

District Councillor Update: **CLr Maggie Filipova-Rivers**

Ward member for Goring and South Stoke

Nov/Dec 2022



Dear Goring and South Stoke residents,

I would like to take the opportunity to wish everyone a happy new year and thank you all for all that you do to make the local community a great place to live and work. I know many of us will be looking to the new year with a varying level of anxiety due to cost of living, health and other challenges, but with hope too, that things will slowly but surely begin to stabilise.

With a bit of delay, please see below my District councillor report. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or needs for support.

1. Cost of Living

The Council has produced a useful guide to help residents struggling with the rising cost of living. Please could you circulate this among your residents and make it available in public places: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/cost-of-living-crisis-advice-and-support/>

And as ever, please direct residents to our Community Hub where officers can guide residents to the support that's available: 01235 422 600 or communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

2. Household Support Fund

We're opening a third round of the Household Support Fund in January to support households who can't afford essentials over the winter months. Support will be tailored to individual needs but will focus on food and fuel vouchers. Details of eligibility will be published on our Cost-of-Living website pages. Please direct people to our [South](#) website for details, [email our Community Hub](#) (communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk) or call them on 01235 422600.

3. Rough Sleeping and Housing Support

We are receiving growing numbers of reports of people rough sleeping in the District and we can expect these numbers to increase further. Our Housing Team are expert at supporting people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and our Council follows the Housing First approach: first

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provide people with a roof over their heads and additional support follows. [About Housing First | Housing First England \(homeless.org.uk\)](#)

Please contact: housing@southandvale.gov.uk or call 01235 422 452 or let us know if you would like to discuss a housing issue or have concerns about a resident who is homeless or about to be.

4. Homes for Ukraine: discretionary £500 payment for hosts

A one-off emergency discretionary support payment of £500 will be offered to hosts under the Homes for Ukraine scheme where we identify a significant and urgent need. The payments will be made directly to guests through our Community Hub in the form of a cash or retail voucher depending on their needs and circumstances.

This is not an automatic additional payment to all guests, and it won't be made where other schemes/funds are available to assist the guest e.g. housing deposits. If you come across anyone who needs help, please direct them to [email our Community Hub](#) or call them on 01235 422600.

5. Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

South Oxfordshire District Council has formally adopted its revised [Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) Charging Schedule](#), which will come into effect on 3 January 2023. The updated schedule will increase significantly the amount of CIL developers are required to pay on new development and introduces a levy for developments including student housing, build to rent housing and elderly person's accommodation which are currently exempt from charges. This is a really positive development as it will ensure we make progress toward bridging the large community infrastructure gap we have in the district. Examples of community infrastructure include playgrounds, leisure facilities, zebra crossings etc. Parish councils can also expect the CIL amounts to increase all things being equal.

The revised [Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#) will also come into effect on 3 January to support the updated CIL Charging Schedule and provide further guidance on how the Council will secure developer contributions through section 106 agreements. If you'd like any further information, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01235 422600 or email planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk

6. New Housing Delivery Strategy and Plan for More Affordable Homes

This is an exciting one for our administration and will see us building momentum behind council and community housing schemes.

A new housing delivery strategy and action plan was agreed by Cabinet Members at South Oxfordshire District Council at a meeting earlier this month. As part of the plans, the council hopes to deliver some of their own social housing in the future to help residents on lower incomes access safe and secure affordable housing.

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The delivery strategy will also help the council's aims to tackle the climate emergency to reduce carbon emissions by encouraging developers to use sustainable materials while building well-designed energy efficient housing. It also aims to encourage housing providers and residents to access grant funding to help retrofit their homes to reduce their carbon footprint.

The action plan will look at how the council can help community led housing initiatives to build new homes and, where appropriate, provide grant funding and developer contributions to help make the schemes financially viable.

This builds on the work the council has already done to provide funds to support new homes. Earlier this year the council gave £1.2 million towards the cost of creating new affordable housing in Henley and Thame. In Wheatley, 12 zero carbon affordable homes are set to be built with help from the council. Along with the strategy a further 2m in capital funds was approved to go towards council housing.

Read the strategy and plan: <http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=27861>

7. New tree roles for the councils

We have collaborated with the other Oxfordshire local authorities to create two new community tree and woodland planting roles. The two new recruits will work to increase tree cover across the county through training volunteers and community woodland creation activities.

8. Nearly £900,000 given to local communities for local improvements

South Oxfordshire District Council has released almost £900,000 to help pay for local community improvements in the district in the last six months. The funds came from a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – money that's collected from developers as a condition of their planning permission to build new homes in the area.

