

District Councillor Update
November 2024

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Councillor Community Grants

Please do make your community groups aware of our Councillor Grants. Jo and James each have £5000 to spend on projects and organisations doing good work in our ward. FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, WE ARE UNDER-SUBSCRIBED! We would love to use these funds to support grass-roots projects that benefit our local communities so please do spread the word and get in touch if you'd like to find out more.

Deadline for applications is Friday 29 November.

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

New Waste Strategy

South Oxfordshire has the highest recycling rate in the country – our residents are committed to doing the right thing and our recycling system is easy to use. But recycling alone is not enough and the Councils have now approved a new waste strategy that emphasises reducing waste. You can see more information on the website:

<https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/rethinkingwaste/>

The council is also supporting “libraries of things” and local repair cafes. There is an amazing repair café in Sonning Common that residents can use for the repair of household items. You can find out more at: www.ecosoco.org.uk

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Environment Act 2021 requires local authorities to prepare and public Local Nature Recovery Strategies. These are spatial strategies that outline how and where nature can be recovered. The Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is now in draft form and open to public consultation. WARNING: the consultation is difficult and not user-friendly. We are letting OCC know this, but do please take a look and feed in your thoughts.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/lhrs-phase3-consultation>

Motions to Council

At last month's Full Council meeting, Council agreed three motions:

1. A motion of no confidence in Thames Water;
2. A motion calling for more action to protect pubs;

3. A motion on net zero;
4. A motion asking government for better funding and multi-year financial settlements for councils, enabling local authorities to plan and carry out their work.

<https://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=3352>

Complaints

The council has a new complaints procedure.

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/about-the-council/get-in-touch/comments-suggestions-and-complaints/>

The biggest changes made to the complaint process are:

- Clarification on the definition of what counts as a complaint.
- The timescales for responding to complaints are different.
- For Stage 1 complaints, there will be a reply within 10 working days of acknowledgement; For Stage 2 complaints, there will be a reply within 20 working days of acknowledgement.
- The number of stages a complaint goes through is capped at 2 – informal complaints or escalated complaint stages are no longer allowed.
- The councils will respond to all stage 1 and stage 2 complaints rather than our contractors.
- There will be more emphasis on learning from complaints and recording evidence of what steps the council has taken to address issues raised.