



You can find the latest information on local cases and statistics on the Covid-19 dashboard at www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk

You can also find information at www.wokingham.gov.uk

Get the support you need this winter

We want to remind residents that support is available for anyone who is worried about paying for essential costs, or who needs some extra help this winter.

One Front Door, a service led by Citizens Advice Wokingham, and delivered in partnership with many local voluntary sector organisations, is supported by us and is here to help residents find the most appropriate support that they're entitled to.



The service was set-up at the start of the pandemic to provide a single point of contact for advice and continues to be available to provide support on a range of different topics. No matter what the problem is, contact One Front Door for:

- Help with rising energy costs: Help paying utility bills, access to fuel vouchers, energy efficiency packs, Advice on changing suppliers and more
- Support with accessing food and other essentials: Foodbank referrals, household item grants, urgent food and toiletries, urgent prescription collection, and more
- Support with loneliness and mental health: Referrals to befriending charities, peer support groups, and more
- Other assistance: Practical help and advice on welfare checks, benefits and debt, housing, employment, and more

Residents can contact One Front Door by visiting www.citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk, emailing contact@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk or on 0808 278 795

Lateral flow testing in Finchampstead this month

1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 show no signs of it and will spread it without knowing - one of them could be you. You can easily check you aren't infected by taking regular Covid-19 tests.

Come and get tested, or collect home testing kits, at the following locations in Finchampstead:

Finchampstead Library, FBC Centre

- Open 9.00am-1.00pm Monday 13th and Tuesday 14th December & 9.00am-12.30pm on Thursday 16th December.
- Open 9.00am-1.00pm Monday 20th, Tuesday 21st and Thursday 23rd December

California Ratepayers Hall

- Open 8.45am-12.15pm Tuesday 14th and Friday 17th December.
- Open 9.00am-3.00pm Tuesday 21st December



Visit the Wokingham Borough Council website for more information and future dates at these locations: www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-testing



WORKING TOGETHER TO SECURE A POSITIVE
FUTURE FOR FINCHAMPSTEAD

The public consultation on the draft Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan has now closed. Thank you to those of you who have responded and sent us your views.

The consultation outcomes and information on the next stages will be published on our website in due course. www.finchampsteadfuture.com

Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update

The Borough Council has launched a consultation on its Local Plan Update. The consultation runs to 24 January 2022.

The Borough is looking for your views on its Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy, which will be the blueprint for the new homes, schools, roads, community and leisure facilities and other infrastructure across Wokingham Borough for many years.

Don't miss the chance to have your say - for more information about the Local Plan Update and the consultation visit www.engage.wokingham.gov.uk



Platinum Jubilee plans

We are considering various opportunities to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2022. We have already launched our Platinum Jubilee Awards - see below. The nomination process is simple - either contact us for a form or use the form set up on our website www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk We look forward to receiving your nominations!

Finchampstead Parish Platinum Jubilee Awards



To commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we would like to award and give recognition to an individual and group that has made an outstanding contribution to the Finchampstead Community.



The awards will be presented at:
The Annual Gathering for Parishioners
9th March 2022

Further details and nomination forms will be available from the Finchampstead Parish Council Office or on our website: www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk



War Memorial relocation project progresses

A consultation on the potential relocation of the War Memorial took place in June to July 2021. 5500 consultation documents were distributed to households across the Parish and there was a high response rate of 10.8%.

We would like to thank everyone who responded for their interest in this important project, and for the many comments received.

Of those responding 89% supported the proposed relocation of the Memorial to the site adjacent to the Memorial Park, and 11% objected to the relocation. Of those objecting, almost 40% supported the relocation of the Memorial, but not to the chosen site.

The consultation report can be found on our website at:

<https://www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk/history/war-memorial/war-memorial-relocation>

In September 2021 the Parish Council formally agreed to proceed with the project. A planning application (no. 213927) has now been submitted to Wokingham Borough Council and you can view the details and comment on the application by visiting www.wokingham.gov.uk

A visualisation of how the Memorial would look in the proposed new location adjacent to the Memorial Park is shown below.



Christmas opening hours

The FBC Centre and cafe, the Finchampstead Library and the Parish Council Office will be closed from 1pm on Friday 24 December, reopening on Tuesday 4 January 2022.





The **Barkham Hookers crochet group** have been busy again - what a lovely festive display on the post box at the California Crossroads.

Thank you to all those involved.



Chocolate!



Many of us will be eating a huge amount of chocolate in the next few weeks, from Chocolate Oranges to selection boxes to tins of Quality Street.

