Winsley Parish Council Report – Nigel White, Unitary Councillor's report – June 2025

Following the Local Elections on May 1st, the Liberal Democrats are now the largest group on Wiltshire Council. Consequently, there has been a change of leadership in County Hall. Here are the details:

New Council Leader and Cabinet

Wiltshire Council has confirmed the appointment of Cllr Ian Thorn as its new Leader. The decision was made following a vote by councillors at the Full Council meeting held on 20 May at County Hall, Trowbridge. The vote, via a secret ballot, was as follows:

Cllr Ian Thorn – 50 Cllr Richard Clewer – 45 Abstention – 2

Cllr Thorn will lead a Liberal Democrat minority administration, marking the first time the party has led the council since it became a unitary authority in 2009. His vision includes encouraging constructive dialogue and mutual respect among councillors, which he believes is essential for effective governance.

In addition to the appointment of the new Leader, Wiltshire Council has also announced the members of the Cabinet who will support Cllr Thorn in his administration. Including the Leader of the Council, who will also take on responsibility for Communications and Transformation. The Cabinet will consist of ten members.
New Committee members have also been appointed.

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on July 22nd, when we will see what policy changes there will be.

New Speed Assessment Proposal

In July last year a Speed Assessment Task Force made a number of recommendations to improve the Speed Assessment process and give greater clarity to LHFIGs and more weight to local concerns.

See last update here.

https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s234185/ESC%20Report%20Speed%20limit%20review%20update%20January%202025.pdf

Due to the elections, the implementation date is yet to be confirmed.

The new Cabinet Minister responsible for Highways has assured me that he will do everything he can to ensure the recommendations are implemented at the earliest opportunity.

There are a lot of new faces and new relationships to build.

Update on the new Local Plan - Housing

As JK reported earlier this year, the new Plan is expected to be adopted sometime in the third quarter of this year, but any changes are unlikely to impact on Winsley as it is in the Green Belt.

However, at a recent briefing, Nic Thomas, Director of Planning, Economy and Regeneration talked about how new Government housing targets will require Wiltshire to build 17,500 houses over a five-year period, rather than the 8,000 over four years as was originally envisaged. New Land Supply figures are expected to be announced before the new Local Plan's first hearing session on June 24th.

He also talked about proposed changes in the National Planning Framework that are currently being discussed, which would increase the power of Inspectors in Planning decisions. He added that having an up-to-date Neighbourhood Plan would help mitigate these changes.

New EV Infrastructure

Wiltshire Council's new Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVI) Team has launched a new council web pages to share EV updates and information. The site includes an interactive map where residents can suggest locations for new EV charge points. https://orlo.uk/bQXUi

And in other news...

Wiltshire dog owners prosecuted after failing to microchip pet.

A third Wiltshire dog owner has been prosecuted in May after failing to update the details on the database for their pet's microchip.

Residents with pets take note!