

## Newsletter - July 2021

The number of VercoR2 members is steadily growing and we currently have approximately 115 dues-paying members.

### Tourist Tax

Out of the 1'022 invoices sent out, there were about 100 complaints that were examined on site with the owners. It appears that the vast majority of the problems have been resolved.

Taking into account the number of invoices sent and the fact that most of the secondary residences are owned by several people (husband and wife, heirs, parents and children), we can estimate that there are probably about 2000 secondary residents in Vercorin.

### One-on-One Discussion with the President of the Municipality, Mrs. Sylvie Masserey-Anselin

During this face-to-face exchange on May 22<sup>nd</sup> between the R2 (second home owners) committee and the President of the Municipality, the latter noted the valuable presence of the many R2s during the COVID crisis, a presence that allowed the village to maintain its activity. There are about 600 people permanently living in Vercorin. During the high season, this number rises to 5'000 people, a large part of whom are secondary residents and their guests. Mrs. Masserey also insisted on the importance of maintaining family tourism in Vercorin, of developing 4-season tourism, of increasing the infrastructure of the Creux du Lavioz and of promoting the energy transition.

We would like to point out the great spirit of openness and listening of the President as well as her desire for a constructive collaboration with the R2.

Most of the points that follow were addressed during the discussion with Mrs. Masserey-Anselin.

### Garbage, Water and Sewage Taxes

The amount of the different taxes is about 1/3 higher in Chalais-Vercorin than in the Municipality of Anniviers without us being able to give a proper explanation. However, regardless of the inter-municipal differences, each Municipality is required to have a balanced account for the various taxes, a balance sheet which can be found in Chalais Info of May 2021, page 18.

The "sewage" account, amounting to 150'000 francs, has a deficit of about 30,000 francs (20%), which is why the Municipality wishes to establish a new regulation.

The "hygiene" account, i.e. garbage, shows a gain of 176,000 francs for an expense of 43,000 francs, which is clearly disproportionate, even if we admit that this gain constitutes a reserve for the construction of the future eco-point. In fact, the waste disposal center at the entrance of the village will be transformed into an eco-point where one could also deposit organic waste from the kitchen. This transformation will not take place in the immediate future because this future eco-point will be put in a place whose choice is not yet formally decided. As for the waste disposal center at the bottom of the village, the "garden waste" part will be maintained. On the other hand, the dumpsters for bulky items will be removed and it will be necessary to take this waste to the central waste disposal center in Bramois. However, this removal will not take place this year or next, unless the Canton decides to make it mandatory.

The "potable water" account, amounting to approximately 380,000 francs, is balanced with a gain of 14'000 francs, which represents 3% of expenses. There is a tax per chalet in the amount of 237.35 francs. This amount is supplemented by a "garden water network fee" weighted by the surface area, a kind of additional garden watering fee that can amount to 220 francs. This tax is worth discussing. Indeed, the watering of the grounds around the chalets in Vercorin is not part of the customs of the R2s except in rare exceptions and the R2s do not generally have vegetable gardens that need to be watered regularly. The method of calculation of this tax is therefore far removed from the principle of causality which is the basis for the calculation of the various taxes. Water consumption by the R2 is essentially based on the number of occupants in the chalet, which depends on the number of rooms. Since the "drinking water" account is balanced overall, the deletion of the item "garden water network costs" must obviously be compensated for, for example by using the calculation method of the tourist tax, which takes into account the number of rooms in the chalet, to evaluate the actual water consumption.

The discussion about the different taxes is therefore not closed and will continue.

#### Misdirected Streetlights

The streetlights are misdirected and illuminate the chalets and the surrounding fields as well as the road. The authorities are aware of this and, in collaboration with the R2, solutions will be sought.

#### Fountain on the Village Square

Nobody is very happy with this new fountain. During a meeting on site with various people who expressed their dissatisfaction, an agreement was reached concerning the need to replace the spout of the fountain, the lightening of the immediate surroundings of the fountain and the partial replacement of the tarring of the central village square by natural stones.

#### Chalais-Vercorin Cable-Car

The new route of the Chalais-Vercorin cable-car, slightly displaced to the West side compared to the current route, has received the green light from all Cantonal services and is currently with the State Council, which will make the decision again this year. It seems that its decision can only be positive given the agreements of all the services concerned.

