

Your West Berkshire

Spring/Summer 2024

www.westberks.gov.uk



Inside

Crowning our Community Champions,
how we're spending your money,
summer activities...and more!



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L



CONTENTS

- 4 New digital planning service, customer services, changing places in Hungerford
- 5 Community Champion Awards
- 7 Demand Responsive Transport
- 8-9 Budget 2024/25 – overview of how we're spending our money
- 11 Learner Achievement Awards
- 12-13 Northcroft Lido
- 14 Local Plan Examination
- 17 Shared lives and foster caring
- 18-19 Things to do this summer

 westberkshire  @westberkshire  westberkshire



Welcome to the new Your West Berkshire magazine.

As the Acting Leader of West Berkshire Council, it gives me great pleasure to introduce this new magazine. It's a good opportunity to find out more about some of the things your Council is doing for you and your community. Through this magazine we will be sharing with you news, events and stories about our work, our achievements and the services we provide throughout the district every single day.

In the Council Strategy we are committed to exploring new ways to inform and engage with residents – building our connection with you, the people we serve. In this edition you can read more about residents who are making a real difference: about Ann, who is one of our wonderful Shared Lives carers; about our latest Community Champions; and the adult learners who have gained qualifications - often in challenging circumstances.

Please pass this on for others to read, or put it in the recycling once you've finished with it.



Beyond that we'll be sharing more about a new flexible bus service we've introduced, previewing the first full season of the new Northcroft Lido and our car club. That, and of course, lots more too.

I hope you find this magazine a useful and enjoyable read. If so, you might also be interested in receiving one or more of our e-newsletters direct to your inbox. From our weekly news bulletin to monthly updates about our libraries, waste and recycling, and environment services, there are plenty of topics to choose from. You can sign up to these here:

westberks.gov.uk/newsletters

Jeff Brooks

Acting Leader of West Berkshire Council

We would love to hear what you think of this magazine.

Send your feedback to

communications@westberks.gov.uk

New digital planning service launched

A new free online service has been launched, allowing residents to check if they need to submit a planning application.

As part of the Council's work to move planning services online and make it more accessible, the new service will make it easier for residents to understand if they need to submit a planning application for items such as solar panels, loft conversions, adding an outbuilding or adding a dropped kerb. This service makes planning information simpler and more transparent for applicants and ensures consistency of guidance.

The new service is currently in a 'beta test' version and we will continue to improve it based on the responses gathered from the first users of the system.

You can find the new service here:

<https://planningservices.westberks.gov.uk/find-out-if-you-need-planning-permission>



The Customer Service Charter – our promise to you



We want our district to be a great place to live and work in, and for our customers to have the best possible experience. One of the priorities in our Council Strategy is to deliver services we are proud of, and through our Customer Service Charter we set out what you can expect when you contact us. It's our commitment to you and how we will work together.

The Charter sets out what to expect when you write, call, email or visit us and how we will keep you informed and involved as we help you. It also says how we will deal with complaints, comments and compliments.

Through these interactions we will be polite and open with you, listen to you and make sure that our employees are trained to give you the advice that you need.

To read our Customer Service Charter in full, search online for '**West Berkshire Council Customer Service Charter**'.

Changing Places in Hungerford

A bespoke Changing Places Pod offering fully accessible toilet and changing facilities has been installed in Church Street Car Park in Hungerford.

The Pod is specially designed to support disabled people who need assistance in their day-to-day lives and is large enough to accommodate a person and their carer.

It will provide a fully accessible toilet, plus a height adjustable changing bench and basin, as well as a hoist. The costs of the Pod have been covered by a £40,000 grant from Changing Places and £60,000 from West Berkshire's Community Infrastructure Levy.





CELEBRATING LOCAL COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Outstanding contributions of individuals and community groups were celebrated through the 2023 Community Champion Awards. The annual event recognises and honours those who have made a significant impact on the local community, going above and beyond to support their fellow residents.

This year's nominations showcased remarkable community spirit, resulting in an overall winner in each category and several highly commended individuals chosen by the judges. Cllr Jeremy Cottam, Chairman of West Berkshire Council, presented the awards to our winners and highly commended nominees at an awards ceremony at Shaw House in Newbury.

We're delighted to announce that our 2023 Community Champions are:

- **Junior Citizen of the Year: Thrishathi Srinivasan**
- **Volunteer of the Year: Gillian Hornzee**
- **Community Group of the Year: Speen Community Café**
- **Lifetime Achievement Award: Susan Cocker**

The 2023 Community Champion Awards underscore the vibrant spirit of community engagement in West Berkshire. These individuals and groups not only celebrate past achievements but also inspire others to contribute to the well-being and cohesion of the local community.

PAT EASTOP MBE JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Thrishathi Srinivasan – Winner

The Pat Eastop MBE Junior Citizen of the Year Award recognised Thrishathi Srinivasan for her inspiring efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing essential lessons to affected children, she generously donated funds to the Swings and Smiles charity.

