

## **District Councillor Update: September 2025**

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### **New Number for the Waste Service**

Please note that residents should use a new number for district council waste and recycling enquiries: **01235 422 123**

The previous number (03000 610 610) is being phased out and will be switched off soon. The new number is already active, so residents should update their records and start using it right away.

**01235 422 123** is new number is for all household waste, recycling, food, garden waste (collections only\*), bulky waste collections, clinical waste collections and street cleaning services. It is also the number to call to report fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles.

\*For queries about garden waste permits, residents should continue to call 01235 422 422.

For enquiries relating to Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRC's), please continue to contact the county council on 0345 310 1111.

*Please do inform your local residents and community groups through your parish council communication channels. Thank you!*

### **Grants**

#### **Councillor Community Grant Scheme**

Community groups are warmly encouraged to take note of and apply for the grants that are currently open.

Each South Oxfordshire district councillor has £7,500 to award to projects and activities that offer community benefits in their ward area, budget permitting. We are particularly keen to fund projects of greatest impact for residents, such as activities that protect and restore our natural world, promote action on the climate emergency, and support thriving, healthy and inclusive communities .

Applications should focus on projects that deliver a clear and demonstrable benefit to the people of South Oxfordshire, specifically in our ward of Woodcote & Rotherfield.

Please do reach out if you would like to find out more, or if we can help set up a meeting with the council's Grants team who are extremely helpful.

*Just to be clear: residents of our ward must benefit from your scheme, but the scheme can be located outside of the ward. For example, previous grants have been awarded to the Wallingford Rowing Club, Riverside Counselling Service and Henley Debt Centre.*

**This scheme closes for applications at midday on 5 December 2025.**

The **CIL Grant Fund** opens in January 2026. £750k is available under this large scheme and groups contemplating putting in an application should start planning their applications now. Please do reach out to Jo or James if you'd like to find out more or arrange a discussion with our Grants team who can advise you on how to submit a successful application.

### **SOHA Grant Information Evening**

SOHA's Community Fund provides grants to charities, voluntary organisations, and local groups delivering projects that benefit our neighbourhoods. An information evening is being held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025. Jo and/or James will be attending and we will feed back to parishes and community groups about the SOHA Community Fund and how you can apply.

If you or a local organisation would like to attend to hear more about the Fund, do just let us know and we'll connect you with SOHA. You can also find out more by emailing Jackie Logan at SOHA: [jlogan@soha.co.uk](mailto:jlogan@soha.co.uk)

### **Planning Drop-In Sessions**

Planning officers host monthly virtual meetings aimed specifically at Town and Parish councils. These meetings provide an opportunity to speak directly with planning officers and ask questions.

The meetings are especially useful for councillors with responsibility for planning.

We encourage you to register here - your input helps to shape a more responsive and informed planning service.

### **Planning Update**

The change to the council's IT systems resulted in some major delays to the uploading of planning applications online. There is still a backlog and officers are working hard to address but it means that we are currently working around two weeks behind standard time for processing planning applications.

James and Jo have been seeking updates from officers and we are confident that all is being done to rectify the situation. However, do feel free to get in touch if you have any concerns about an application or if we can help.

### **Electoral Register Email**

Everyone who has registered to vote or applied for a postal vote and provided an email address will receive an email asking them to check their voter registration information and either confirm or update their details online. This saves on printing and postage costs. Please do look out for the email and encourage your local communities to update/confirm their details online.

For more information, visit [southoxon.gov.uk/ElectionsCanvass](http://southoxon.gov.uk/ElectionsCanvass)

### **New scheme to help residents switch to EVs**

Oxfordshire residents without off-street parking can apply for a new scheme that allows them to charge an electric vehicle (EV) outside their own home. It is estimated that 86,000 households across the county lack driveways and so cannot easily install a home charger.

The Oxfordshire County Council pilot project aims to help residents switch to cleaner, greener electric vehicles. It will offer 500 households in Oxfordshire EV charging cable channels at a reduced cost. These allow the cable from a home charger to safely cross the pavement and connect to a kerbside EV without causing a trip hazard. Residents should apply through the [Oxfordshire County Council's website](#).

### **Finally: Local Government Reorganisation**

We are nearing deadline when councils have to submit their proposals for local government reorganisation.

The decision about which proposal to submit and what form the proposal will take is one for the leader and cabinet and there is no requirement for Full Council to approve or discuss the proposal.

However, in the interests of transparency and public accountability, South and Vale councils will have the opportunity to publicly debate the final proposal at Full Council in November. There will also be a Joint Scrutiny meeting where members will make recommendations on the final draft of the Two Councils proposal.

Oxfordshire County Councillors will NOT have the opportunity to publicly discuss and debate the One Oxfordshire proposal at Full Council, and we understand that Oxford City Council has taken the same approach to their Greater Oxford proposal.

At this stage, officers are compiling consultation responses (over 2000 were received for the Two Councils proposal being put forward jointly by South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, Cherwell, West Oxfordshire and West Berkshire councils). We understand from MHCLG that this is an impressive number of responses relative to the rest of the country.

There is also the tricky work of obtaining financial and other information from the councils submitting alternative bids, to enable a proper assessment of the relative financial and other merits of each of the proposals. It is unfortunate that government has enabled a competitive process rather than an open-book approach with the aim

of achieving the most cost effective and democratically sound model that delivers for residents.

I think it's safe to say that the process has been enormously costly, shambolic and inefficient. Our officers have done a sterling job of putting together the Two Councils proposal and have worked collaboratively and constructively with our neighbours. But it's clear that the speed of the announcement of local government reorganisation, and the lack of meaningful guidance from MHCLG has left local authorities under enormous pressure.