Council Report for September 2026

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

Councillor Clive Hooker, Downlands Ward

West Berkshire Council

Council

Council met on 30 September to discuss:

- Standards Complaint - Outcome of Full Investigation

Papers and a recording of the meeting are unavailable as it was a private meeting, but a news article covering the discussion is available here.

The next meeting is on 15 October.

Executive

Executive met on 24 September to discuss:

- **2026/27 Q1 Financial Performance Report**
- **Grazeley Solar Farm Business Case**
- **Membership of the South East Regional Care Cooperative**
- **2026/27 Performance Report Q1**
- **ASC Strategy post consultation outcome and Delivery Plan**
- **Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027**

Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found here.

The next meeting is on 12 November.

Local Government Reorganisation

Ridgeway Paused

This month, HM Government announced a pause to the LGR programme whilst it underwent a review. This means there will no longer be Ridgeway elections in 2027, and WBC will be having elections after all.

We are expecting a further announcement later this month, so we wait in anticipation!

Our Area

A place to belong: West Berkshire among England's best

Elections

Annual Canvass is underway

Residents may have received an email or letter as part of this year's annual electoral canvass, they should take a few minutes to respond – it is a legal requirement to reply in most cases.

The annual canvass helps keep the electoral register up to date and ensures residents can take part in future elections. Responding is quick and easy. Simply follow the instructions in the email or on the form you have received.

If details have changed, or someone has moved into or out of the household, it's important to let WBC know.

Any help completing the process can be accessed by contacting the Electoral Services team on 01635 519464.

Transport

New evening and Sunday bus services to boost travel in Newbury

There are now more opportunities to travel later and across the weekend in Newbury and further afield by bus.

From early September, later evening journeys started running on routes 2 and 8 on Friday and Saturday evening and the Sunday services routes 2 and 8 operated by Newbury & District (N&D). Route 2 serves Newbury, Wash Common and Pigeons Farm, while Route 8 serves Newbury, Greenham, Pigeons Farm, The Nightingales and Tesco Superstore.

A Sunday service operated by Thames Travel called Route 34 began operating in September between Newbury, West/East Ilsley, Beedon, Chieveley and Didcot.

The improvements will enhance bus services to help people access shopping, leisure and onward travel opportunities. These improvements have been made possible through Local Authority Bus Grant funding provided to West Berkshire Council by HM Government.

Better routes, better connections

WBC are continuing to invest in infrastructure that encourages and enables walking, wheeling and cycling across West Berkshire.

Recent improvements have been completed on the shared pedestrian and cycle route along Kiln Road and Turnpike Road, in Newbury. These include new cycle direction signs featuring the distinctive *Linkway 3* branding and showing journey times to key destinations. The route helps connect Trinity School, Shaw House, the residential areas of Shaw and Turnpike, and Thatcham.

The work has also included refreshed line markings, along with upgrades to tactile paving, bollards and signage, making the route clearer and easier to use for everyone.

These improvements form part of the ongoing investment in active travel infrastructure across West Berkshire, helping more people choose sustainable, healthy and convenient ways to get around.

Public Protection

Newbury Town Centre Safety

Residents who live, work in or visit Newbury town centre can share their views on the Public Spaces Protection Order, known as a PSPO.

The PSPO gives the police and other agencies an additional tool to help address anti-social behaviour and keep the town centre safe and welcoming.

The current order is approaching the end of its term, and WBC are asking whether it should be extended for another three years or allowed to expire.

The survey takes around five minutes to complete and is open until 9 November.

Printed copies are also available from Newbury Library and the council offices in Market Street.

Stoptober

This Stoptober, residents can take the first step towards becoming smokefree with support right at their fingertips.

The Smokefree Digital app provides personalised quit support, daily motivation and 24/7 access to stop smoking advisors. If eligible, residents can also access Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), with treatment delivered directly to home.

Even better, West Berkshire residents can get six months of full access completely free. With Christmas just around the corner, someone who quits 10 cigarettes a day could save around £240 in just four weeks.

Download the Smokefree Digital app today, claim the free six-month licence and begin the quit journey towards a healthier, smoke-free future.

Waste

Drill battery fire prompts safety reminder

A lithium-ion battery from a discarded drill caught fire in the back of one of WBC's waste collection vehicles last month while operating in the Crookham Hill area. Thankfully, due to the quick thinking and response of the crew, the fire was safely extinguished before the fire spread further. Luckily no-one was injured.

Lithium-ion batteries, including those in vapes, are increasingly responsible for fires. When batteries are put into bins, they can be crushed, punctured, or damaged, causing them to overheat and catch fire.