Milla Brereton - Highly Commended

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Gillian Hornzee – Winner

Gillian Hornzee earned Volunteer of the Year for helping Ukrainian families settling in the area. From finding hosts to supporting education, her selfless efforts exemplify the true spirit of volunteerism.

Maureen Velvick – Highly Commended

Irwin Fairclough – Highly Commended

COMMUNITY GROUP OF THE YEAR

Speen Community Café – Winner

Speen Community Café secured the award for its 17 months of commendable efforts, becoming a hub for community building with various activities fostering connections and skills development.

Time to Talk – Highly Commended

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Susan Cocker – Winner

Susan Cocker received the Lifetime Achievement award for over 30 years of dedication to Lambourn Parish Council, leaving an indelible mark on the local community.

Stephanie Awbery – Highly Commended

Bill Graham – Highly Commended



To find out more about the winners, and when nominations open for 2024 visit

westberks.gov.uk/community-champion

A general election will be held by January 2025

We don't know the runners & riders yet, but you'll need to be ready

Parliamentary Boundaries have now changed

You may be in a new constituency.
For more details visit:

<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>



You need photo ID when you vote at the polling station.

If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate online:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID



If you are not registered to vote at your current address go to

www.gov.uk/register-to-vote



If you have any queries please contact the Electoral Services team.
Tel: 01635 519464 | Email: vote@westberks.gov.uk



Community Connect – a new flexible bus service

Community Connect is a new on-demand bus service which puts more control in the hands of passengers.

Launched earlier this year, Community Connect is a move away from conventional timetabled bus routes. Instead, the new service offers passengers the flexibility to book journeys through the website, user-friendly app, or dedicated phone service.

The new Community Connect service replaced the timetabled service 5/5a/5c. A morning and afternoon timetabled journey remains to ensure seamless commuter, school, and college journeys, while the service throughout the rest of the day allows passengers to choose from a variety of pick up and drop off locations within the designated operating areas.

Key features of the new Community Connect service include:

- 1. Flexibility at your fingertips:** passengers can easily book their journeys via the website, dedicated app, or via phone, putting control in their hands, rather than waiting for a timetabled bus.
- 2. Tailored journeys for rural areas:** due to the rural nature of the district with limited public transport available, these services are socially necessary for people to commute for education, employment, and medical appointments.
- 3. Responsive and efficient:** The dynamic nature of the Community Connect bus adapts to passengers' needs, ensuring optimal efficiency and responsiveness in meeting transportation demands.
- 4. Environmentally friendly:** buses are good for the environment as they can transport large amounts of people at the same time, rather than single or low occupancy cars on the road.

You can book a journey using the passenger app, by telephone or by email. When you request a booking, our smart technology will match your journey request with vehicle availability and any other passengers travelling in the same direction.



WB Community Connect

01635 519650



communityconnect@westberks.gov.uk

www.westberks.gov.uk/communityconnect



OUR SPENDING PLANS FOR 2024/25

Did you know that the council tax you pay helps to fund more than 700 services across the district?

