

District Councillor Update – October 2023

Jo Robb and James Norman

Check it Before you Chuck it!

South Oxfordshire has one of the highest recycling rates in the country but even still, every week thousands of the wrong items are ending up in our recycling bins by mistake.

This can lead to entire truckloads of recyclable waste being contaminated and rejected.

You will find stickers on your green recycling bins this week to encourage you to check the council's waste website before putting items in the bin.

Please encourage your residents to check the website to make sure that what they're putting in the recycling bin belongs there!

Unsure? www.southandvale.gov.uk/checkit

[Recycling - helping you to get it right - South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council \(southandvale.gov.uk\)](http://www.southandvale.gov.uk)

Supporting Safer Places

The council's Community Safety team works closely with police and local businesses to provide safe places for people in need of help or somewhere to go. They may be frightened, in need of medical support or struggling with mental health and need somewhere to talk. Safe places are identified with a nationally recognisable logo.

The Community Safety team are looking for more organisations and businesses in South Oxfordshire that would be happy to sign up to being a safe place. They can find out more here: www.safeplaces.org.uk or by emailing the Community Safety team: communitysafety@southandvale.gov.uk

Town and Parish Training

The Council has sent an invitation to all town and parish councils for planning training sessions. These are "speed training" sessions covering a range of topics including enforcement, permitted development, neighbourhood planning, conservation and forestry as well as an update on changes to the planning system. Please contact Paula Fox or Emily Hamerton for more information: 01235 422 600.

Tree Planting

The tree planting season has begun and autumn, with its mild days and warm soil is the perfect time to plant and allow trees to establish good roots before spring.

Oxfordshire County Council is looking for community tree planting projects that will benefit people and nature. Please take a look at the OCC Climate Action website for more details:

[Start a community tree or woodland project | Climate Action Oxfordshire](#)

Businesses Update:

From 1 October, businesses must no longer supply, sell or offer certain types of single use plastic items in England. The ban includes polystyrene cups and food containers, single use plastic cutlery and single use balloon sticks. The new measures compliment the existing restrictions on plastic straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers and the carrier bag charge.

To ensure they are complying, businesses should visit the government website for more information. [Single-use plastics ban: plates, bowls, trays, containers, cutlery and balloon sticks - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/single-use-plastics-ban)

Fly Tipping and Animal Carcasses

We are sadly at the time of year when we see more and more dead and injured wildlife on our roads. Please drive carefully and remember that if you see one deer, there are almost certainly more!

It was fascinating and great privilege to visit Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue in Blewbury. They have well over 100 sick and injured hedgehogs in their care as well as a kestrel, some tawny owls and a whole range of other animals. They operate a 24 hour wildlife hotline where you can report sick and injured wildlife: 07549 322 464 or oxfordshirewildliferescue@gmail.com

Animal carcasses that are causing a hazard should be reported to Biffa either on the general waste number 03000 610 610 or on the Public Spaces page of the SODC website: [Public spaces - South Oxfordshire District Council \(southoxon.gov.uk\)](https://southoxon.gov.uk/public-spaces)

Five Year Housing Land Supply

The Council has published its Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement which stands at 4.2 years.

Where a planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing, national planning policy directs decision-makers to grant planning permission unless there are clear reasons weighing against granting permission. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which cover the entirety of the ward of Woodcote & Rotherfield, have the highest level of protection under national planning policy and law.

The Secretary of State has indicated he will be abolishing the five year housing land supply requirement for councils with up to date local plans (such as South Oxfordshire) but has yet to do so.

In a recent appeal on a speculative application for up to 160 dwellings on land off the B480 in Chalgrove, the inspector found that the district did not have five years of housing land supply but refused the appeal nonetheless, reasoning that:

*“The assessment of the scale of the 5-year HLS is essentially a snapshot in time. Thus, in a situation where the development plan is only recently adopted, it is too early to say that the LP strategy is exacerbating the issue of a lack of an adequate HLS. The application of the tilted balance reduces the weight to relevant policies. **However, here the relative youth of the development plan and maintaining public confidence in the planning process, are such that Very Significant weight is attached to the conflict with the development plan and the harm that flows.**” (emphasis added)*

The planning team has produced a note explaining the situation:

[Note-to-accompany-South-Oxfordshires-5-Year-Housing-Land-Supply-Sept-2023.pdf](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshires-5-Year-Housing-Land-Supply-Sept-2023.pdf)
([southoxon.gov.uk](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk))

Grants:

Councillor Community Grants – Final Reminder

Each South Oxfordshire district councillor has £5,000 to award to projects or services that offer community benefits in their ward area, budget permitting. We are especially keen to fund projects of greatest impact for residents, such as activities that protect and restore our natural world, promote action on the climate and nature emergency and improve economic and community well-being. **Applications close on 20 October** so please do promote this scheme in your communities and do get in touch if you have any questions. Our Grants team are extremely helpful.

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/councillor-community-grants/>

£730k cash boost for rural economy across districts

SODC has secured £730 000 from the government’s Rural Prosperity Fund to help improve the rural economy across the district. The fund can be used by any organisation with legal status to boost to projects such as creating rural business hubs, setting up community energy schemes and diversifying farm businesses beyond agriculture.

There are large sums available to support our local businesses, please do promote this scheme in your communities:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/business-and-economy/advice-for-businesses/rural-england-prosperity-fund/>

Capital Grants

Larger capital projects in the local area can benefit from capital grants of up to £75,000. The latest round of Capital Grants is launching soon so please do have a look at the website and,

once again, please be sure to let your local community groups know about this scheme. Previous successful schemes have included the renovation of a cricket pavilion, a new roof for a Sea Scout hall, solar panels for a sports centre and retrofitting a church to create a brand new community hub in Wheatley.

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/capital-grants/>

Local Environment Fund: Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment

South Oxfordshire District Council has created a £50,000 fund to increase biodiversity and encourage public access to green spaces in the district.

In a new partnership with Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), the money will be given as grants through TOE's Local Environment Fund to help boost local nature recovery efforts and reduce the impacts of climate change.

Community groups, town and parish councils, charities and non-profit organisations are invited to apply to TOE for funds to help look after South Oxfordshire's green spaces. Grants ranging between £1,000 and £15,000 can be used for tree and hedgerow planting or restoring community orchards, ponds, and nature-rich meadows.

Grants could also be used to improve access to nature for the public to enjoy and learn from. This could include replacing stiles with gates for better accessibility and also improving pathways.

The new fund uses money from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) paid by developer contributions.

Early applications are encouraged, so any South Oxfordshire based group involved in protecting and restoring their local environment should contact TOE to find out more.

<https://www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/local-environment-fund>