

FROM JANE HANNA...

Thank you to local residents who have written to me regarding the Try Homes Development. I have raised and will continue to raise concerns expressed to me about overdevelopment of the site, problems of access; insufficient parking and the fact that the developers are planning a footpath on the south side of the road. I made representations about the highway safety concerns at a recent meeting of the Parish Council and PLAGs with County officers. The strip of land proposed as the footpath is intended to be land that in the longer term, funds permitting, could be used to widen the road through the village. I intend to argue at the planning committee that the provision of a strip of land would be very valuable in the longer term for Marcham particularly if plans for a Bypass never materialise, but that it should not in the meantime be dressed up as a footpath to nowhere increasing the number of people having to negotiate a dangerous highway. I am hoping that County Highways will reconsider their advice to the Vale that the plans satisfy them as the Highways Authority as the planning committee is likely to face a legal appeal from the developers if they refuse to follow the advice of the County on this matter.

On the reservoir the Environmental Agency has come out strongly against it and Vale Policy remains to oppose it as the proposals stand. On Council Tax the Vale budget has been set at £102 per annum for the average band D house. An alternative budget from another Group was discussed, but in the end not proposed. This would have saved residents 5p a week but would have involved a host of service cuts including the Energy Team working to conserve heating for the elderly and help them apply for insulation grants, Sports Development in its work with young people across the Vale and Arts Development which helps support over 120 local groups. The Vale is still the 8th lowest of the 238 authorities in England accounting for only 8% of your total council tax bill. Car parking charges will be reduced by 30% for 3 hour stays to promote vitality of market towns.

JANE HANNA District Councillor for Marcham & Shippon

COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORT

The planned traffic experiment in Packhorse Lane is moving closer after a meeting between Parish, District and County Councillors last week. Hopefully the experimental period will determine whether it is practical to make the narrowest part of the A415 one-way working. It has taken a fair amount of negotiation with officers and cabinet members at OCC to get the money and officer time to fund the experiment, and if it is successful, there is a sum of money which can be allocate to a permanent scheme.

Sally Timberlake and PLAGS have provided the direction and a lot of the enthusiasm for a traffic scheme, and Steve Howell and Peter Ronald at OCC believe they may be able to engineer a workable solution. I wait eagerly to see it in action, although Marcham will still need a bypass eventually.

I attended a site visit with the Vale District Council to Rutland Water, to see the famous reservoir and the impact on the landscape that it has made. There are some very important lesson to be drawn from Rutland, for all parties involved in the proposed reservoir in our area. Firstly, although there was a massive opposition to Rutland Water initially the demonstrators were won over by the water authority after four years of negotiations. This scheme ascended Parliament in 1969 and was planned to supply the new city of Milton Keynes, No construction work began until 1973, and all conservation and landscape work was agreed in advance. The results are stunning examples of world-recognised conservation and environmental projects. In short, the project had a proven need, it was planned over a long period, it blends in with the landscape and was achieved with minimum disruption and negative impact on the environment. Thames Water may like to send some of their staff to see what can be achieved when local people are listened to. Rutland Water is only two hours drive from here.

CLLR IAIN BROWN

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ED VAIZEY WRITES...

I hope that some of you will have seen my Westminster Report. I plan to send one out every six months or so to give you a fuller picture of what I am doing.

As those of you who have seen it will realise, the problems with the train service from Didcot have been dominating my constituency mail bag. I think that we are making progress. First Great Western are laying on extra capacity at the end of March, and I hope there will be an additional train to London in the morning from May. In addition, there will be a whole new timetable in May. While I have to concentrate on the trains that run between London and Didcot, I have not forgotten Appleford, nor my constituents who commute to Oxford, Bristol and Swindon. In short, the whole thing has been a complete nightmare, but a cross-party group of MPs is working very hard to make changes.

The national issue that has dominated my post bag has been the future of our independent nuclear deterrent. I have always made clear that I will not do party politics in this column, but Trident is in effect a cross-party issue - there are supporters and opponents in all the main parties. I will give you my own personal view. I do recognise that the end of the Cold War means that there is an opportunity to debate again whether Britain needs its own nuclear deterrent. Many people do argue that the money could be better spent on conventional weapons, or indeed on other things completely. And still others argue that we could set an example. However, I decided to support retaining an independent nuclear deterrent because I think the world has become less safe, not more. Many more countries are likely to acquire nuclear weapons, and many of those will be capable of launching them against other countries. I believe that we have an important role to play the world and that retaining our nuclear deterrent is important in this respect.

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage (Con)

MP'S SURGERY WITH ED VAIZEY

5.30-7.00pm, unless stated otherwise

April 2007	
13	Wallingford , Town Hall
20	Faringdon , Corn Exchange
Contact Ed Vaizey by	
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Dear Editor

Thank you to the high proportion who supported my petition for a litter bin in The Gap. A Vale Council employee visited the road late last year, and concluded that there was no litter problem here.



OF COURSE she didn't find any, because I pick it up regularly and put it in my dustbin! The outcome is that we shall not be provided with a bin at all ("difficulties finding a suitable location" etc), but that the Vale Council's litter-picking team will increase its visits to fortnightly from once a month.

After monitoring this for the next few weeks, if there is still a problem, "they will visit the site to assess for a litter bin again". In a letter dated 17 October 06, the Parish Council said that if the District Council was unable to provide a bin, then the Parish Council has agreed to fund one!

I rest my case, as they say.

JOAN CARTER

Write to MADNews and let others know what you think about current events