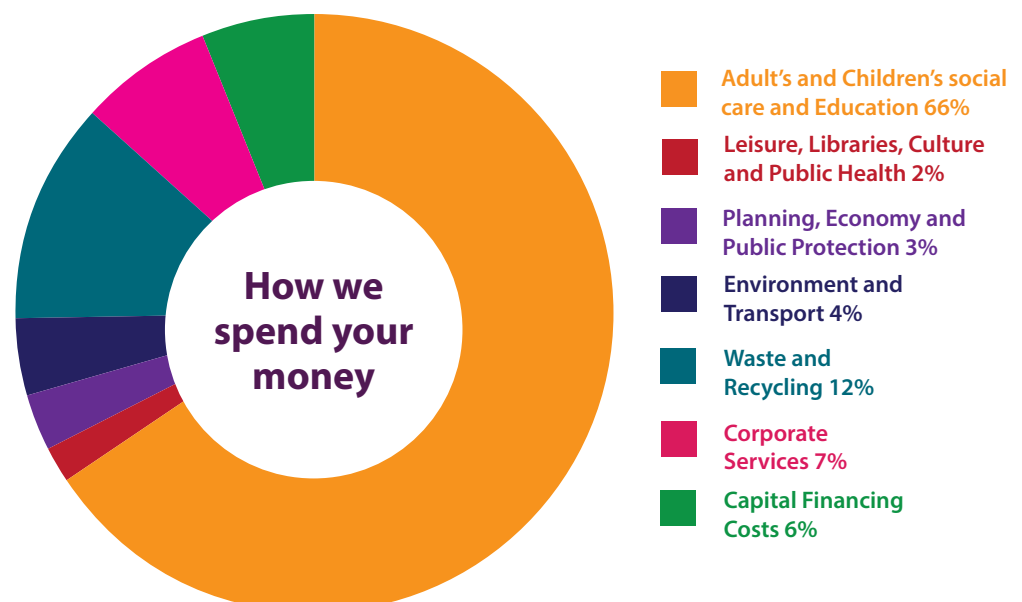
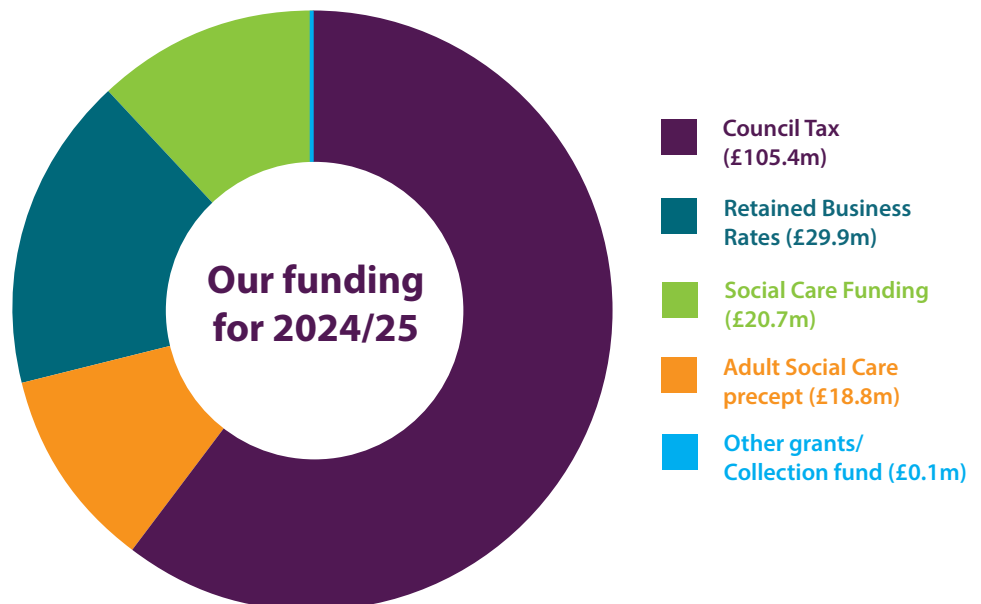
This year we will be spending £174m delivering these services, along with a further £50m on infrastructure and improvement projects. Our capital programme will see more than £10m invested in schools and education, £4m on improving our roads and £1m on active travel schemes as well as a range of other projects across the district. Alongside this, our revenue budget will help us continue delivering more than 700 statutory services across the district.

As a new Administration elected at the district council elections in May 2023, it is with pride and a keen sense of responsibility that we have set our first budget. The council tax we receive is vital in enabling us to provide the services our residents need, as well as investing in local infrastructure. We have worked hard to create a budget which delivers for the people of West Berkshire.

On these pages you can read more about how we're spending our money this year.

Despite very significant financial pressures, we believe that this is an ambitious budget as we look to continue delivering services and infrastructure we can be proud of. However, in taking a fresh look at the budget we have also made some significant changes to ensure our spending is ambitious, but also realistic and responsible.

Councillor Jeff Brooks
Acting Leader of West Berkshire Council





Our £50m capital programme is funding these projects this year...and many others too.



£95,000
playground equipment



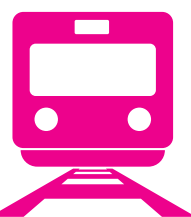
£1.8m
on flood prevention in
Memorial Fields, Thatcham



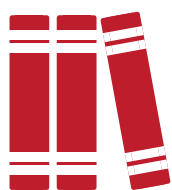
£150,000
improving footpaths in
Aldermaston



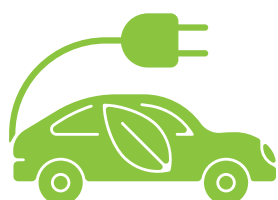
£7,000
on disabled access
to the countryside



£50,000
on public transport
infrastructure



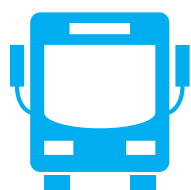
£123,000
on new library
books



£532,000
zero-emission vehicle
infrastructure



£700,000
on a new
solar farm



£1.5m
improvements
to bus services



£741,000
providing aids and
equipment for vulnerable
residents



£25,000
improving open spaces

Investing in social care

An extra £12.3m is being put into social care – helping to keep children safe and families together, and ensuring older people and vulnerable adults are looked after and supported to live independently.

Saving for a rainy day

At the moment we have about £4m in our reserves – around a week's running costs. We're putting more in to help manage pressures in areas such as social care, and to make sure we're prepared for the unexpected.

Reducing the garden waste collection charge

We're charging less to collect waste – reducing the annual cost from £58 to £55 - which is a start to our commitment to phase out the garden waste collection charge.

Listening to you

We made changes to some of our spending plans for 2024/25 after listening to the 2,500 responses we received through a consultation. Thank you to everyone who took part.