Make sure that you recycle all that you can from each. The foil can be balled up and put in your recycling, as can cardboard packaging. Selection boxes can be harder to recycle, so consider putting your own together.

When each last crumb is finished, you can pop the tub or tin that your chocolates came in in your recycling bag.

Wrapping paper

When it comes to wrapping presents, try and use wrapping that is either reusable or recyclable. To be recyclable, it needs to be free from glitter and pass the 'scrunch test'.

As an alternative to wrapping paper, you could use fabric, a reusable shopping bag, old maps or newspapers or jars.



Please keep your bags sealed

With Christmas shopping in full swing and wet weather upon us, please make sure to crush or cut down large recyclable items and properly seal your green recycling bags.

Wet cardboard can get rejected at the sorting facilities or cause materials to not be collected at kerbside, meaning residents careful efforts have been wasted.

Need more recycling bags? You are able to get up to four more green recycling bags. You can just turn up at any of the hubs during the opening hours. For information on collection hub locations and opening hours visit:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/recycling/order-recycling-bags/>



A midwinter nature challenge from the Wildlife Trusts

12 Days Wild is a festive nature challenge, encouraging you to do one wild thing a day from the 25th December to 5th January. In those weird days between Christmas and New Year, winter wildlife is just waiting to be explored! Your wild acts could be little things to help nature - like recycling your Christmas tree or feeding the birds - or ways to connect to the natural world, like walking off your Christmas dinner in the woods or admiring the beauty of a winter sunset.



For more information and to sign up visit <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/12dayswild>

News from the Friends of Finchampstead Ridges

For the final volunteer workday in the year we were back over at Finchampstead Ridges clearing the invasive Birch and Gorse. This area was at one time covered in Heather and the plan is to gradually reintroduce Heather back to the lower slopes of the valley. As part of the overall plan we are managing the landscape to create areas that benefit certain species and increase biodiversity. Bird species that benefit from undisturbed heathland are Dartford Warbler, Woodlark and Nightjar. Also invertebrates and the reptile population particularly enjoy undisturbed areas on a sunny day for a bit of sunbathing !

A relatively straightforward task but we were working around chestnut and other saplings so that in years/decades to come they are the next generation of mature trees....it may take a while....

So for those New Year walks why not leave the car at Simon's Wood and take the Centenary Trail round the woods and then follow Hollybush Ride to the top of the ridges to pick and enjoy up the Ridges ramble and you should see the many areas of the two properties where we have been trying to make a difference in 2021...and walk off those festive calories !

And finally, a happy New Year from the Friends of Finchampstead Ridges and the volunteer team...



www.finchridges.co.uk





Waste and recycling collections Christmas and New Year

There are no changes to this year's collection dates.
Collection timetable as follows:

Normal collection day
Christmas Day (Sat) no scheduled collections
Boxing Day (Sun) no scheduled collections
27 December (Mon)
28 December (Tues)
29 December (Wed)
30 December (Thurs)
New Year's Eve (Fri)
New Year's Day (Sat) no scheduled collections
3 January (Mon)
4 January (Tues)
5 January (Wed)
6 January (Thurs)
7 January (Fri)

- Garden waste**
Collections will coincide with the above schedule
- Time of collection**
Please place your waste out the night before, as collections start earlier than normal
- Christmas trees**
If you're part of the garden waste collection scheme, please cut up your real tree and place it in your brown wheelie-bin or compostable sacks and put out as normal
- Wrapping paper**
Please recycle wrapping paper where possible. Metallic paper must be put in your blue bag
- Paper and cardboard**
Wet paper and cardboard **cannot** be recycled. Please either re-use them, keep dry until collection day, or save them for a non-rainy collection day





Be bright and protect your home from burglars this winter and holiday season

As the winter nights close in, leave a light on... and burglars in the dark! Burglars are often opportunistic thieves and you can take steps to avoid becoming one of their victims this winter.



- Try to make your home look occupied by using timer switches on lights and radios.
- Illuminate your front door with dusk to dawn lighting that comes on automatically.
- Consider purchasing and installing a video doorbell, house alarm or CCTV system.
- Close and double lock all doors and windows when going out, even if you're only away from home for a short period of time. Those 10 or 15 minutes on the school run are all a burglar needs to break into your home.
- Always double lock doors and windows when you go to bed.
- Keep all valuables and keys out of sight and away from doors, windows and letterboxes.
- When not in use, store electronic car key fobs in a security pouch to prevent them being scanned by thieves to open and steal your car.
- If you have a key safe, ensure it is not visible to people passing by, but anyone tampering with it can be seen.
- When working from home, ensure laptops and electronic equipment are not on view.

