

## **ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL**

**WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021**

### **AGENDA ITEM 8: REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL**

**CLLR HELEN PIGHILLS, ABINGDON ABBEY NORTHCOURT WARD**

#### **LEISURE FACILITIES**

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

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. Negotiations are still continuing between both parties and this has impacted on the opening date of the Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool this year. It has always been the Council's intention that the pool would open this year, however GLL had decided to keep facilities that do not make money closed until the formal agreement was finalised.

GLL have now agreed to open the pool from 12<sup>th</sup> July, although it will be at a reduced capacity to allow social distancing while Covid-19 restrictions are still in place. GLL have announced the new opening hours and bookings may be made via the Better website or app.

GLL have listened to residents' suggestions and are now opening earlier on weekdays to allow early morning and late afternoon swimming sessions. In previous years there were around 600 swims per week in termtime and there were around 3000 per week in during school holidays.

The Abbey Meadow splash pad will reopen on 19<sup>th</sup> July, assuming government Covid-19 restrictions are lifted then. GLL and the Council do not believe that social distancing can be managed on such a small area. In addition, the splash pad has not been in operation for nearly two years so will need cleaning and testing before it can be used again.

#### **WASTE COLLECTIONS**

Over the last few weeks there have been various problems and disruptions to waste collections. These have been mainly due to staff shortages, mainly drivers, affecting our waste contractor Biffa. There have been a number of contributing factors including travel restrictions on foreign workers due to Covid-19 and Brexit, drivers switching to work such as delivery, 13 months of disrupted driving tests for conversion of operators to drivers and the high cost of living in this area.

Biffa is managing the situation as best they can by providing extra weekend overtime – but this is not sustainable long term and the Vale council is actively calling for more drivers to join the teams.

## **WHITE HORSE COMMUNITY LOTTERY**

The White Horse Community Lottery has now been officially launched. The lottery enables people to support causes that they care about and helps good causes to connect with their supporters.

Players can choose which causes they want to support when they buy their tickets. Tickets are £1 each with 60p from every ticket going to support charities and community groups.

It is free for organisations to join – see more details on the Vale website or email [communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk)

It would be great if all councillors could think about the voluntary groups and charities in their wards, make sure they are aware of the lottery and encourage them to join.

HELEN PIGHILLS  
Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities  
Vale Councillor for Abingdon Abbey Northcourt ward  
June 2021