Car Rental That's Right Up Your Street



Unlock cars and vans with your phone - rent by the hour/day

The West Berkshire Car Club offers flexible access to fuel-efficient and hybrid cars. It gives you 24/7 pay-as-you-go access to vehicles parked on streets, car parks and Enterprise branches.

Whether it's a quick errand or a spontaneous road trip, the mobile app is your golden ticket to access a car. Vehicles are currently available in Newbury, with further sites in the district being explored.

Over the next few months Enterprise, our car club provider, will improve the rental experience by upgrading their in-vehicle technology and mobile app. This will enable customers to use the Enterprise Car Club app to access the keys, the fuel pin location, and extend reservations.



SPECIAL OFFERS

To get you started, the following offers are available to new and existing members!

- **Join for £1, plus get £10 FREE driving credit.** Using promotional code **NEW110**, new members with a Newbury postcode will save £59. Offer expires 31.12.24 T&Cs apply.
- **Join for FREE, plus get £25 FREE driving credit,** when joining from a previous Car Club provider and resident in West Berkshire. Use promotion code **NEW025**. Offer expires 31.12.24. T&Cs apply.

For more information, visit: www.westberks.gov.uk/carclub and see how you could benefit from using an environmentally sustainable solution like the West Berkshire Car Club.

Household Waste Recycling Centre - Opening Hours

Did you know that weekday opening hours for our two Household Waste Recycling Centres have changed?

They will now be open from **11am to 6pm** on weekdays – but will remain open as usual from **9am to 6pm** on weekends and bank holidays. The shorter weekday opening hours follows a consultation earlier in the year. It will help the sites run more efficiently – as there was spare capacity during weekdays – and save almost £60,000.

Please remember to book an appointment before you visit and check your household is registered for a permit.

You can find further details on our website: westberks.gov.uk/recyclingcentres

Garden Waste Subscriptions

If you subscribe to our garden waste collections you won't receive a sticker for your bin this year. Thanks to technology in our waste vehicles our collection crews will know which properties are subscribed, eliminating the need for a physical sticker. This will see 33,000 fewer pieces of paper issued - saving money, resources, and reducing waste.

You'll also notice the subscription for the first bin will be cheaper this year. A £3 reduction marks the start of phasing out the garden waste collection charge, reaffirming our commitment to our community and the environment.

More information will be available from July 2024 on our website: westberks.gov.uk/gardenwaste



Learner Achievement Awards

It's never too late to try something new

Do you ever wish you could change direction, do something else, try a new career - or just enjoy learning? Do you tell yourself it's too late, it's too scary or you feel you may be a little too old to follow your heart?

Well, we have news for you. It's never too late to try something new – with more adult learners up for the challenge and making those longed-for changes.

Last year, our Community Learning team celebrated a bumper year in their mission to deliver a wide and innovative range of opportunities to adults and families across the district. Together with our eighteen learning providers, the team enabled 1,622 adults to enrol on courses of their choice. This included 215 learners who were 60+ and 259 who have learning difficulties or disabilities.



Need more inspiration? We had over 60 nominations for some incredible achievements for the latest Learner Achievement Awards.

Kyra Black, the winner of our Outstanding Achievement Award, didn't find learning easy. She was diagnosed with ASD and dyscalculia when she was young, and also suffers from high frequency hearing loss in both her ears which requires the use of hearing aids. Despite her difficulties, Kyra never gave up on her dream to go to university. During her studies she worked as a Teaching Assistant at Falkland Primary School, where she went as a child, and she has recently started a degree in Medieval History at Winchester University.

Tom Ventam, winner of our Numeracy Skills for Life Award wanted to work in the IT industry but struggled to gain his Maths Level 2 to enable him to take up the perfect apprenticeship role he was offered. He studied hard, even taking a week of his annual leave to prepare for his exam (which he smashed!) He's now on track to complete his dream apprenticeship this year.

Our Inspiring Others Award went to three amazing ladies. We were delighted to recognise Hanan Turland-Warlow, Rachel Flynn-Delargy, and Beata Holeckova - who are all teachers at the Berkshire School of English. They were nominated for exceptional dedication and compassion in their work with refugee learners from Syria, Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Ukraine. They ensured that these learners not only acquired language skills but feel comfortable and integrated in their new communities. Over the last eight years, their collective effort has had a significant positive impact on the lives of over 400 refugee learners.

We're not saying that adult learning is easy. We know how tough it can be to juggle family life, studies and work. But we're here to help you and set you (literally!) on the right course. Our brilliant Learner Achievement Awards are testament to the determination and effort needed and confirm that, no matter your age, background or qualifications, you're never too old to pick up new skills.

You can find out more about community learning and the winners in our 2023 Learner Achievement Awards online: www.westberks.gov.uk/community-learning

NORTHCROFT LIDO

open for first full summer season

Bathing suits at the ready! Our fabulous Northcroft Lido is open for its first full season following a £5 million refurbishment.

