

## Cllr Nick's Newsletter – Edition 7, May/June 2024



### Flooding



*River Kennet (Gillie Rhodes)*



*If you're reading the print version, you can access the latest digital copy by scanning this QR code.*

The council's Highways team has been in regular dialogue with Burghfield residents whose homes have suffered flooding over recent months. On 9 April I met two officers on site to look at and discuss both the specific case and flooding generally. As I understand it, the root cause of flooding in the particular area is the high ground water level coupled with the properties' being built on low ground relative to the floodplain. I understand the Highways team don't think surface water to be the root cause. That said, where they identify a need for additional gullies and/or correction of road level to drain surface water, they do and have carried out remedial work. They hope to increase proactive checking and maintenance of underground road surface water drainage systems, with the aim to reduce the level of reactive work. Proactive maintenance has been limited over the last few years through funding shortage. Whilst council funding is expected to remain very constrained over the next year or two, the team plans to survey an area in Burghfield, as has been done previously in Mortimer,

to establish the remedial work needed. Unfortunately, the council can't yet confirm if the latter will be possible during this financial year's owing to the need to balance many such similar issues across the district.

### Sewage in Foudry Brook Mortimer



Figures released in March show that over 3300 hours of sewage was emptied into Foudry Brook Mortimer last year. The proposed improvement works for Mortimer and Burghfield sewage treatment works, originally expected by 2023, is now said to complete by end 2024 (more [HERE](#)). The parish council began monitoring discharge levels in 2019 after a resident alerted it to the issue. I was asked recently by BBC South Today to comment, so invited parish councillor Mike Dennett along to meet them, as he had been monitoring the issue more closely. We met at the brook - the TV news

report is [HERE](#). Meanwhile the West Berkshire Council CEO and Leader have jointly called for Thames Water to create an action plan and hold regular meetings about it between the parties. They have also asked local MPs/the Secretary of State for more funding for enforcement and a review of OFWAT's (the regulator) activities.

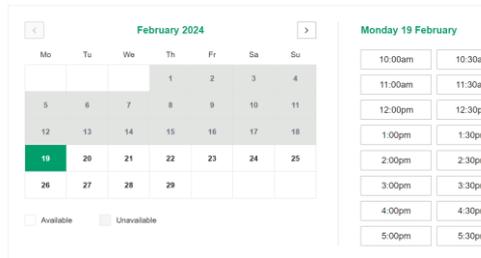
### Garth Club, Mortimer



*Garth Club, St John's Road, Mortimer*

The Royal British Legion has arranged for the two possible new trustees – Mortimer Hobby Hall & Repair Café and Royal Berkshire Boxing – to view inside the building in May. The delay came after RBL's advisors raised concerns about access safety. The viewings will be followed by meetings to discuss their proposals in more detail in June. I and parish Cllr Graham Bridgman will sit in on these sessions (Mortimer's version of The Apprentice's [Karen](#) and Tim perhaps).

## Waste & Recycling



As part of essential cost cutting, the Padworth Waste & Recycling Centre opening hours reduced recently to 11am – 6pm (Mon to Friday) and 9am – 6pm (weekends and most Bank Holidays).

You can now make/change bookings at the Padworth (and Newtown Road) Waste and Recycling centres, one hour (or less) in advance via the [online booking system](#).

Don't forget to register for and use the "online permit" method to book– the "one-day" permit is, as the name suggests, only suited for *one-off* bookings per car.

## Mini Recycling Banks



*Mini recycling bank at East Garston*

When visiting residents last year, a resident suggested the introduction of local recycling bins for items not currently collected at the roadside (or by the excellent Ali's Recycling endeavour). The resident had in mind plastic food trays, in particular. When I mentioned this at a recent council meeting, our waste team said they can supply (and empty) various collection banks including pots/tubs/trays, cardboard and small electrical. I've asked our parish councils and some other local groups whether they can think of anywhere these could go/support the idea. If you are interested to know more, please get in touch. Meanwhile there's more about future plans for roadside collection in Issue 4, p5 [HERE](#)

## Burghfield's Heritage Assets

Whilst Mortimer has a Saxon tomb in St Mary's church, and various other historical sites and stories, Burghfield has both a late 19th century cast iron hand water pump and a well-head shelter dating from 1902. Each sound more use than a Saxon tomb to be fair. That aside they've each belatedly (owing to staff shortages) been nominated by the West Berkshire Heritage Forum for inclusion on West Berkshire Council's heritage assets list.

### *Water Pump*

Iron water pumps were a familiar sight in Victorian villages, when piped water was not available. Many pumps were taken for scrap in wartime or moved/discarded when roads were widened. This is a good example, which may have used by residents or connected with the school. It's made by Joseph Evans & Sons a well-known and very successful pump manufacturer, founded in 1810 and trading until the 1960s.

### *Well House*

Few well-head shelters survive in West Berkshire and Burghfield's is notable because it's dedicated to Queen Victoria - usually such memorials are statues, drinking fountains or memorial stones, not something of greater public worth. The shelter is in good condition, attractive and well maintained, and is a local landmark because of its position in a well-used recreation area.

