

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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GIVE YOUR VIEWS ON CALIFORNIA COUNTRY PARK IMPROVEMENTS

New plans are in hand to improve one of the most well-used parks in Wokingham Borough to provide residents with better, more accessible leisure facilities while building a greener borough with richer biodiversity.

The council is proposing to enhance the lakeside, a popular visitor spot, and other areas frequently used by residents in [California Country Park](#) in Finchampstead.

The proposed improvements follow on from last year's enhancements to the play park and the car park. Works to the lakeside area include building a paved seating area, picnic areas with spaces for wheelchairs and a timber deck extending to the lake for water bird viewing, as well as planting wildflowers for bird foraging.

Improvements to other areas include building new surfaced footpaths to the lakeside, playground and woodland picnic areas; creating a flowering lawn and new plantings; and turning the existing historic well building into a visitor information point.

Residents are encouraged to give their views on the council's proposals. A survey, open until Sunday 18 August, is available on the [Engage Wokingham Borough website](#).

More accessible to visitors and welcoming to wildlife

Cllr Jordan Montgomery, executive member for environment and climate emergency of Wokingham Borough Council, said: "California Country Park is a much-loved destination for our residents, families and individuals alike, from across the borough.

"We know our parks offer many important benefits to our residents in terms of recreation, health and well-being, as well as contact with nature and opportunities for social interaction. That's why we keep improving our parks to make them a place for everyone.

“Our latest proposals would make California Country Park more accessible to visitors, especially wheelchair users and those with buggies, enrich its natural habitats to help wildlife thrive and bring a more inviting environment for all to enjoy.”

Cllr Sylvia McDonald, Chair of the Amenities Committee of Finchampstead Parish Council, said:

“Finchampstead Parish Council are delighted to be working in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council on the California Lakeside Improvement Project. It will further enhance this wonderful country park which is enjoyed by our Finchampstead residents and many others across the borough.”

Work to be completed in phases

The council plans to start the first stage of the work early next year, while the remaining work will be completed in phases to reduce possible disruptions to visitors.

As a large area of pennyroyal, a legally protected plant, is found around the lakefront, the council will be consulting [Natural England](#) for approval before carrying out the proposed work.

Pennyroyal is an important species for enriching biodiversity, but is also endangered and scarce in the UK. With nectar and pollen rich flowers, it provides food for bees and other pollinators.

Funding from new development in local areas

The proposed work for California Country Park will be jointly funded by Wokingham Borough Council and [Finchampstead Parish Council](#), using funding received from developers building housing in the area, and at no cost to local taxpayers.

[Barkham Parish Council](#) and [Winnersh Parish Council](#) will also contribute to the project with funds from the new development in their local areas.

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Further information

1. More from Cllr Jordan Montgomery, executive member for environment and climate emergency of Wokingham Borough Council, at Jordan.Montgomery@wokingham.gov.uk
2. More from Kate Lang, deputy clerk of Finchampstead Parish Council, at DeputyClerk@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk