

District Councillor Report – Sam Casey-Rerhaye, November 2021

A new leader for SODC

Cllr Sue Cooper has stepped down as Leader of the Council, after deciding it was to the right time to hand over to someone else. The new leader of the LibDem group is Cllr David Rouane and he was elected to be leader of the whole council at our meeting of 7th October.

Other motions and decisions made at the Council meeting were:

- Questioning the basis and democratic accountability in the OxCam Arc growth policy and asking the Minister to pause it and review whether it is appropriate in the climate emergency
- Objecting to the withdrawal of the £20 pw Universal Credit uplift
- Support for a ‘retrofit army’ for energy efficiency measures for homes and writing to relevant Ministers to urge a national strategy on this for decarbonisation of homes
- Urgently requesting the Clinical Commissioning Group for hospice beds for South Oxfordshire where there are none
- Welcoming the new Minister for Planning and urging him to scrap the new proposals and the five-year housing land supply requirement of Councils
- Supporting leisure centre refurbishment for decarbonisation and requesting long term, reliable funding from government for this
- New budget envelope for the new Council headquarters building in Didcot
- A grant for social housing to the Henley & District Housing Trust
- A budget envelope for rebuilding Council property on the Broadway in Didcot for council flats and community spaces

Covid-19

Covid cases have risen 44 per cent in a fortnight in Oxfordshire. In South it’s the same picture as rates have risen from around 255 to 505.6 per 100,000 residents here at the end of October.

We are amplifying our health partners’ messages on encouraging people to take up the offer of both the flu vaccine jab and the covid booster.

NHS advice on the flu vaccine is on their **website**.

Please keep on being careful, washing hands regularly and thoroughly, and, as the weather gets colder and we are meeting others inside more, wear masks as a precaution and continue using the lateral flow tests. These tests are still available free from pharmacies or you can order

them at the following address: [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-covid-19-rapid-lateral-flow-tests)

Test and Trace

During the past year the Oxfordshire service has successfully contacted, advised to isolate and offered support to nearly 7,000 Oxfordshire residents who have tested positive for COVID-19.

The work of this contact tracing service has broken countless chains of transmission and has helped slow the spread of the outbreak across the county.

To date, officers from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils' Environmental Protection Team have completed a total of 745 visits across our two areas.

Garden Waste Collections

The garden waste collection service will resume its normal fortnightly collections from 1st November. Please note that we have extended the period that this year's payment will cover by three months, so a total of 15 months to make up for the disruption to the service in the past months.

Now we have brought more services in-house from Capita, such as customer information, we can contact residents more quickly and efficiently and the delay in telling residents about this should be a thing of the past.

Civil Parking Enforcement starts

This new service that we as an administration brought off a dusty shelf and pursued to this point, will start on 1st November. I am happy to hear any particularly difficult spots for parking that you as parishes have so I can pass on to the enforcement team.

While this will not mean traffic wardens patrolling every day, it will mean they will attend areas every so often, so drivers will not know when they may get a ticket. This usually works well in dissuading most people from parking on double yellow lines or other illegal places.

Grant schemes open this Autumn

Please spread the word about the following grants available this Autumn for the district's voluntary and community sector:

- Revenue grant scheme is now open for applications to apply for core funding and support to help diversify income streams. Funding is

available for two years and is open to local constituted voluntary sector organisations. Closes noon 26th November 2021.

- Capital grant scheme opens 1st November and closes at noon 17th December 2021 for grants of up to £75,000 (max 50% of their total project cost). Voluntary and community sector organisations and town & parish councils are eligible to apply.
- Second round of Councillor Community grants opens 22nd November for wards with budget remaining. Round two closes noon on 4th February (2022)

Further information on all these grants can be found on **the South website** or contact the Community Enablement Team who are happy to answer any questions and guide applicants through the submission process: communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk

COP26

And as this crucial conference starts, I thought I would share with you this link from Imperial College to help everyone know what they can do to tackle climate heating:

[Nine things you can do about climate change \(imperial.ac.uk\)](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/nine-things-you-can-do-about-climate-change/)

1. Make your voice heard to those in power
2. Eat less meat and dairy
3. Cut back on flying
4. Leave the car at home whenever you can
5. Reduce energy use (and bills)
6. Respect and protect green spaces
7. Invest your money responsibly
8. Cut consumption and waste
9. Talk about the changes you make

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