

District Councillor Update
January 2024

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Happy New Year!

Warm Spaces

Residents in need of a warm place this winter are welcome to pop into the local leisure centre. All leisure centres across South Oxfordshire are opening up as Warm Spaces again this year. You can charge your phone, work on your computer, have a warm drink and a chat at Henley Leisure Centre, Abbey Sports Centre, Didcot Wave, Parks Sports Centre and Thame Leisure Centre. The Warm Spaces scheme runs from 9am-2pm on weekdays in the café and communal areas of the centres.

You can find out more about warm spaces in your local area here: www.warmwelcome.uk

Emergency Housing

In times of freezing weather, the Council activates its emergency housing protocols to ensure everyone is brought inside out of the cold.

If you are aware of anyone who is rough sleeping, please contact us or the Housing Team who can arrange emergency accommodation immediately.

Please know, that our Council was among the first in the country to adopt the Housing First strategy. This means that we prioritise giving people who are homeless or about to become homeless, a permanent home. From there, all support services flow. Housing First is cost-effective and enables people to get their lives back on track much faster.

Email: Housing@southandvale.gov.uk or phone: 01235 422 410. This number is monitored 24/7.

Community Grants

Our Councillor Community Grants were heavily oversubscribed – thank you to everyone who applied for a grant in this round. Sadly, because we were nearly twice oversubscribed, we were forced to make some cut-backs to our allocations and so not all applications were successful. Please do get in touch with James or Jo if you would like some advice on how to make your project happen – we have already helped some applicants to find alternative sources of funding. Letters confirming allocations will be going out next week. Feel free to get in touch if you'd like further information.

Cost of Living Help

The Community Hub remains open and is supporting residents with cost of living issues as well as signposting people in need to other services. Feel free to contact them and do direct your residents to do the same: 01235 422 600

Neighbourhood Planning

Back in November, the council delivered an online presentation on neighbourhood planning for Town and Parish councils. If you would like to watch the presentation, you can access it here: [Neighbourhood Planning Resources - Vale of White Horse District Council \(whitehorsedc.gov.uk\)](http://NeighbourhoodPlanningResources-ValeofWhiteHorseDistrictCouncil(whitehorsedc.gov.uk))

Green Businesses

SODC is teaming up with Oxford Brookes University to undertake a local study on the challenges faced by businesses trying to become more environmentally friendly. Brookes has formulated a short survey to gather information on the subject.

South and Vale Councils have won some UK Shared Prosperity Funding to help our businesses become more sustainable.

Please could you share the attached survey with local businesses you know of, it takes around 15 minutes to complete.

[Investigating SME businesses' engagement with sustainability in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District \(qualtrics.com\)](#)

Police and Crime Commissioner Council Tax Survey

The PCC for Thames Valley is asking residents about which areas they would like the policing element of council tax to focus on in the 2024/2025 budget. Please have your say and please do share this with residents. Some parishes are understandably concerned about speeding: if you'd like more focus on this, or other areas of policing, please make sure your views are heard.

[Public consultation - Thames Valley PCC \(thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk\)](#)