If you like your fun 'al fresco', the Lido is for you. Enjoy the 50m, Olympic length pool, sunshine and fresh air with family and friends, while the kids take playtime to the next level on the splash pad or spiral flume.

Fully accessible, the Lido attracts serious swimmers, sunbathers and self-confessed 'Lido Geeks' (yes, it's a thing!).

The Lido also has history. Records show that the large rectangular outdoor pool originated in the late 19th century and can be seen on the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping of 1880. The pool was enlarged in 1914 then completely rebuilt and converted to a Lido in 1937, when it was said to be the largest pool in the south of England at 70 metres long!

In 1967, it was transformed into a more organised Lido complex with an adjacent 'baby pool'. You can see some of the Lido's history in pictures here www.westberks.gov.uk/new-newbury-lido



Whoosh!



Best day!



"It's a really nice community space and it's nice to see so many families enjoying themselves and the kids just getting into their swimming."

"It's just stunning! It's been done to such a high quality."

"There are loads of 'Lido Geeks' out there, swimming in as many Lidos as they can. I've done 63, this is my 64th and it's definitely straight up there in the top 5!"

"It's amazing and probably the best water park I've ever been to."



So fun!



Memories

We can't wait to see you there - it's THE place to be when the sun's out, so don't forget to book in advance to avoid disappointment.

www.everyoneactive.com/centre/northcroft-leisure-centre/

We're also planning a fabulous Family Fun Day during the season, so keep your eyes on our social channels and website for details.

Free NHS Health Checks – have you had yours?



A new outreach service has been commissioned to boost take-up of free NHS Health Checks.

The NHS Health Check provides you with a free check up of your overall health. It can tell you whether you are at a higher risk of getting conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease or stroke.

To increase participation, West Berkshire Council has commissioned Solutions4Health to deliver checks for eligible residents aged between 30 and 74. The check takes around 30 minutes and involves:

- measuring your height and weight
- measuring your waist
- a blood pressure check
- a cholesterol test
- a blood sugar test

During the check you will discuss how to reduce your risk of these conditions, as well as having the chance to talk about mental health and wellbeing.

You can book an NHS check directly, but eligible residents will be contacted by Solutions4Health to invite them to attend at a time convenient to them.

The service is part of a wider NHS funded pilot across the whole of Berkshire.

There will be mobile clinics across the district and you can just drop in for a check-up. You can also book your free NHS health check by phoning **0800 772 0056** or emailing **WestBerkshire.CWOS@nhs.net**.



To find out more search online or scan the QR code

Spring examination for the Local Plan Review



The Public Examination of the Local Plan Review will be taking place this Spring.

The Local Plan sets out planning policies for the district – setting out how the district will develop in the coming years. It determines how many new homes are needed and where they should be built, and looks at employment needs and finds opportunities for future growth. Having a Local Plan also prevents speculative and unplanned development in the district.

The current Local Plan Review will shape West Berkshire's future through to 2039.

Prior to adoption, it will be subject to an independent examination by an Inspector who is appointed by the Secretary of State. It will assess whether the submitted plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements.

At the Examination the Inspector will take into account the representations submitted in relation to the soundness of the plan and hold a number of informal debates on key matters which he identifies. Members of the public can attend the hearing sessions but only those invited to do so by the Inspector may speak.

At the end of the Examination, the Inspector will prepare a report to the Council with precise recommendations, which may include modifications to the plan if such a request is made by the Council. If there are proposed modifications, these will be subject to further public consultation and the Inspector will consider representations made before reaching his conclusions.

Once approved by the Inspector, it will return to West Berkshire Council to be fully adopted.

Want to get active, but need help to get started?

If you're new to running or walking or just out of practice we're here to help.

Running

RunTogether offers free running groups especially for beginners to help you get off on the right foot.

The weekly sessions are fun, friendly, and free of charge at parklands and open spaces around the district. They're suitable for complete beginners or those who've been inactive for a while - you just need some comfortable clothing and trainers to join in.

Our runners are all shapes, sizes and ages and it's a great way to meet people and make new friends. Qualified run leaders lead a short run and are on hand in each session to offer advice, support and feedback to help you progress and meet your goals.

Walking

If walking is more your thing, we also offer free, regular Wellbeing Walks for people of all abilities. The walks are friendly, welcoming and empowering, and a great opportunity to explore the outdoors, discover new places and meet new people. Our walk leaders are trained volunteers who are on hand to encourage and support walkers.

The walks are free and easy, ranging from 30 to 90 minutes. Some walks stop for coffee afterwards which is a great way to socialise and relax.



To find out more about walking and running groups visit [westberks.gov.uk/physical-activity](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/physical-activity)

Services we are proud of

April 2023 to March 2024

Throughout the year we're out and about improving our roads. From fixing potholes, resurfacing roads, and making sure our drains flow well, the work we do helps keep you on the move.

