recycling centre. Although the recycling centre is an Oxfordshire County Council responsibility there are clearly opportunities to try and influence still. I have raised the issue with other District Councillors who have shared they are experiencing similar feedback so I am hopeful we can influence some changes. I will update you when I have more.

Again although not within the control of the District Council, I am also keeping abreast of the work on the A417 near Mellors and currently trying to reconcile conflicting updates on what next to try and prevent repeated significant flooding later this year.

Reviewing various planning applications in our ward is starting to take on an increasing amount of my time. There are several active applications particularly in West Challow and Kingston Lisle that I am helping residents with to ensure their voices are heard. [More information is available on the council's website](#)

I continue to hold various roles on the District Council e.g. serving on the Joint Audit and Governance Committee.

I have also recently been appointed as the District Council's representative on the Letcombe Brook Project Steering Group. This felt particularly timely following the [recent motion I successfully introduced at Council](#) on protecting our rare chalk streams across the Vale. I attended my first meeting of the Steering Group in May and had the pleasure of learning more about the work they have recently done, what they plan to do over the coming months, and enjoyed a hands-on riverfly demonstration.

I am also looking forward to attending my first meeting in July as the District Council's representative on the Council of Partners for the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly the North Wessex Downs AONB).

Fancy watching something different?

With recent improvements to facilities at Abbey House, full Council meetings can now be watched live or watched later on the councils' [Committee Meetings YouTube channel](#).

Cllr Hannah Griffin
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(27 May 2026)