



Council Report for August 2025

Written by your local Conservative team to keep you up to date.

Councillor Clive Hooker, Downlands Ward

West Berkshire Council

Council

There was no meeting of Council this month.

The next meeting is on 16 October.

Executive

There was no meeting of the Executive this month.

The next meeting is on 25 September.

Environment

Town and Parish Climate Forum

When: Wednesday 10 September 2025

Location: Online teams meeting

Organised by: West Berkshire Council

As part of a six-month trial, local community groups and individuals are being warmly invited to attend the West Berkshire Town and Parish Climate Forum. This forum is an opportunity to hear updates from the Council on their work to tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergencies for Town and Parish Councils plus, share ideas and hear from each other and guest speakers.

The online meetings (via Teams) are an hour long (12.30 - 1.30 pm) and take place on a Wednesday, every 4-6 weeks.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for the meeting invites please email environment@westberks.gov.uk

Free Caddy Liner Giveaway

For a limited time only, from 1-30 September 2025, residents can collect a free roll of compostable food waste caddy liners. These are available during regular opening hours at all West Berkshire Council Libraries, the Council Office reception at Market Street in Newbury, and Tilehurst Parish Council, while stocks last.

This offer is only open to West Berkshire residents. These are limited to one roll per household to give as many

FREE

**caddy liner
giveaway!**



Compostable
Liners

**Pick up your
free roll of caddy
liners for your
food waste bin
this September.**





residents as possible the opportunity to collect a free roll. Proof of address or West Berkshire library card is required.

Soil Conditioner Giveaway



working in partnership



West Berkshire Council is teaming up with Veolia for the seventh time to offer residents free soil conditioner, made from recycled food waste.

The giveaway will take place on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 October 2025, from 10am to 4pm at the Padworth Integrated Waste Management Facility (RG7 4JF). No appointment is needed - just bring proof of address (e.g. ID or utility bill). Residents should bring their own bags or containers as the soil conditioner will be provided loose. For safety reasons, no direct loading into vehicles.

Vehicle restrictions apply - no commercial vehicles or those listed as prohibited in the HWRC user guide. Residents visiting the recycling centre must still book an appointment.

Queues may occur during peak times, but we'll be restocking throughout the day. Please take a reasonable amount so everyone can benefit. Veolia will manage the event on-site.

Transport

Proposed speed limit changes in West Berkshire

Speed is one of the biggest factors in serious and fatal road incidents and WBC have a responsibility to make roads as safe as possible.

Following on from discussions with ward members and residents, WBC have consultations open to gather views on proposed new speed limits for four local roads:

- [Oxford Road, Donnington](#): 40mph to 30mph
- [B4009 Long Lane, Shaw](#): extend the existing 30mph limit
- [A339 Newtown Road, Greenham](#): 50mph to 40mph
- [Sulhamstead Hill, Sulhamstead](#): extend the existing 30mph limit

Read more and share views before 3 September using the links above.

A34 Northbound Closures

National Highways will be repairing the carriageway and renewing road markings on sections of the A34 northbound between Beedon and West Ilsley on Friday 5, Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 September (9pm-6am). These are the rescheduled dates of the works that were postponed in July.

To do this, they will close the A34 northbound from the A34/M4 J13 Chieveley Interchange to the A4185 Chilton Junction, near Didcot, Oxfordshire.

The diversion route for motorway traffic is long, but it is the most suitable option for both car and HGV drivers. From M4 Junction 13:

- travel east along M4 to Junction 8/9
- exit at junction and travel north on the A404(M)/A404
- at M40 Handy Cross roundabout take first exit onto M40 northbound

- continue on the M40 to Junction 9
- exit at Junction 9 for the A34

Public Protection

Fire Alarms

Smoke alarms are affordable, easy to install, and vital for preventing deaths in house fires. Residents should fit at least one on every level of their home and test them weekly by pressing the button until it sounds. If it doesn't, replace the battery.

Vacuum alarms every six months to remove dust and prevent faults. Replace one-year batteries annually and ten-year batteries every ten years, only remove them when replacing.

Mains-powered alarms must be installed by a qualified electrician and tested regularly. They include back-up batteries, which should be replaced as needed to ensure they work during power cuts.

A [Safe and Well Visit](#) is a free service provided by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to eligible residents. The visit will take place at home, and is tailored to individual health and wellbeing needs, as well as fire risk reduction.

