

District Councillor Update  
February 2026

UPDATED – 6 February

Cllr Jo Robb, Cllr James Norman

### **UPDATE: Local Government Reorganisation – Consultation Launched**

The government's consultation on Local Government Reorganisation is now live and residents, businesses and town and parish councils are strongly encouraged to respond.

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/oxfordshire>

The consultation is open from 5 February to 26 March 2026. Respondents can either take part in an online survey or write directly to government with their views.

Just to refresh, the three competing proposals for the reorganisation of local government in our area are:

1. Two Councils – the proposal being put forward by five local authorities (South and Vale District Councils, Cherwell, West Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. Involves two Oxfordshire unitaries – South, Vale and West Berkshire in the south and Cherwell, West and City in the north). <https://www.twocouncils.org/home>
2. One Oxfordshire – the proposal for a single Oxfordshire unitary being put forward by Oxfordshire County Council. <https://oneoxfordshire.org.uk/>
3. 3 Councils (or Greater Oxford) – the proposal being put forward by Oxford City Council, involving the expansion of Oxford City into the surrounding greenbelt and the creation of two other smaller unitaries outside of the city. <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils>

### **Community Grants**

We are finalising our grant allocations now – thank you to all who applied. Across the district, the grants were more than twice oversubscribed and in many wards, very difficult decision had to be made.

We will update applicants as soon as possible.

### **£750,000 CIL Grant Fund Open**

Following the success of last year's CIL Grant Fund, a total of 750,000 is now available to improve community facilities across the district.

Town and parish councils as well as not-for-profit community groups can apply for grants between £75,000 and £250,000 to help fund projects that support communities. Sports and cultural facilities, open spaces, play areas and community centres could all be eligible.

Please contact James or Jo ASAP if you have a project and would like to apply – we can put you in touch with the grants team to give you the best chance of success. Applications close at 5pm on 30 March.

Previous grant recipient Wallingford Sports Park used the funding to help complete a major upgrade to its 'all weather pitch' which included a new shock pad and playing surface, a high-quality multi-use games area, and a safer, more comfortable spectator area.

### **Head of Planning to Retire**

Adrian Duffield, the council's head of planning, will retire on Tuesday 3 March, after nearly 25 years at SODC. The councils are currently recruiting for his replacement.

You may also be interested to know that Paula Fox, the much admired planning officer of longstanding, has sadly left the council.

### **E-Bills**

If you would like to receive your council tax bill by email rather than by post, you can sign up to switch to e-bills. Please do let residents know that they have the option of switching to e-bills or to stay with paper. The choice is yours! <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/council-tax/view-your-council-tax-details-online/>

### **Planning Training for Town and Parish Councils**

Please do attend the Planning Training to be held on Tuesday 3 March at Cornerstone in Didcot. The session will be run by the planning team at SODC and will include updates on the government's proposed changes to the planning system.

Where: Cornerstone, Didcot

When: Tuesday 3 March, 6pm – 7.30pm

Please RSVP (two places per parish council) at:

[PlanningBusinessEnquiries@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:PlanningBusinessEnquiries@southandvale.gov.uk)

### **Waste and Recycling News**

**\*\*\*\* REMINDER! \*\*\*** Existing garden waste permits will expire on 31 March. To continue receiving fortnightly collections from 1 April and to avoid any interruption to your service, please buy a new permit!

New permit sales will open mid-February and it's best to get in early.

Buying a permit: The majority garden waste customers will be able to buy their permit via their 'MyAccount' or by visiting [www.southandvale.gov.uk/gardenwastepermit](http://www.southandvale.gov.uk/gardenwastepermit)

Offline Support: Residents who need assistance should call our Customer Services team on 01235 422422. The team can talk you through the process.

When you receive your new permit, please keep the current 2025 sticker on the brown bin until after the final collection in March.

After the last March collection, please remove the old sticker and affix the new 2026/27 permit to the lid of the brown bin. If the old permit won't come off, just stick the new one over it.

Residents can still buy a permit at other times of the year, however they will have to pay the full annual amount (if purchasing before September) or the half year amount (if purchasing from October) - so it's best to buy in advance of the expiry date to make sure they benefit from the full year's worth of scheduled garden waste collections up to 31 March 2027.