

<b>Title</b>	District Councillors' Report
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<b>Parish</b>	Warborough Parish Council
<b>Date</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025

### **Annual Council Meeting – 15 May 2025**

Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan is now chair and Cllr Andrea Powell is our Vice Chair. At the meeting it was announced that the formal partnership between the Liberal Democrat Group and the Green Group in forming the administration will cease. The partnership was formed after the elections of 2019, when no party had a majority on the council, and continued through choice after the election in 2023, even though the LibDems then held the majority of seats on the Council. They have voted to dissolve the partnership so the Greens become the official opposition as the second largest group. We are proud of what we have achieved together: we have championed sustainability, improved local services, turned around the council's finances, and pioneered a more open and collaborative way of working.

### **Accessible mooring on the Thames at Wallingford**

Also on 15<sup>th</sup> May we had the official opening with local councillors and volunteers from the Wallingford Accessible Boat Club of the accessible mooring. This will allow wheelchair users and others to access the river

### **Major council IT system maintenance in May/June**

During May and June a major piece of essential maintenance work on the council's IT systems is being carried out as part of our move from Capita to in-house IT.

All our information and systems that are still hosted by Capita, including all current network drives, website forms, Ocella (including planning, environmental services, private sector housing and community safety), land charges and GIS system will move to our own in-house managed South and Vale cloud platform.

This work will impact a significant proportion of the council's services – for example, it won't be possible for people to view the planning registers and applications, land charges registers, or access most of the council's online forms.

All of these systems will be unavailable, internally or externally, until probably 9<sup>th</sup> June. This is work we have to carry out in order to secure the future of our IT system and the services it enables. This approach is the only one that will work and maintain the integrity of the systems and data. Services will put into action their business continuity plans for this kind of situation.

This will mean during this downtime people won't be able to use the majority of the online services - such as comment on a planning application via the council's website, use the majority of the council's online forms e.g. book a bulky waste collection, report fly-tipping, apply for a licence or make certain payments.

All planning application consultations will be extended by 14 days. The garden waste permit payment system is unaffected, as is council tax payments and general customer enquiries form.

### **Grants**

The next Capital Grant scheme is now open for applications. There is a total budget available of £320,000 to award for capital projects that take place in the district or within a three-mile radius of the district boundary. You can request a minimum of £5,000 and a maximum of £75,000 but **no more than 50 per cent** of your total project cost. Your total project cost must be at least £10,000 but no set maximum cost.

Applications should focus on projects that benefit significant numbers of South Oxfordshire residents, or that that will improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups and contribute towards at least one of the priorities from [The Way Ahead: Council Plan 2025-2029](#).

The Councillor Grant scheme opens on 18<sup>th</sup> August (£15k between us), the Performing Arts Grant Fund (£60k) on 28<sup>th</sup> July and the CIL Grant fund (£750k) in January 2026.

## **Tougher Fines to Tackle Fly-Tipping**

From 1 April 2025, those who fail to meet their legal responsibilities for waste disposal will face significantly higher fines as part of a national crackdown on anti-social behaviour.

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.

Failure to pay these fines may lead to prosecution in court, which could result in an unlimited fine or even imprisonment for large-scale fly-tipping offences.

As a reminder, fly-tipping can be reported to SODC's Enviro-crime team via the website – <https://southoxon.gov.uk/EnviroCrime> or by phone to Biffa on 03000 610610.

## **Councils prepare a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**

Minimising the use of temporary accommodation which can be disruptive to people's lives, especially for children, is one key aim of proposed updates to how councils tackle homelessness in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. Increasing the provision of genuinely affordable, long-term homes remains a core focus of South Oxfordshire. We both took part in a consultation workshop recently with our impressive team of Housing Officers; SODC regularly performs well above the national average for avoiding homelessness and looking after rough sleepers, but there is always more that can be done. A key focus for the next strategy will be ensuring that this high performance is maintained in the transition to Unitary Authority status and that the important, but non-statutory, services provided are protected.

## **Summer fun comes to Riverside**

The pool and splash pad at Wallingford Riverside are now open, kicking off a summer of fun for families and fans of outdoor swimming in South Oxfordshire. The Riverside Park and Pools area is owned by South Oxfordshire District Council and managed by their leisure contractors GLL under their trading name of Better. Sessions can be booked using the Better App; the pool opens at 7am each weekday morning and at 9am at the weekend.

If you'd like to swim in the river instead, the bathing season in England officially started on 15 May. This means that regular tests will be carried out on water samples from the River Thames at Wallingford throughout the summer. There is a new notice board by Wallingford beach with more details.

## **Let's talk rubbish! Tell us what you think of our waste services**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are inviting residents to have their say on how rubbish and recycling are handled across the districts.

A new waste services survey is now live, giving people the chance to share their experiences and opinions on everything from household waste and recycling collections to street cleaning and waste reduction initiatives.

By taking part, residents can help shape the future of local waste services, highlighting what's working well and where improvements can be made.

**Your opinion really does matter to us – take the survey now by visiting –**  
[southandvale.gov.uk/2025WasteSurvey](https://southandvale.gov.uk/2025WasteSurvey) Please post your comments before 13 June 2025.

## **Plough Field**

SODC has done extensive further work on the flooding question. The Parish Council has received a letter giving more detail. This work will all be kept on file and can be used for future applications in the area if needed.