Mobile emergency alerts on 7 September

The UK Government is testing the Emergency Alerts system on Sunday 7 September at 3pm. Compatible mobile phones and tablets will receive an alert, make a loud siren-like sound and vibrate. Residents will not need to take any action. The Emergency Alerts system is used to warn if there's a danger to life nearby, including extreme weather.

Whilst these alerts aim to protect the public in emergencies, they could put victims/survivors of domestic abuse at risk, especially those who rely on hidden phones as part of their safety plan.

To opt out, search settings for 'emergency alerts' and select to turn them off.

Thatcham PSPO

The current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Thatcham town centre is due to expire in November 2025 and WBC are asking for views on whether it should be extended or discharged.

The PSPO was introduced to provide an additional tool to deal with a number of anti-social issues which caused concern to those who live, visit or work in Thatcham town centre. Residents can find out more about the PSPO [here](#).

The consultation is live until 29 September, and should only take around five minutes to complete.

Hard copies of the survey will be available from Thatcham library and Thatcham Town Council.

Scam warning as Self Assessment customers targeted

Millions of Self Assessment customers are being urged by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to remain vigilant to scams that claim to be from the department.

Scammers often impersonate HMRC, offering fake refunds or demanding urgent payments to steal personal and banking information. They may say it's safe to share personal details. It's not. Passwords, usernames, and access codes are private and customers should never share them, even with someone they trust or who helps them with their tax.

Filing early can also help customers spot scams more easily as those who have already submitted their tax return are less likely to be caught off guard by scam attempts closer to the Self Assessment 31 January 2026 deadline.

If someone receives a communication claiming to be from HMRC that asks for personal details or offers a tax rebate, they should check the official HMRC scams guidance to verify its authenticity.

Customers can report phishing attempts to HMRC by:

- forwarding emails to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk
- reporting scam phone calls via GOV.UK
- forwarding suspicious texts to 60599

Leisure and Culture

Completion works planned for Thatcham Memorial Playing Fields

WBC are committed to fully re-opening the playing fields with work continuing on the site over the coming months.

Residents are keen to see the space fully open to the public again following work on a flood alleviation scheme which will protect more than 70 homes in the area from flooding. Construction of the scheme has finished ahead of the winter and plans are in place to complete the landscaping and reinstate a dog exercise area.

New fencing is due to be installed in the next three weeks, but unfortunately the particularly hot summer has delayed the landscaping of the area. It needs to be re-seeded but this cannot be done until early autumn when the growing conditions are better. At this point the re-seeding and last of the landscaping will be completed. This has caused other knock-on effects for the project including the re-provision of equipment for ball games.

A new location on the playing fields has been found for the dog exercise area, but the weather is delaying the preparation of the area as that too needs re-seeding and time to grow so this is likely to be open in Spring 2026.

Craft workshops at West Berkshire Museum in September

The Kennet Valley Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers are running a series of free craft workshops at West Berkshire Museum in September. No need to book, just drop in! Find out more below.

Have a go at weaving - Saturday 6 September, 11am - 2pm

Try stick weaving and learn about simple weaving techniques on table and heddle looms. Experts will explain the basic principles of weaving with colour and texture.

Have a go at spinning - Saturday 20 September, 11am - 2pm

Have a go at spinning with natural fibre and learn about preparation and drafting using either a drop spindle or working alongside a wheel with one of the experts. Spinning wheel techniques will be demonstrated by Guild members.

Have a go at braiding - Sunday 21 September, 11am - 2pm

Learn the fundamentals of 'fill the gap' braiding and take your braid home. Lucet and Marudai braiding demonstrations will bring the craft to life.

Current Consultations

- [Springfield Primary School - School Streets Scheme](#) – Closes 2 December 2025
- [Extension of pedestrianisation hours for Newbury Town Centre from 10am-5pm to 10am-11pm](#) – Closes 19 November 2025
- [Review of the Public Spaces Protection Order \(PSPO\) in Thatcham Town Centre](#) – Closes 29 September 2025

- [Proposed Traffic Regulation Order: Oxford Road, Donnington: 30mph speed limit](#) – Closes 3 September 2025
- [Proposed Traffic Regulation Order: A339 Newtown Road, Greenham - 40mph speed limit](#) – Closes 3 September 2025
- [Proposed Traffic Regulation Order: Sulhamstead Hill, Sulhamstead - 30mph speed limit](#) – Closes 3 September 2025
- [West Berkshire Bus Service Survey 2025](#) – Closes 31 August 2025

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