Never put batteries in household rubbish or recycling containers.

A few moments spent recycling batteries correctly could prevent a serious incident.

Culture

Grow a lasting legacy at Shaw House

Residents who enjoy gardening, meeting new people and spending time outdoors can join in two community planting days at Shaw House this autumn and help make a lasting difference to this much-loved local heritage site.

On Saturday 24 October, WBC will be planting the new borders around the Great Lawn, and on Saturday 21 November, WBC will be planting the roses in the newly restored Edwardian Rose Garden.

Everyone is welcome to come along and be part of something special at Shaw House. Interested in volunteering? Email amy.bosley1@westberks.gov.uk to find out more and register interest.

Heritage Open Days bring local history to life

Residents and visitors enjoyed a journey through West Berkshire's past during this year's Heritage Open Days at Shaw House and West Berkshire Museum.

At West Berkshire Museum, families explored local history through interactive trails and hands-on activities, and enjoyed demonstrations from the Kennet Valley Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers. The Guild demonstrated traditional clothmaking skills dating to seventeenth century and the original purpose of the Museum's Cloth Hall. The demonstrations proved particularly popular, with many visitors saying they had come specifically to see the crafts in action.

Meanwhile, Shaw House welcomed more than 560 visitors across two special open days celebrating 20 years since the historic building reopened to the public. Visitors explored the Elizabethan mansion, its beautiful grounds and exhibitions, while around 120 people took the rare opportunity to visit the historic Bakehouse.

The free events brought people of all ages together to discover local stories, learn new skills and celebrate the heritage that makes West Berkshire such a special place.

Shaw House and West Berkshire Museum host a wide range of events, exhibitions, talks and family activities throughout the year.

Meningitis protection for young people

A free, time-limited MenB vaccination programme is available to help protect eligible young people against meningitis and sepsis. These infections can become serious very quickly and, in rare cases, can be fatal. Residents may be eligible for the free two-dose MenB vaccine if they:

- were born between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2008
- are under 25 and starting university for the first time in autumn 2026
- are under 25 and moving into residential further education accommodation for the first time this autumn

For the best protection, it's important to receive both doses, with the second given at least 28 days after the first. Eligible young people can receive the vaccine at participating community pharmacies.

Meningococcal bacteria can spread through close contact, and young people starting university or moving into shared accommodation may be at greater risk as they meet, live and socialise with new groups of people. Getting vaccinated can help protect and reduce the risk of serious illness.

Environment

Greenfest

GreenFest is back this October, along with regional organisations and inspiring local projects, for a free fun-filled inspiring day!

Discover how to add sustainability and positive actions for climate and nature into daily life. Packed with free hands-on activities and zones for Travel, Home, Food, Energy, Nature, Community - plus an array of local food and refreshments available

St Bartholomew's School, Andover Road, Newbury, RG14 6JP

Climate Forum

Town and parish councils, community groups, and residents are invited to join our online Climate Forum.

It's aimed specifically at providing a relaxed platform to share local climate and ecological emergency work, hear from others, ask questions, and get support and advice. To attend any of the Forum dates below, please email environment@westberks.gov.uk.

Forum meetings take place online on Wednesday lunchtimes from 12.30pm to 1.30pm. The dates for 2026 are shown below.

- 21 October 2026
- 2 December 2026

To be added to the mailing list and meetings, or to ask any questions, email environment@westberks.gov.uk

Give young trees a helping hand

Throughout the summer, WBC have been watering young trees across West Berkshire to help them establish during dry conditions. While this work will continue where possible, the large number of newly planted trees means a little help from residents can make a real difference.

Young trees are particularly vulnerable during dry weather and need regular watering to develop strong root systems. One simple way to help is by using grey water, which is clean household water that would otherwise go down the drain. This could include water left in watering cans, water used to wash vegetables, cooled water from kettles, water from paddling pools or even leftover drinking water.

Trees bring many benefits to our communities, including cleaner air, habitats for wildlife, shade during hot weather and greater resilience to climate change.

Avoid using water that contains bleach, detergents or other chemicals. Just one bucket or watering can of grey water once or twice a week during prolonged dry spells can help a young tree survive and thrive.

Every tree planted today is an investment in a greener, healthier future, and support can help them grow for generations to come.

Current Consultations

- Proposed Traffic Regulation Order for a 'no right turn' from Englefield Road into Theale C of E Primary School – closes 9 October
- Community Governance Review for Shaw-cum-Donnington parish 2026 – closes 23 October
- Community Governance Review for Lambourn parish 2026 – closes 23 October
- Review of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in Newbury Town Centre – closes 9 November

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