

# Parish hall's 'access hazard'

Entrance to community space is regularly blocked and kerb poses a risk to visitors

By MADISON ROLFE  
madison.rolfe@newburynews.co.uk

**RESIDENTS** have raised concerns about an 'access hazard' to a community space in Thatcham that led to a resident falling over.

Ian Waters, 76, is concerned about the accessibility of the walkway into Thatcham Parish Hall in Chapel Street, which is in regular use "by the elderly townfolk, with wheelchairs and walking aids, plus mothers and toddlers with pushchairs and buggies" but is often blocked out of use by vehicles in the car park, which is owned by West Berkshire Council.

He said: "The rear exit entrance way is continually blocked by vehicles parking, albeit in designated bays, blocking or restricting easy access.

"When a vehicle is parked it is extremely difficult to gain access and egress resulting in pedestrians using the narrow verge."

Access to the hall is also partially blocked by a large kerb, making it difficult for anyone with mobility issues to get over.

Mr Waters, who is from Thatcham, wrote to both West Berkshire Council and Thatcham Town Council after a resident fell last year due to the inaccessible nature of the entrance.

His email suggesting improvements to the parish hall rear access pathway, leading from The Kings-



Ian Waters at the Parish Hall entrance from the car park

Ref: 05-1226D

land Centre car park, has not received a reply in the 15 weeks since he sent it in October 2025.

The hall is in regular use by many groups, such as the table tennis club and mother and baby groups, meaning easy access is essential.

There is no official parking restriction in front of the hall, meaning cars are free to ignore the cone placed on the space and park in front of the entrance.

The closest entrance from the parish hall to the walkway is an emergency exit fire door, which has raised concerns for Mr Waters regarding the speed at which people would be able to get out in an emergency.

He is proposing that the council should change the parking bay, to

be redefined as a non-parking bay.

Alongside this, he has suggested that, together with the above mentioned, improvement works also be undertaken to drop the concrete kerb to remove a trip hazard and make a level walkway.

He said: "Please get in contact councils so we can get this issue resolved. That fall is the one we know about."

The organiser of a group held in the hall, who wished not to be named, has also voiced her concerns about the access issues.

"The kerb and parking space directly outside that entrance does make access more challenging, particularly for families with pushchairs," she said.

"If a car is parked in the space, families find it difficult to get their pushchairs past, which means they have to turn back and go the long way round to the front entrance.

"A dropped kerb would make a significant difference, as standard kerbs are harder to manage with pushchairs.

"The alternative route involves going through the car park, out towards the main road, and round to the front of the building, which isn't ideal, especially with young children, as well as the extra time it takes and changeable weather.

"This entrance also serves as a fire exit, therefore having a vehicle parked in front of it isn't an ideal situation in regards to safety."

## THATCHAM

Keeping in touch

Have you got a story? Contact our Thatcham reporter Madison Rolfe on (01635) 01635 886637 or email: newsdesk@newburynews.co.uk



News updates from Thatcham are now available online throughout the week. Go to [newburytoday.co.uk](http://newburytoday.co.uk) and select the district pages

[newburytoday.co.uk](http://newburytoday.co.uk)

## Family treasure hunt

THE streets of Thatcham will be transformed into a free outdoor family treasure hunt from today (Thursday) to March 15, in celebration of World Book Day, with this year's event being especially significant as it is part of the National Year of Reading.

Thatcham Town Council and Thatcham Library have partnered with High Street Safari to bring an innovative augmented reality treasure hunt to the town centre, where families are invited to hunt for 10 'Book Zones' hidden in shop windows.

Using only a smartphone, explorers can scan markers to see 3D characters – from astronauts to mythical unicorns – leap into the real world.

Each stop also features a hidden secret letter, found by taking selfies with the characters – families who find all 10 can solve the mystery word and complete the trail.

To start the hunt, families should head to Thatcham Library to scan their first marker, before heading into the town centre.

## Eyes down for mayor's charity bingo

**THATCHAM'S** mayor will be hosting a bingo evening and history talk in March to support her chosen charities.

Petra Pemberton has announced the dates for the upcoming fundraising events for her three chosen charities – Home-Start West Berkshire, Swings & Smiles and Bridge for Young People.

Firstly, a Thatcham in Old Photographs talk will take place on Monday, March 2, at 7.30pm in the Thatcham Town Council chamber.

Following that, the mayor's charity bingo night is set to take place on Friday, March 6, at 7pm in the Frank Hutchings Hall in Bradley-Moore Square.

The Thatcham in Old Photographs talk will be presented by local historian Dr Nick Young, who will take the audi-



Mayor Petra Pemberton

ence on a visual journey using a captivating mix of historic and modern photographs, revealing how the town has changed over time.

The entry for this event is £5 per person.

The bingo evening will fea-

ture six games of bingo, where a selection of prizes will be up for grabs, and there will also be a prize-winning raffle during the event so there will be plenty of chances to win.

Entry is £10 per person, which includes a booklet for the six games.

Raffle tickets will be available to purchase on the evening of the event.

For the long-awaited bingo evening, the doors will open at 6.30pm, with 'eyes down' at 7pm sharp.

Groups are welcome to pre-book a table to secure seating together.

To get tickets for either event, email enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk or visit the website.

All profits from both events will go to the mayor's chosen charities.

## Roadworks across Thatcham this week

**MORE** roadworks will be taking place across Thatcham in the coming week, including temporary traffic lights and road closures.

On Bath Road, multi-way traffic lights will be in place from the junction of Church Hill to just past the junction of Brimpton Road for ducting works today (Thursday).

The traffic controls will be in place from 9.30am until 3.30pm.

Volker Highways is undertaking this work on behalf of West Berkshire Council.

Ashmore Green Road will be

closed from its junction with Bowling Green Road to opposite Elmhurst Farm every day from 4.30pm to midnight until tomorrow (Friday).

The closure is for emergency sewer works by Thames Water to prevent flooding to properties.

All enquiries should go to Thames Water's contractor, Lanes Group, on 0800.316.9800.

A plan of the closure and diversion route can be found at <https://one-net-work/?tm=GB148293948>

Temporary multi-lane traffic lights will be in place from 9.20am until 5pm every

day until Monday, February 16, on Urquhart Road, near to the Station Road roundabout.

There may be possible delays as Thames Water carries out repair and maintenance works.

Sagecroft Road will be shut from 9.30am to 2.30pm tomorrow (Friday) between the junctions of Northfield Road and Shakespeare Road for permanent carriageway repairs.

Delays are likely, but the works will finish by 2.30pm for school pick up.

Volker Highways is undertaking this work on behalf of West Berkshire Council.

## STAY INFORMED

Join over **150,000** USERS to find out who's applying for what and where in your community.

The Public Notice Portal is a free to use, online service that will tell you who is applying for what and where. Plus, if you register, we'll tell you about any plans for your community, helping you to stay informed.



Visit: [publicnoticeportal.uk](http://publicnoticeportal.uk)



**Public Notice Portal**

Keeping you informed.

Supported by Google News Initiative and the News Media Association