- Don't give thieves the tools to burgle your house, ensure sheds and garages are locked and secure.
- Don't leave any presents on view or advertise them on social media.
- Don't leave packaging next to your bin.
- Register your new presents and gifts online at www.immobilise.com
- Don't advertise you are away from home on social media. Ask a trusted friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your property.

Receive free crime and information updates from Thames Valley Police by registering for Thames Valley Alert at: www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk

Consider joining a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. For more information, visit www.ourwatch.org.uk

You can find further crime prevention advice at www.thamesvalley.police.uk

Please contact us if you have any information relating to burglary in your neighbourhood. Report online at www.thamesvalley.police.uk or call us on 101. Always dial 999 in an emergency.

Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on free phone 0800 555 111.

Email: You can contact your local neighbourhood team by emailing WokinghamNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk – please note this email address cannot be used to report crimes or for any urgent matters.

Social media: Follow us for regular crime updates and find out what your local policing teams are up to.

Facebook: TVP Bracknell & Wokingham

Twitter: @TVP_Wokingham



Free trees for your garden

In celebration of National Tree Week WBC has launched a pilot Garden Forest Scheme and is inviting you to apply for a tree, or trees, for your garden. It's part of the aspiration to become a net-zero carbon borough.

Over the next five years we are looking to plant 250,000 trees across the borough to increase carbon sequestration rates. Carbon sequestration is a process whereby the trees will draw excess CO2 from the atmosphere and store it.

The initial application window is open until 31 January and applicants will be contacted throughout March. Successful residents being given more information on arrangements for collecting a tree, which will be early Autumn 2022 to coincide with the planting season.

In order to be eligible, you must have space in your garden for a tree and permission to plant the tree if the garden is not yours.

For more information and an application form visit www.engage.wokingham.gov.uk



WILD WORLD Heroes
WINTER MINI CHALLENGE

Winter Activity Pack

Pick up a free activity pack from our libraries.

If you want to share any of your writing or artwork with us email the images to: libraries@wokingham.gov.uk

Illustrations © Heath McKenzie 2021

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL Wokingham Borough Libraries



Drop into any of the Borough's libraries during December and pick up a free Winter Activity Booklet while you choose your books for The Winter Mini Challenge.

There are wordsearches, book reviews, colouring and art challenges.



15 MILLION+ SONGS
INCLUDING CLASSICAL, JAZZ, KIDS & MUCH MORE!

freegal

pressreader

Remember that there is plenty for all ages at the libraries.

As well as visiting the library, you can get everything from e-magazines, e books and audio books to online talks. There is a teen writing group; virtual story time and rhymetime for young children, and even Christmas play lists!

To find out more about what's available visit

www.wokingham.gov.uk/libraries



Some of our recent activities

Here are just a few of the things we have been up to over the last month or so. We have:

- Held a Main Council meeting, and meetings of the Finance & General Management, Planning and Rights of Way Committees.
- Attended a meeting of the Gorse Ride Steering Group (Cllr Steve Bowers chairs the Group and Cllrs Becky Eytel and Chris Driver also represent us), the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership AGM (Cllr Simon Weeks is the Vice Chair and Cllr Roger Woof also represents the Council), and the Finchampstead Allotment Association AGM (Cllr Gordon Veitch and the Clerk, Katy Dagnall, represent the Council).
- Held a meeting of the War Memorial relocation project Working Group
- Held two roadside speed watch sessions - thanks to the great team of volunteers including Parish Councillors and local residents.
- Saw work start on drainage improvements at our allotment site, and met contractors to discuss drainage improvements on a problem bridle path.
- Started looking at the possibility of a new path on Fleet Hill to link existing footpaths with the Tally Ho, in conjunction with the Loddon Valley Ramblers.
- Saw our part time Litter Wardens collect 34 sacks of litter from our roadsides.
- Put 25 news posts on our website.
- Had 1045 users on our website with 3173 page views.



The Finchampstead Future Group, made up of Parish Councillors and local volunteers, continues to work on the **draft Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan.**



Staff are now working in our office at the FBC Centre on certain days, while continuing to work from home on other days. If you would like to see a member of staff please get in touch to ensure we will be in the office when you wish to visit.

We are still meeting using video conferencing and members of the public are welcome to attend a Main Council or Committee meeting - please contact us if you would like to do so.

***With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year
from all the Councillors and staff at Finchampstead Parish Council***

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH OFFICE, FBC CENTRE, GORSE RIDE NORTH, FINCHAMPSTEAD RG40 4ES
Tel: 0118 908 8164 email: clerk@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk



To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter and other Parish Council information please contact us at the address above or follow the link on our website.