

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

1 October 2025

Item 7: report from district councillors

Abbey Meadows Outdoor Pool - Doggy Swims

The pool was kept open for an additional week, up to 7th September, providing extra time for residents to enjoy the pool during the school summer holiday. For the second year running, the pool was also made available for a dogs swimming session on 8th September, allowing residents the change to take their dogs along to the pool for a swim before the pool closed for the year.

Temporary Flood Barriers - Chaunterell Way

Following flooding last year which saw water rise from the Ock and flow over Chaunterell Way, Nash Drive and Orpwood Way, the Environment Agency has left temporary flood barriers by the storage unit just north of Chaunterell Way. The EA had previously withdrawn a scheme for a long set of barriers which could cover a stretch of 1.5km, however this scheme didn't proceed as they came to the determination that the barriers would take too long to put in place in the event of a flood. The set of barriers which they've left now will cover a distance of about 200-300m and it should be possible to put them up more quickly than the longer set of barriers.

The EA carried out a test deployment of the barriers 10th September and they should offer protection to homes in flood events up to a 'one-in-thirty-year' level of severity if they are deployed with sufficient speed. Flooding is not a direct responsibility of the Vale of White Horse; however, I thought this worth noting - particularly as I represent residents whose homes were flooded.

Abingdon Parking Permit Schemes

As you may be aware, Oxfordshire County Council recently undertook two consultations on residents parking permit schemes in Abingdon. The two schemes were substantially identical in the measures they proposed, with each covering a different area - the Ock Street area covering roads just north of Ock Street including Conduit Road and Victoria Road, and the 'Central North' area including Fitzharry's Road and the surrounding estate. The core measure proposed was the introduction of residents parking permits effective 8AM-6PM Monday-to-Saturday, which could be purchased annually for a fee of £132, along with marked parking bays. The schemes were intended to deter daytime and commuter parking.

Both of the schemes covered areas in the ward which I represent (Fitzharris). Although the consultations were organized by the County Council, many residents contacted both myself and my district ward colleague Eric de la Harpe to raise their concerns and objections. Along with Neil Fawcett, I met with residents of the Fitzharry's estate so that they could go over their concerns in detail. It became my view that the permit scheme was not necessary, primarily because daytime parking did not pose significant difficulties in the scheme areas, and because the existing arrangements are in the main practical.

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The County Council held a meeting 4th September for the Cabinet Member for Transport to determine whether or not the schemes should go ahead. I spoke against the proposals at the meeting, as did several residents. The schemes were almost entirely withdrawn, with only a scheme at Withington Court being approved. It was evident at the meeting that the views and objections raised by members of the public through the consultation process were taken into account both by the officers who prepared the consultation report and by the Cabinet Member to whom the decision was delegated. I consider the consultation to be an excellent example of public engagement and a demonstration of the value of local knowledge and representation.