

November 2019

- On Monday 28 October West Berkshire Council held its first 'climate conference' to discuss how it can meet its target to become carbon neutral by 2030. This followed the council's declaration of a climate emergency in July. In mid-November the council is due to publish a draft environment strategy and a six week period of public consultation will begin, but nothing has appeared yet so perhaps it's delayed because of the general election.
- The West Berkshire Council planning officer dealing with the future of the Institute site in Compton has reassured me that the cancelled public engagement event on 7 November will be rescheduled in January, before the site owners submit a planning application at the end of February. Up until recently the understanding was that there would be no more than 140 new homes built on the site, but the site owners Homes England and their consultants are proposing 250. I will maintain contact with the planning officer throughout the process and keep you updated.
- We are creating a community orchard on the old disused allotments in East Ilsley and hope to begin planting in December ([we aren't going to hit the end of November 'national tree planting day' unfortunately](#)). One of the council's tree officers visited to speak to Steve Meadows and I, and is going to advise us about the mixture of trees we should plant, [but we haven't received his proposal/map yet](#).
- Regarding salt bins, I've decided to leave this with the six parish councils in Ridgeway ward to resolve, because I'm being batted back and forth between WBC and the parish councils, with no resolution in sight. I have come to the conclusion that I cannot solve this on my own. It needs to be the parish councils either paying WBC to fill the bins, ordering salt from another source, or not filling them at all and leaving it up to residents to make their own arrangements (for example in Compton one cul-de-sac club together to buy their own salt). I get a lot of questions about this from residents across the ward but I am now referring them to their parish councils.
- I attended the Remembrance Day service at Aldworth church on 10 November and was granted the honour of delivering a reading. The church was packed with local residents including lots of young people.
- I took part in a discussion panel entitled 'How democratic is the UK?' at Theale Green School on 8 November during their 'Democracy Week'. I spoke at a similar event at Kennet School in Thatcham last year. Talking with students, including the local climate strikers at their Friday protests, fills me with hope for the future. They are well informed, articulate and full of energy.
- Western Area Planning Committee is busy (four hour meeting last week) but there is nothing contentious in this ward right now.
- I'm on the council's 'Planning Advisory Group' where we recently discussed reviewing conservation areas. East Ilsley is in the current phase of review (it's going to take years to review all the conservation areas). Officers at the meeting said they would write to all PCs in conservation areas asap to tell them about this project. Hopefully Fen has received something by now.
- Remember you can report problems including fly tipping, unemptied bins, and pot holes by searching for 'West Berkshire Report a Problem' on the internet or visiting [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com) If it's urgent please email [customerservices@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@westberks.gov.uk) or call 01635 551111. I reported the full dog bins last week and they have responded saying they will empty them within a day (so by the time you meet it should have been done).
- General election is Thursday 12 December. Voters should have received their voting cards by now. Postal votes will start to be sent out during the week beginning 25 November. Our polling station is the Swan.