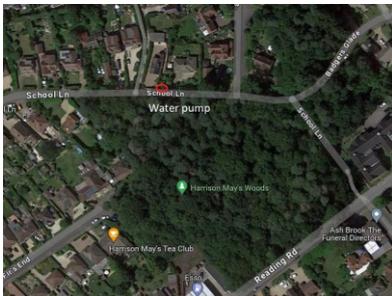
You can comment on the proposals [HERE](#) link until midnight on Sunday 12 May. There's more about the 'heritage list' process [HERE](#).



*Water Pump*



*Well-head shelter*



*Location of iron water pump*



*Location of well-head shelter*

## Healthcare - Little Village Pharmacy/Health Scrutiny Committee



I raised the issue of Little Village Pharmacy's lack of electronic access to prescriptions at the March Health Scrutiny Committee meeting [HERE](#). Note the nodding from the senior managers. The meeting itself covered this as part of a wider [review of Pharmacy](#) provision. I'll update you on progress.

I find the sessions themselves an excellent source of information about diverse health matters, presented as they are by senior staff across the sector. They are open to the public to watch live or on catch up. The papers for the March meeting are [HERE](#) and all the meetings are available to watch [HERE](#).

### 20mph Zones

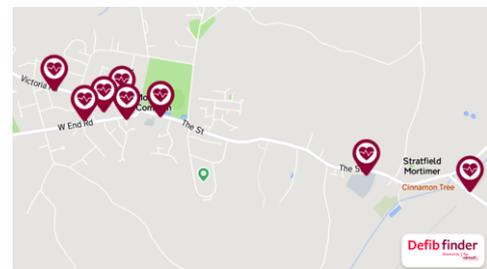


At public request, 20mph speed limits are expected to be introduced in parts of Theale soon – more [HERE](#). It's part of the council's election commitment to offer such change *where residents want it*. Assuming the Theale trial is successful, the scheme will be offered to other parts of the district. The process is likely to entail: a survey/petition by a Ward Member(s) to capture demand; an analysis/proposal by council officers of if/how it can be done; a public consultation to identify any blocking issues before proceeding. Whilst it seems

clear that a speed limit is not always adhered to/enforced, the evidence, supported by the police and measurements made by parish councils, is that limit reduction brings overall speed reduction. If you have a suggestion of places that you feel lend themselves to further study, please get in touch. I have already received a request from a resident in Abbots Road Burghfield and had some initial emails with Mortimer St Mary's school governors on the idea.

### Defibrillators

A resident asked whether people know the whereabouts of local defibrillators. Whilst the emergency services do, the Ambulance Service (obviously) prefer residents to know where they are before needing to use them, since speed is of the essence. All registered defibrillators are shown on <https://www.defibfinder.uk> You just enter postcode or town (Reading) or select "my location".



On the back of this, the Community First Responders are running free 30-minute CPR and defibrillator demonstrations on 14 May between 18.00 and 20.00. at Mortimer Methodist Church sanctuary. To reserve a place please call the parish council office on 01189 331955 or email [admin@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](mailto:admin@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)

## School drop-off/collection – Burghfield Common



*Signage outside The Willink*



*No-wait markings.*

As previously mentioned, I raised residents' concern about parking on the "Keep Clear" area at school drop off/pick up time with the local police. They duly made an impromptu visit in February at school pick up time. They reported back that no one had parked on the zig zag area, but several vehicles stopped on double yellow lines waiting to pick up pupils, were spoken to and moved on. The Police report that they will visit again, hopefully at the start of the school day, which the resident who raised this issue thinks the problem occurs most.

## Annual Parish Meetings



*Beech Hill Memorial Hall*

Annual Parish Meetings (easily/often confused with the annual meeting of the parish council which is more a paperwork thing), led by parish councils (where parish councils exist) offer an opportunity for the community to gather to discuss issues of interest or concern. I was delighted to be invited to attend the Beech Hill meeting for the first time this year and learn about the many activities in their thriving community. As [the agenda](#) confirms, the meeting covered rewilding, allotments, the community plan and more. I heard some residents and landowners' views and concerns about flooding, speeding and the claimed effect of roadway repairs on hedgerow maintenance. Separately Mortimer's meeting (which I couldn't get to) took place on 29 April, Wokefield's is set for 15 May and Burghfield's on 22 May.

## Electric Vehicle Charging

Several residents responded to my calls for interest from homes without off street parking, who are considering buying an electric vehicle. As a result, 4 roadside chargers are planned to be installed in June in Omers Rise (2), Hollybush Lane (1) and Abbots Road (1). The council seeks to deploy charge points across the district so that charging is not limited by income or location. It hopes to futureproof the district as people make the switch to electric. Funding for the rollout is limited and the council understands there to be no more Government support after the latest funding it's received. It is therefore keen to make the

most of the opportunities to create a charging network. I've heard a concern from a resident in one of the affected streets, centring I think on the fact that parking is at a premium there and that an electric car might take the space used by a petrol/diesel. I plan to visit to discuss this with them in the next few days. Separately work continues on a trial of the [under pavement charging](#) and towards the possibility of car park chargers (see last newsletter). None of the grant money comes from council tax and such grants cannot be used for purposes other than EV charging – there more information [HERE](#)



A site in Omers Rise



Abbots Road



Hollybush Lane

## Getting In Touch

If you'd like more information on anything in this newsletter, or have any other council issue to raise, please get in touch. If you'd like to meet face to face I'm at The Baobab, Mortimer on [each first Saturday](#) from **10-11am**. Next drop-in is on [Sat 1 June](#).



