

**ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL**  
**WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL 2021**  
**AGENDA ITEM 8: REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**CLLR HELEN PIGHILLS, VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LEISURE FACILITIES**

At the March Vale Council meeting the council agreed to offer a financial support package to GLL, the leisure contractor that manages leisure facilities across both Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire, subject to formal agreements being made.

The leisure industry has been hit hard by the pandemic with facilities closed or running at limited capacity for most of last year. Ensuring that residents have access to facilities and opportunities to stay healthy and active is a priority for the council and it is important that our leisure facilities remain open. Council is continuing to push government for additional financial support for the leisure industry to ensure long term sustainable operation across the district

Following government advice, leisure centres started to reopen from 12<sup>th</sup> April. A phased reopening approach has been agreed with leisure contractors GLL. Each leisure centre has been assessed in line with Covid guidelines to determine how they can safely open and they are all operating at a much reduced capacity.

In line with government restrictions, a phased approach will be taken to reopening the outdoor pool at Abbey Meadow. Normally this would be open from May until the end of the school summer holidays but it remained closed last year because of the lockdown restrictions. The current plan is to open the pools for the summer season, but this is subject to continued progress towards the government's roadmap out of lockdown. It is expected that the exact opening dates for the pool and the splash pad will be confirmed in the next few weeks.

Some council outdoor activities such as Nordic walking have also resumed following strict covid-safe rules.

**JOINT LOCAL PLAN**

At their March council meetings Vale and South Oxfordshire councils agreed to develop a joint Local Plan for the area which will meet the districts' common needs for carbon reduction, affordable housing and improved infrastructure.

A Joint Plan would benefit residents of Abingdon as the town is adjacent to the boundary separating the two districts. There will also be cost savings in producing one plan as there would be one set of evidence studies, one local plan examination and one Planning Inspector instead of two.

## **PUBLIC COVID 19 TESTING**

Everyone over the age of 18 can now get free twice-weekly at home Covid tests. Everyone is encouraged to take a regular test, even if they have been vaccinated. The tests are now available by the following routes:

- Workplace testing programmes, on site or at home
- School or college testing on-site or at home.
- Community testing at The Beacon, Wantage

Collection of home test kits at community testing sites or any of almost 100 pharmacies across the county

Online ordering of tests by post.

Full details are on the county council's [website](#) or [gov.uk](#).

## **WHITE HORSE COMMUNITY LOTTERY**

This summer we will be launching a new community lottery for the Vale. This follows a very successful lottery that is already running in South Oxfordshire.

Voluntary and community organisations are being invited to register their interest in getting involved. It is a great way to raise funds with 60% of ticket sales going to good causes.

Any organisations wanting to register should email [communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk)

HELEN PIGHILLS

Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities

Vale Councillor for Abingdon Abbey Northcourt ward

April 2021