

South Oxfordshire District Councillor Report April 2025

Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Sandford & the Wittenhams ward

Everyone Active grant 2025/26

We are launching another round of 'Everyone Active 2025/26' grant scheme in South Oxfordshire to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents. We have a budget of £50,000 with a maximum of £1,000 for each application for projects that benefit more than one individual becoming active or sustaining activity, to groups of residents in South Oxfordshire.

The grant scheme is open to a wide range of not-for-profit groups and sports clubs, town and parish councils/parish meetings, not-for-profit pre-schools, PTAs and local authority run schools or Academies for non-statutory elements of the education program.

The Everyone Active grant scheme will open for applications on **Tuesday 1 April**. For more information, please visit the [Everyone Active grant page of our website](#) or contact grants@southandvale.gov.uk.

Capital grant scheme opens soon!

To support community projects that help improve the quality of life for local people, our Capital Grant Scheme is opening soon for applications of up to £75,000.

The grant gives organisations a financial boost towards capital expenditure such as making improvements to buildings or play areas.

Applicants must show how their projects will help improve the quality of life for people in South Oxfordshire through projects that: support thriving, healthy and inclusive communities, provide infrastructure that meets local need and that take action on climate change and nature recovery.

Organisations eligible to apply are town and parish councils, non-profit businesses and Community Interest Companies and community-based organisations.

The Capital Grant Scheme will be open for applications from **2 June to 25 July**. Applicants will be able to apply online through [our website](#), where full guidance will be available to help submit the best possible application

Thame Leisure Centre – increasing energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions

South Oxfordshire District Council was awarded £160,351 by the Sport England from the Swimming Pool Support Fund to help boost their energy efficiency and keep running costs down. Work has begun this week at Thame Leisure Centre to install just over 150 solar panels, reducing the site's reliance on fossil fuels and lowering its carbon emissions.

It is estimated the panels will produce 69,000KWh of renewable electricity for the centre. This project follows other work carried out at the site to improve energy efficiency including the installation of LED lighting.

Local Government reorganisation update

In response to the government's requirement for proposals for new unitary councils, last month South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Cabinets and the West Berkshire

Executive Committee agreed to support the 'Ridgeway Council' interim proposal being submitted to government. The proposal outlines the initial case for a new unitary council that would see South and Vale combined with West Berkshire.

The proposal forms one half of a two-unitary council proposal for Oxfordshire, with the other half made up from the district council areas of West Oxfordshire, Oxford City and Cherwell. West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council have [confirmed they will be developing this North Oxfordshire Council](#) half of the proposal, strongly complementing the Ridgeway Council work we're carrying out.

As required by government, Oxfordshire County Council submitted the interim proposal on our behalf. The County Council's submission to the government also included its own initial proposal for a single unitary council for Oxfordshire, and a third option from Oxford City Council proposing the county area is divided up into three small unitary councils based around an expansion of the city's borders that hasn't as yet been defined.

Easter Holiday Activities for children

Don't forget to check the South Oxfordshire website for information on the latest low or no cost activities across both South Oxfordshire and the Vale here where you can find out what's on and when, and book sessions, southandvale.gov.uk/holidayactivities . These include free fun days in Didcot and Cholsey.

80th Anniversary of VE Day

This May will mark the 80th Anniversary of VE Day.

As well as raising the Union Flag outside Abbey House we will be encouraging residents and our Town and Parish Councils to add the details of events they are organising to our [Southern Oxfordshire What's On website](#). Events can also be added to the official website [VE/VJ Day website](#). This site also includes information about how to set up an event and other useful resources, so please do share with those in your ward that maybe working on events.

New waste collections calendar

The 2025-26 waste collections calendar is now available to download – you can even synchronise the calendar into their smartphone via Google Calendar and iCal.

Just visit our [South waste calendar page](#). On this page you will also find the latest waste information leaflet, including holiday collection changes, information on how to report a missed collection and much more

Fines for fly tipping

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are stepping up efforts to combat environmental crimes with stricter penalties for fly-tipping, littering and for householders who fail to ensure that their waste will be disposed of legally.

Environmental crimes like fly-tipping harm wildlife, damage public spaces and cost taxpayers millions in clean-up efforts. The tougher fines, introduced by the government, aim to deter offenders and ensure those who disregard the law face serious consequences.

Key changes include:

- **Householder duty of care breaches:** on-the-spot fines will rise from £300 to £600.

- **Fly-tipping:** maximum fixed penalty notices will increase from £400 to £1,000.
- **Littering and graffiti:** fines will rise from £80 to £500.

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