Meet me on first Saturdays at The Baobab

### Nick Carter

West Berks District Councillor - Burghfield and Mortimer



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## All At Sea

I celebrated a belated milestone birthday with my family aboard Radio Caroline, the radio station that broke the mould of pop radio, and was my memorable, albeit at times rocky, home in summer 1987. We visited on its 'official' 60<sup>th</sup> birthday on Easter Saturday - video [HERE](#).

I learnt recently that I'm not the first district councillor to set foot on a 'pirate' radio ship – André Potier, representing Hillingdon on the former Greater London Council visited Radio London in the 1960s. I'm the first on Caroline though, and as a DJ.



*André Potier aboard Radio London'*



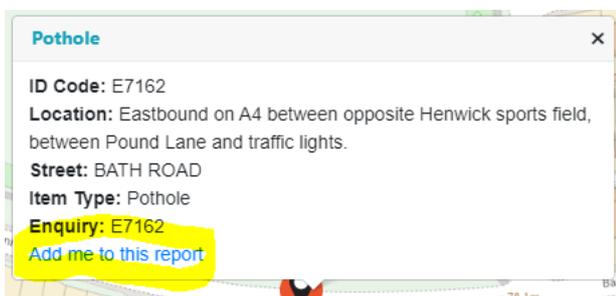
*Nick aboard Radio Caroline*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Reporting Highways and Countryside Problems

The [online problem reporting system](#) allows residents (and parish councils) to report problems relating to Highways (potholes, dirty road signs, unemptied pavement bins and non-working street lights) and Countryside (unemptied bins in parks and footpaths). You can access the system [HERE](#) from a PC or mobile device.

You select the problem category from a list and mark the incident location on a map. You can (and ideally should) upload photos for pothole cases but should not try to measure their depth. You'll receive an email acknowledgement, giving an indicative response time. The incident is then reviewed and assigned a priority. A non-working pelican crossing, or a serious pothole for example, should be dealt with within a few hours of reporting, whilst a less serious pothole may take 28 days. You'll receive email updates as the incident progresses. If it is deemed a duplicate of a problem reported by others or dealt with already, you will be informed. You can nominate other people to receive notifications of the incident's progress.



The council doesn't currently support the use of third-party apps. to raise problems, nor phoned-in incidents, other than for out of hours emergencies. If you experience problems with the service, or an unusually poor response time, please let us know, forwarding the relevant incident email(s).

## Issue Tracker

Some issues raised by residents and their status (for closed issues see older newsletters):

Topic	Raised	Action	Status
Alleged encroachment/planning infringements/other	27 June '23	Heard concerns over alleged encroachment/Planning/other issues and residents understanding of what the council has/is doing about it.	6 Oct: Residents updated. 10 Nov/20 Feb: internal status reviews/action planning with cross functional teams within council. Continuing to liaise with residents on status and actions.
Drainage – apparently faulty surface water drainage pump	28 Feb	Liasing with resident and council officers	28 March: resident advises WBC confirms a split pipe and will arrange repair
Flooding of homes	Various dates since Nov' 23	Discussing flooding/drainage issues raised by diverse residents and Mortimer parish council with officers.	See separate item in this and previous reports – examples comprise: a street and The Street Mortimer and roads within Burghfield.
Windmill Court	Oct' 22	Understanding residents' requirement/engaging with housing association, summarising the proposal for residents. Pursuing concerns of residents that wish to return to the new facility and remain in suitable accommodation in Mortimer in the meantime.	Nov '23: Invited public comment on plan. Jan '24: told residents what moving costs the Housing Association will pay. Mar '24: raised concerns over reported threat of eviction both with the association and our Exec to progress.
Repairs to The Bever Mortimer Housing Association property gutters etc	23 Dec' 23	Alerted to concern on apparently poorly organised refurbishments to housing association properties,	Jan '24: raised case with council's Housing Association team. 5 March: put housing team in direct contact with resident to liaise over repairs
Online transmission of prescriptions between Mortimer Dispensary and Little Village Pharmacy	1 Nov '23	The Little Village Pharmacy's (formerly JHoots) asked for help gaining electronic access to prescriptions, instead of an employee needing to walk regularly to/from dispensary at the surgery.	19/2/24: tabled issue for inclusion in Feb Healthcare Scrutiny meeting with the Integrated Care Board. 2/5/24: see item in this report.
Overgrown hedge – unexpected closing of incident.	15 Mar '23	Resident (Mortimer parish councillor) raised an overgrown hedge incident, and it seemed to become closed for no good reason.	15 Mar: raised with senior management. 18 Apr: raised with maintenance team. My next move is to discuss with a specific officer