



**Matthew Barber**  
Police & Crime Commissioner  
for Thames Valley

Matthew Barber  
Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley  
The Farmhouse, Thames Valley Police HQ  
Kidlington OX5 2NX

Councillor Bethia Thomas  
Leader of the Council  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Abbey House  
Abingdon OX14 3JE

13 March 2026

Dear Councillor Thomas,

Thank you for your letter in relation to flag flying.

We have had several conversations about this issue in recent months, but I wanted to respond to your letter in writing.

I fully appreciate the polarising nature of this issue, and understand the fears and concerns of some in the community. I acknowledge that there will be some individuals who erect flags with negative intent however, the hanging of a national flag is, in and of itself, not a criminal offence.

Whilst there may be offences under the Highways Act, the responsibility for progressing offences under this Act lie with the relevant Highways Authority, which, in the Vale of White Horse, will be Oxfordshire County Council. It would not ordinarily be a matter for the police to assist in the removal of flags, save to be a presence to prevent a breach of the peace. Of course, residents would no doubt expect the Council to enforce legislation relating to attaching items to street furniture equally.

The force continues to monitor the issue closely and neighbourhood teams continue to engage with residents and local community groups as well as deliver visible local policing.

Where there is criminal activity associated with the hanging of flags this should, of course, be reported to the police and I would expect them to take proportionate action.



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Where there have been incidents of criminal offences, including harassment or assault, Thames Valley Police have taken action against those responsible.

If residents witness any criminal activity, they should report via 101 or online at [www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime)

Best,

**Matthew Barber**

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