We want to deliver services to be proud of - and you can help. If you spot a pothole or something else which needs fixing you can tell us online at [westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem)

Potholes
Repaired



2,928

Gullies Cleaned

18,253

Surfacing completed

24.5km

Street
Lights
Repaired

699



Let's Get Active Fund! Grants to Build Active Communities

The Let's Get Active Fund is back – with another £40,000 available to improve access to physical activities in West Berkshire.

Open to applications from individuals, clubs, groups or non-profit organisations, the fund has helped many community groups, organisations, social enterprises, charities and schools to start or enhance physical activity initiatives. This includes:

- seated exercise classes at Educafe in Newbury,
- football/rugby hybrid nets and a wheelchair-accessible table tennis table for East Ilsley Parish Council,
- a community basketball hub for Reading Rockets basketball club in Theale,
- new equipment for Kintbury Bowling Club; and
- free tennis activity sessions designed for adults and children with learning, sensory and physical disabilities for Bright Ideas for Tennis.

The fund was launched in 2019 and is a partnership between West Berkshire Council and Greenham Trust.

What could it do for your community?

Find out more and apply for a grant at greenhamtrust.com/lets-get-active



Photo: West Berks Muslim Centre



SHAW HOUSE

Community Kitchen Garden

If you want to learn more about gardening, enjoy being outdoors or have skills to share, why not pop along to our Community Kitchen Garden sessions?

Shaw House in Newbury has a beautiful walled garden full of raised beds and a polytunnel ready to grow a variety of fruit, vegetables and flowers. The drop-in sessions are free, open to everyone and held between 10am and 12.30pm on Thursday mornings.

This is a great opportunity to learn new skills, share skills and meet new people whilst getting all the benefits of being outside in nature. It's part of a Nature for Health initiative which is developing and delivering green space and nature activities which promote and improve physical and mental health and wellbeing whilst reducing social isolation and loneliness.

Are you interested? We'd love to see you there!

For more information or to come along contact Amy on **07553810133** or send an email to amy.bosley1@westberks.gov.uk

"Coming to the garden and helping is the first time in years I have felt a purpose and can be useful to something"
Tony - Volunteer





Sharing is

caring



They also go to 'Breakfast Club' on Saturdays with other carers and service users at a local café where they enjoy food, socialising and having a good time.

Ann says, "Jamie is very much a part of my family, we have lots of laughs together. Being a Shared Lives Carer is fabulous, I really enjoy my time with Jamie and helping him live the best life he can."

Jamie says, "Ann is an amazing carer and I love staying with her. I enjoy seeing her family when they visit, especially during the holidays."

Could you share your home and life with someone who needs care and wants to be part of a family? You could become a Shared Lives Carer.

Meet Ann and Jamie.

Jamie has been living with Ann, his Shared Lives Carer since 2022. He has lots of interests including gaming and watching TV and films. He also likes to collect games and films and enjoys browsing local shops to find them. Jamie has Down Syndrome and needs some support from Ann to live more independently within Ann's home.

A typical day begins with Ann getting Jamie up and helping him get ready for the day. Life is never dull, and the pair have a busy social life.

Jamie attends local day activities during the week, his favourite is Drama.

Friday night is 'movie night, when Ann and Jamie will pick a film together and grab a takeaway treat.

Find out more about becoming a Shared Lives Carer at www.westberks.gov.uk/article/38966/West-Berkshire-Shared-Lives, emailing sharedlives@westberks.gov.uk or calling **01635 520173**.



We're looking for new foster carers to provide loving, nurturing homes for children of all ages, long and short term.

Please contact us today:
Phone **01635 503155**
Email fostering@westberks.gov.uk
www.westberks.gov.uk/fostering

Foster NOW



Looking for things to do for children and young people this summer?



Here are a few ideas...

Cycle Training

Bikeability sessions help young people grow more confident with each turn of the pedal. Our expert instructors will lead riders on quiet roads to safely experience 'real' cycling. With sessions for children and families, you can find courses online at: westberks.gov.uk/cycletraining



The Goldwell Park Pump Track

Visit the new pump track in Newbury to experience high energy excitement. The innovative all-weather pump track is a continuous circuit designed for wheeled sports like BMX and mountain biking.



Take part in the Summer Reading Challenge

Visit your local library during the summer holidays to take part in this year's Summer Reading Challenge. With eight libraries across the district there's one near you – all offering the Summer Reading Challenge and many other activities and events to keep children and young people entertained. To find out more at: westberks.gov.uk/libraries



Northcroft Lido

Don't forget to make a splash at the new Northcroft Lido. You can read more about the new pool, slides and splashpad on pages 12 and 13.

Visit the Museum

Pay a visit to West Berkshire Museum. It's open every Wednesday to Sunday between 10am and 4pm. Entry is free but donations are welcome. Find out more about the special exhibitions, events and activities at: westberkshireheritage.org



Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Our holiday programme provides a variety of fun and enriching physical activities, including sports, music, arts and other exciting opportunities to learn and develop skills, alongside a nutritious meal each day. Delivered in more than 20 locations across the district, with free places for eligible children, you can find out more about the programme and how to book places at: westberks.gov.uk/haf



Explore the countryside on foot or by bike

Enjoy fresh air and beautiful countryside with our free walking and cycling maps and routes. Our walking maps have been carefully drawn to show road crossing points, underpasses and short-cuts, with routes colour-coded to show the suitability of paths for all users. Our cycle maps help show you which routes suit for your abilities, and can help you explore the district. To find out more at: westberks.gov.uk/walkingandcycling



Pop in to our Family Hubs

Our three Family Hubs in Calcot, Newbury and Thatcham offer a range of services to support families, parents and carers of children aged 0-19 years old, primarily working with those with children aged under 5 years. There's always fun to be had at the Hubs, with lots of family events running all through the summer. From Messy Play to Cruisers and Crawlers, they have summer fun all wrapped up and ready to enjoy. Find out more at: westberks.gov.uk/familyhubs



Disco Dragons

Disco Dragons is a treasure map that that helps people to explore and learn more about the historic town of Newbury. You can read more about this on page 20.

STAYING SAFE IN AND AROUND WATER

Summer is a great time of the year to remind children about the water safety code to help them stay safe in and around water.

To find our more search

Water Safety Code



Teach your children the Water Safety Code

STOP & THINK



Look for the dangers. Always read the signs and understand what they mean.

STAY TOGETHER



Never go near water on your own. Always have an adult with you.

FLOAT



If you fall in, float or swim on your back and stay calm. Throw something that floats to someone who has fallen in.

CALL 999 or 112



In an emergency call 999 or 112 (coastguard).

FIND THE HIDDEN TREASURES OF NEWBURY WITH DISCO DRAGONS



Have you seen our Disco Dragons treasure map?

It's a fun way to explore and learn more about the historic town of Newbury. The creative ideas for the map came from the children at Speenhamland School, with local businesses and agencies also involved.

The map is based in the heart of Newbury town centre with walking routes designed to help find the hidden treasures which are the gargoyles and statues that adorn the town. The project is part of a plan to get people active and walking, both in the town and out on the wealth of parks and footpaths around Newbury.

They are free and available to request from places such as Newbury Library, West Berkshire Museum, The Watermill Theatre, Tiny Town Café, Crystals and Rainbowz (in Kennet Shopping Centre) and The Ugly Duckling Pottery Painting Coffee House on Bartholomew Street. This will be limited to one map per family.



GRAB YOURS TODAY AND LET THE TREASURE HUNT BEGIN!

Delivering affordable accommodation



Last year, 275 new affordable homes were delivered across West Berkshire.

Affordable housing is housing for sale or rent for people whose needs are not met by the market. It provides help for households in housing need including key workers by providing affordable rented homes and a subsidised route to home ownership, which may be beyond the reach of many households in the district.

Many of the new homes were delivered through the completion of a new 119-property development in Sterling Gardens, Newbury.

Sterling Gardens offers one, two and three-bedroom flats tailored to accommodate families on the housing list. There are 27 designated for social rent and 62 for affordable rent which will be available to those on West Berkshire Council's Housing Register. A further 30 are shared ownership properties. All homes will be managed by a housing association.

Alongside this, properties at Weavers Yard in Newbury and other developments delivered by housing associations in the district have contributed to our achievement of exceeding our affordable housing target last year.

Delivery of more homes that people can afford is a commitment made in the Council Strategy 2023-27 and this will contribute towards the goal of providing more than 1,000 new affordable homes by 2030.

Your favourite books delivered to your home

If you find it difficult to visit your local library, because of age, disability, or any other special circumstance, we may be able to come to you.

Our 25 dedicated volunteers currently deliver books on a 3-weekly basis to over 100 homes across West Berkshire to make sure that everyone has access to the books they enjoy. The books are carefully chosen in line with customer preferences so that people get what they like.

Our volunteers love the feedback they get when customers have read the books, and it's a great opportunity for a chat.

David Richardson, one of our At Home Service volunteers says, "This service is worthwhile on so many levels. I signed up to volunteer when I retired to use my time constructively and have now been delivering books for 20 years!"

"Taking books to people who can't make the trip to their local library is a great thing to do, it brings joy, regular companionship, and I get a nice cup of tea."

The At Home service means that there's no need to miss out on your favourite reads. If you or someone you know is interested in using it please contact us by emailing library@westberks.gov.uk, phoning **01635 519827** or visiting westberks.gov.uk/mobile-library to find out more.

Welcome to your library

It is free to join and borrow books from West Berkshire Libraries for everyone who lives, works, or studies in West Berkshire.

Babies and young children can have their own library cards and borrow up to 15 books at a time.

There are also audiobooks (on CD), e-books and e-audiobooks, all available to borrow for free.

All details, including how to join and the current library opening hours, can be found at:

westberks.gov.uk/libraries



TIME FOR ROAD SIGNS TO SHINE

Some of our road signs will be getting a scrub this year as part of a new maintenance programme.

