

District Councillor Update – May 2026
Cllr Jo Robb, Cllr James Norman

Waste Survey -

Residents are invited to participate in the annual survey on waste services, recycling and street cleaning across the district.

Last year, more than 2,100 people took part in the 2025 survey. Feedback from the survey resulted in staff training to make sure bins were returned to the right place after emptying and better communication on which items go in which bins.

You can participate in the survey by clicking the link: southandvale.gov.uk/WasteSurvey

The survey is open until 4 June 2026.

BinDays

BinDays is an app with information on the days when and which bins will be emptied in your local area. It replaces Binzone and is more reliable and easier to manage.

If people are using a smartphone, once they enter their postcode and select the 'install instructions' button, they will be able to add the app to their mobile for easy access next time.

southoxon.gov.uk/BinDays

Please do let us know if you have any feedback on BinDays and note, the BinDays web app does **not** collect any user data.

Planning and Land Charges System

The new planning and land charges system is now live. A reminder that if you had an account and were receiving updates on planning applications, you need to create a new account and request updates. All existing accounts from the old system have been deregistered.

An information session was held in late April but if you didn't make it, you can watch the meeting here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL00bA70Ys7ceODUtCiqM6IWzucMQbYVhQ>

The Council is recommending:

- One shared email account per Parish Council using the official council email address (this ensures all consultations are managed in one place and there is a clear audit trail);
- Parish Councils will receive a link to the consultation for planning applications – this link will be unique for the Parish Council. Therefore, please do NOT share this link with residents – their views will be recorded as being those of the Parish Council. We recommend you instead share the generic link to the planning application or simply share the planning application reference number.

Council Meeting Livestreaming

Residents have been able to watch livestreamed Planning and other Committee meetings but now, for the first time in years, residents can also watch Full Council meetings live from home. The first live-streamed SODC Full Council meeting will be on 14 May. You can watch SODC Council and Committee meetings on the council's own YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTj2pCic8vzucpzlaSWE3UQ>

This is about making the Council more transparent and accountable.

Renters' Rights Act

From last Friday (1 May), the Renters' Rights Act started to come into effect. This brings about the most significant changes to the private rental sector in 40 years. The Act introduces new powers for councils and new requirements for landlords. Councils have a statutory duty to enforce the new landlord legislation and we are anticipating an increase in demand for housing services from May.

You can find out more at: www.southoxon.gov.uk/renters-rights-act or you can contact the Housing team directly: housing@southandvale.gov.uk

Empty houses

National Empty Homes week was held in March. Between December and February, 163 empty properties across both Districts were brought back into use, many with the involvement of the Empty Homes Officer. If you know of any empty properties in the District which could be brought into use as much needed housing, please email EmptyHomes@SouthandVale.gov.uk

Recycling Update

It is disappointing that South Oxfordshire dropped from top recycling English council area to third place amongst English Council areas for our recycling rate for the year 2024/2025. Our recycling rate **dropped** to 61.3% and the national figure for recycling also fell. These figures were for the year ending in March last year. Reducing waste overall is important: the County Council has to pay a gate fee per tonne to have residual waste burned to generate electricity. That fee is quite high – reducing waste saves money for the council.

Just to note, the County Council runs household waste recycling centres, including our local centre at Oakley Wood. Since the booking system for these was introduced, there have been concerns this might increase fly-tipping. Rates of fly tipping are therefore being closely monitored by the District Councils. Please be alert and report any fly tips you see to Biffa: admin.southoxford@biffa.co.uk or call them on 01235 422123
SODC has carried out a number of successful prosecutions of offenders.

Disabled Facilities and other Grants

There are a range of grants available to residents who need to make improvements to their homes. These are to enable people to continue to live at home safely and in comfort, even if they become sick or disabled. Please do check the council's website – you or your friend/neighbour may be eligible and it's worth applying.

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/housing/help-with-improving-your-home/>