Since April, the district council has paid out £870,440 to local councils that have new developments built in their parishes. £847,945 of CIL funding was identified in the district council's performance report for their first financial quarter, and since its publication, a further £22,495 has been given to Warborough Parish Council after new homes were built in the village. Read more:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/uncategorised/nearly-900000-given-to-local-communities-for-local-improvements/>

9. Land and Buildings Available for Change

South & Vale have published the results of the Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change, part of the process in creating our Joint Local Plan. [Here is a great short video](#) to explain what the Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change is and what happens. It's important to note these are not proposals the Council is making for development. The Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change does not grant planning permission to any site submitted or confirm that the site will be suitable for development. You can view the full results on our interactive Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change website: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/83c42d77f9104794a8cb49a815ff2352>

10. Successful Eco Fair in Didcot

In total 37 organisations, local companies and charity groups were at the fair at Cornerstone arts centre showcasing some of the best of South Oxfordshire's sustainable economy. Hundreds of local people attended the family-friendly event hosted by South Oxfordshire District Council with support from Sustainable Didcot on 5 November. There was a huge variety of goods and services on offer ranging from clothing, food and drink, jewellery, skincare and beauty products, candles, baked goods, upcycled furniture, garden products, pushchair and car seat valeting, and homewares, as well as electric bikes and vehicles. Read More:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/economic-development/hundreds-enjoyed-all-the-fun-of-the-eco-fair/>

11. CCTV helps to keep people safe in our districts

Our CCTV operators have helped support nearly 100 arrests across the two districts in the past six months. Our most recent CCTV report gives information on how we've contributed to tackling crime and helping safeguard vulnerable people in our town centres.

Operators working across Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford supported 363 incidents, gave 47 evidence packs for potential court proceedings and supported 42 arrests. We supported 472 incidents, gave 52 evidence packs and supported 46 arrests using cameras based in Abingdon and Wantage.

For more information: https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/11/South-first-half-22-23_FINALISED.pdf

12. New measures to tackle Bird Flu

The government has introduced [mandatory measures to help prevent the spread of Bird Flu this winter](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bird-flu-avian-influenza-housing-your-birds-safely). Bird keepers are now required to keep all poultry and captive birds indoors and to follow stringent biosecurity measures, regardless of type or size. People are advised to follow **this guidance** (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bird-flu-avian-influenza-housing-your-birds-safely>) to ensure birds are being housed indoors safely.

For the latest information about Bird Flu, please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bird-flu-avian-influenza-latest-situation-in-england>

13. Application could drive water quality improvements in Wallingford

A joint application to help tackle pollution will lead to a safer swim for swimmers, river users and wildlife in Wallingford. South Oxfordshire District Council and Wallingford Town Council, supported by environmental charity Thames21, have submitted an application to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for bathing water status for a stretch of the River Thames at Wallingford.

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If bathing water status is awarded, Thames Water would be legally required to treat waste outflows to a much higher standard. This would ensure that bacteria harmful to the health of people and wildlife would be removed before the water can be released into the river. Read more:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wellbeing/application-could-drive-water-quality-improvements-in-wallingford/>

14. “Park and Charge” scheme wins an award!

We are pleased to report that the Park and Charge scheme that put 124 electric vehicle chargers in 10 of the council-run car parks across both districts has won an excellence award, called an “Evie”. Evidence is showing that the charging bays are being used more and more; our foresight in installing infrastructure before demand outstrips supply has been widely praised.

Open Consultations

Share your views on the Integrated Care Partnership’s strategic priorities The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire

West Integrated Care Partnership (BOB ICP) is pulling together a strategy to further develop the local health and care system and reduce inequality. The members of the ICP have worked with partner organisations, the voluntary sector, and other stakeholders to understand their areas of focus.

The ICP has launched public engagement to seek feedback on these proposed priorities from wider partners and with people who live or work in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

The draft strategy proposes priorities in these categories:

- Promoting and protecting health – to support people to stay healthy, protect people from health hazards and prevent ill health
- Start Well – to help children get the best start in life
- Live Well – to support people and communities to stay healthy for as long as possible
- Age Well – to support people to live healthier, independent lives for longer
- Improving quality and access to services– to help people access services at the right place and right time.

The public feedback will refine the principles and priorities and a further draft of the strategy will be published early this year. The ICP will continue to engage with stakeholders and the public as the work progresses. To find out more and to give feedback by answering an online survey please visit: <https://yourvoicebob-icb.uk.engagementhq.com/icp-strategy-engagement>

Water Resources South East consultation

A new public consultation has just been launched on water management plans that include proposals for the new reservoir near Abingdon. The Water Resources South East (WRSE) <https://wrse.uk.engagementhq.com/our-draft-best-value-regional-plan> have been published for comment.

Local Crime Survey

Residents across the Thames Valley are being asked to complete a survey about how safe they feel in their local area, their experience of both crime and the police, as well as questions on the future funding of policing.

The information provided will help inform the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) on any gaps or improvements that could be made in the future.

To find out more, visit <https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/survey/>