You may have noticed that some are beginning to look a little grubby and we're taking action to address this. Unfortunately not all are as sparkling as the one pictured. An allocation of £25,000 in this year's budget will be spent cleaning those signs which need it the most. The work will help to show the best of West Berkshire – showing pride in the district and the services we deliver, while having a positive impact for local residents and visitors to the area.





SHAW HOUSE

SHAW HOUSE

SUMMER FAIR

SUNDAY 21 JULY 11AM-4PM

Adults £2, Children £1 (Under 3 yrs free)

Local Craft Stalls, Live Music
Artisan Food and Drink
Mr Muddle the Magician
Children's Rides, Exhibitions
Dog Show, Outdoor Trail
Meet Shetland Ponies



www.westberkshireheritage.org/whats-on

Shaw House, Church Road, Newbury RG14 2DR

E: shawhouse@westberks.gov.uk

Could you volunteer at West Berkshire Council?

Are you looking for ways to get more involved with your local community?

West Berkshire Council has a range of opportunities to volunteer with us regardless of age or experience. Volunteering with us is a great way to gain and share skills, as well as helping your local community.

Our Community Panel gives you a chance to get involved in the decision-making process of the council by sharing your opinions on important local issues. Panel members can get involved through group discussions, answering surveys or participating in webinars.

A wide range of topics are discussed varying from where a bus stop location should be placed, to decisions about provisions that cover the entire district. You can find out more about our Community Panel online: westberks.gov.uk/community-engagement.

Along with this, you could also volunteer at any of our libraries, Shaw House or West Berkshire Museum. You could greet and interact with visitors or give support running everyday activities and clubs. If you are interested in volunteering with us then visit: westberks.gov.uk/volunteer.

You could also volunteer with any of our Countryside partners including The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust and The Friends of Linear Park. It's a chance to get out and about, enjoying the fresh air whilst creating a difference in our beautiful district. You can find out more information on our website: westberks.gov.uk/countrysidevolunteers.



Whether you enjoy getting your hands dirty in the mud or would rather provide a warm welcome to visitors, we have something for you.

You read to the end... NICE!

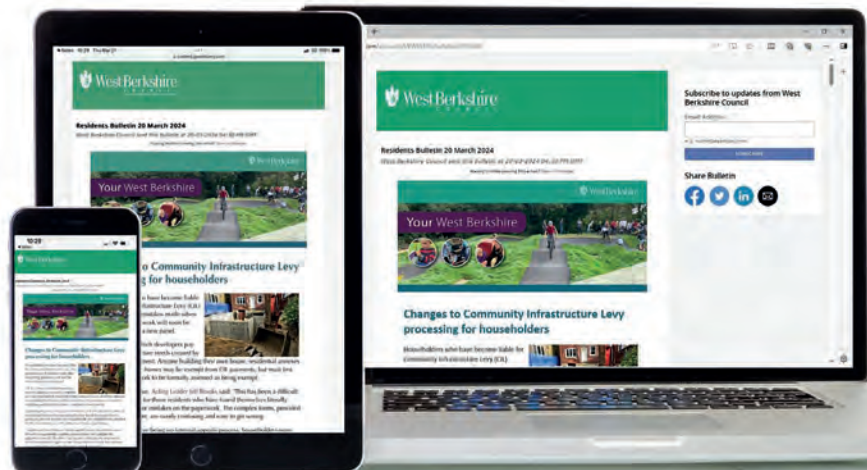


If you enjoyed this magazine why not sign up to receive the Your West Berkshire e-bulletin direct to your inbox each Wednesday.

Sign up at

WESTBERKS.GOV.UK/NEWSLETTERS

You can sign up to receive information on a range of topics - from our weekly residents' news bulletin to updates on specific themes including libraries, heritage, business, environment, and waste and recycling.





West Berkshire Council Here to help

Your Council is here to help you and provides a wide range of services, such as adult social care, education, planning, roads, waste and council tax.

Our website contains information about all of our services and many transactions can be performed quickly and easily online.

Go to <https://westberks.gov.uk> to find out more.

You can also report problems such as potholes or missed bin collections online by scanning this QR code:



<https://westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem>

If you're not online, there are many other ways to get in touch with us:

You can write to us at:

**West Berkshire Council,
Market Street,
Newbury RG14 5LD**

If you need to visit us in person, our Market Street offices are open
8:30am-5pm Monday-Thursday and
8:30am-4:30pm on Fridays.



If you would like to contact us by phone, you can call us on the following numbers:

Blue Badges:	01635 503276
Council Tax:	01635 519520
Adult Social Care:	01635 503050
Main Switchboard:	01635 551111
Out of Hours Emergencies:	01635 42161



If you'd like to stay connected with us, why not sign up to our e-newsletters?
Subscribe at westberks.gov.uk/newsletters

You can also follow us on **Facebook, Instagram, X (previously known as Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube** and **TikTok @WestBerkshire**



LinkedIn

YouTube

TikTok