The alternative project (Daval - South-East side bypass of Le Mont) significantly degrades the view from Vercorin towards the Val d'Anniviers and prejudices the life of the pupils to get to school, an indispensable service during the whole year in comparison with the tourist activity limited to a few months. Finally, it seems that it is not obvious that the Daval solution can benefit from public subsidies as it is currently the case.

#### Chairlift at Mont Major

It will be built this summer and will be ready for the next winter season.

#### Energy Transition defined by the Canton of Valais

The Municipality takes this issue very seriously. In order to make concrete progress in this area and to be able to make practical proposals, the authorities have decided to be accompanied by professionals in this field (Oiken).

### New Zoning Plan (NZZ) according to the LAT (Law on Territorial Planning)

The law on land use planning (LAT) voted at the Federal level in 2013 and the Cantonal application law with the Cantonal master plan oblige Municipalities to define their territorial vision to define the location of different activities for the next 30 years.

This long-term vision is based on criteria such as quality of life, quality of the built environment, targeted and qualitative densification, quantitative re-dimensioning of building zones, linking historical and functional centers, promoting soft mobility and public transport.

Within the framework of this long-term vision, the Municipality will have to reduce the building zone by approximately 400'000 m<sup>2</sup>, which is the equivalent of 400 chalets/houses on an average 1'000m<sup>2</sup> plot. According to the official document of the Municipality of Chalais concerning the May 2021 Plan d'affectation de zone (PAZ, or NZZ in English), "most of the needs for new housing are located on the plain, a resizing of the reserves on the mid-coast and at the Vercorin station is inevitable. Consequently, "the Municipality has decreed the building zones of Briey and Vercorin as reserved zones". In plain language, this means a temporary blocking of all construction.

In terms of timing, a public information in a participatory way took place in spring 2021. On the basis of this discussion and the comments it received, the Municipal Council will draw up a project that defines the principles of development, a project that will be transmitted to the Canton in winter 2021/2022. The Canton's response is expected by the end of 2022. The Municipality will then draw up a detailed regulation that will concern the owners, a regulation that will be submitted to a public inquiry in 2023 with the possibility of opposition for the owners concerned. The final approval by the CE is expected in 2024.

### Vercorin Tourisme SA (VTSA)

Vercorin Tourisme SA is a structure set up by the Municipality of Chalais to coordinate the tourist activities of Vercorin. The Municipality of Chalais, the Cable Car Company, the Tourist Business Office, Swisspeak Resort, Verco R2, the Veranda, the Development Company, the Edouard Vallet Foundation, the Oiseau Bleu (bus) and the Associations of the agencies of the Val d'Anniviers are represented. Jacques Perret represents us on the Board of Directors. The financial resources of VTSA come from the tourist taxes.

VTSA's objective is to increase the number of overnight stays by 30% by making greater use of existing capacities and to increase the use of the ski lifts by developing its frequentation in summer, autumn and during the low seasons in winter. Reducing, or at least not increasing, the carbon footprint is also part of its objectives.

The VTSA, in addition to the management of the Tourist Office, is currently mainly concerned with the development of the Creux du Lavioz for activities for children up to 12 years old. Les Avouintsettes (behind Virage Sport shop) is intended for activities for children up to 6 years old. The development of the Creux du Lavioz, the first stage of which will be carried out in 2022, consists in particular of setting up structures such as

- o Refurbishment of the premises and extension of the terrace
- o Conveyor belt for skiing and cycling for children
- o Children's ski lifts
- o Mechanical sled
- o Wading pool with water from the Bisse (mountain stream)
- o Bleachers at the edge of the tennis court for shows

The development project of the Creux du Laviroz was sent to the members of the R2. It was presented in person in Vercorin and by video-conference for the R2. Possible remarks can be made until August 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 by communicating them (ideally, in French) to [direction@vercorin.ch](mailto:direction@vercorin.ch).

Furthermore, it was decided to appoint a single director for Vercorin Tourisme SA, the Téléférique Chalais-Brie-Vercorin and the Télécabine Vercorin SA. Arthur Clivaz, the current president of Vercorin Tourisme SA, was chosen for this position. In turn, Thomas Steiner will head Vercorin Tourisme going forward.

July 5<sup>th</sup>2021

Andreas Saurer