

## **District Councillor Update – 6 September 2021**

**Jo Robb and Lorraine Hillier**

### **Breaking:**

The Chair of the Council has agreed to a request for an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council to discuss the ongoing issue of waste collections. The meeting will be held at 2pm on Friday 24 August. Apologies for any inconvenience caused by the timing. Unfortunately no other times were available. Parish Councils or residents who wish to speak are invited to register online by 5pm on Thursday 23 August. Residents and parish councillors may participate remotely via Teams. The agenda will be published on 16 September:

[Agenda for Council on Friday, 24 September 2021, 2.00 pm \(southoxon.gov.uk\)](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/Agenda-for-Council-on-Friday,-24-September-2021,-2.00-pm)

### **Garden Waste Suspension**

Regrettably, the Council was given no alternative but to agree to Biffa temporarily suspending the garden waste (brown bin) collection service at the start of August. This was to preserve the core waste collections of rubbish, recycling and food.

Like many waste contractors, Biffa has suffered from the national (100,000 driver) shortage of HGV drivers, caused by Brexit and exacerbated by Covid.

Biffa has provided SODC with options and, following external legal advice, SODC has written to Biffa reminding them of their obligations under the waste management contract. Discussions are ongoing and we are assessing the options with a view to ensuring the least-worst outcome and to holding Biffa to their contractual obligations.

Regrettably this means that the garden waste service is still suspended and will remain so for a while longer. A large number of other councils across the are facing similar problems.

We will ensure that customers are properly reimbursed in some way for any shortfall in the contracted number of collections. This is still under discussion.

Please see SODC's waste website with further information and again, our sincere apologies for this.

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/garden-waste/>

## **Councillor Community Grants**

Applications are open for this year's Councillor Community Grants. Lorraine and Jo each have £5000 to spend in our wards so please get in touch if you have any ideas for projects you'd like financial support for. [Councillor community grants - South Oxfordshire District Council \(southoxon.gov.uk\)](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/councillor-community-grants)

## **A Hospice for South Oxfordshire**

Cllr Stefan Gawysiak is leading a campaign to bring residential palliative and end-of-life care back to South Oxfordshire following the closure of Sue Ryder in Nettlebed. A meeting last week was attended by the Mayors of Henley and Didcot, by Cllr Gawysiak and SODC Chair Jo Robb as well as by Cllr David Turner, SODC representative on the Health Scrutiny Overview Committee, Cllr Ian Reissman and a number of dedicated residents and volunteers including Tony Hardy, whose son died at Sue Ryder in Nettlebed. The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group has indicated they will provide two beds with non-specialist staff in Wallingford. According to the campaigners, this is inadequate for the needs of our District. Do contact Jo Robb if you would like to know more about this campaign.

## **Important Consultations: Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc**

Consultation on the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan is open and closes on Friday 8 October. We warmly encourage Parish Councils, residents, businesses and community groups to give their views on the proposed options. The Oxfordshire Open Thought website contains details of the draft policies including those related to tackling climate change, improving environmental quality, and housing need. It would be particularly helpful to hear views on the proposed spatial options, which consider where best to locate new developments for example focussing on sustainable transport corridors (rail routes, bus routes etc) or on business locations (eg Culham Science Centre, Milton Park etc) or on rural communities.

<https://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/>

## **Big Green Week**

Communities across the county have responded to the challenge of the climate crisis and the opportunity of Big Green Week, starting on Saturday 18 September. You can find a full listing of events at [www.greenweekoxon.co.uk](http://www.greenweekoxon.co.uk) on the What's On page. Online events include a webinar on the Future of Transport organised by the County Council, and the Week coincides nicely with national Recycling Week: council staff will be promoting new initiatives to increase our recycling rates.

Oxfordshire has one of the largest Big Green Week programmes in the UK – we should be proud of that!

As part of Big Green Week, SODC is inviting residents and community groups to organise and take part in a River Clean-up on World Rivers Day, Sunday 26 September. [World Rivers Day](#). The event aims to bring communities together to celebrate our river, clean up the river and towpath and raise awareness of the climate and ecological emergencies.

As well as carrying out a clean up, groups are also encouraged to have information stalls and talks to raise awareness about water quality and sewage discharge, create community cohesion around caring for the river Thames, and enhance the wellbeing of the community.

If you'd like to organise a local event there are a number of organisations that can offer advice and support:

- [Surfers Against Sewage](#)
- [Clean Access Clear Waters](#)
- [World Rivers Day](#)
- [Wandle Trust](#)
- [Thames 21](#)

Please let us know if you are planning to organise your own river clean up, whether it is on World Rivers Day or a different date and we can put you in touch with officers who can provide support and advice.

There are a host of events happening during Big Green Week and Oxfordshire is among the country's most active counties with large numbers of community groups getting involved.

### **Eco Business Fair**

SODC's Business Development team are hosting an Eco Business Fair at Henley Town Hall on Wednesday 22 September, 10am-3pm. There will be speakers throughout the day and a chance to meet local businesses doing excellent work in the Green economy. More information here: <https://www.svbs.co.uk/henley-eco-business-fair/>

### **Kit Out The Nation**

As part of the BBC's Kit Out the Nation campaign, Better Leisure Centres are collecting used sporting goods that are clean and in good condition. If you have old, unused rugby boots, hockey sticks or any other bits of sporting kit you no longer need, please pop down to Henley Leisure Centre and drop them in.

### **Move Together**

Earlier this year a new county-wide programme “Move Together” launched to support hundreds of Oxfordshire residents most affected by Covid-19 to move more and protect their health and wellbeing. Move Together is co-ordinated by Active Oxfordshire with city and district councils working with them. The support provided is personalised to each individual based on their specific needs and is provided by physical activity specialists.

You can find out more about Move Together via this website. Please do share with residents to promote this important service. [www.getoxfordshireactive.org/move-together](http://www.getoxfordshireactive.org/move-together)

## **Planning**

A reminder that following a unanimous decision by Full Council, we are returning to the old system of planning call-ins, whereby Parish Council objection triggers automatic call-in to Planning Committee for minor (9 houses or fewer) applications. Planning training will be provided to Parish Councils to update councillors on current planning policy and material planning considerations should you be interested. More updates to come.

## **Vaccines**

Better Leisure has joined Public Health England’s drive to boost the uptake of Covid vaccination among young people. Young people between the ages of 16 and 30 will receive a £10 voucher to spend at a Better leisure facility and a three-day pass to any of its leisure centres and gyms.

<https://www.better.org.uk/healthy-communities>