

District Councillor Report Haseley Brook ward

July 2023

Cllr Georgina Heritage



Foreword

I'm delighted that we have some positive updates for Haseley Brook residents this month... From grants and funding opportunities, to SODC action on bathing water quality and air quality. Plus – as summer holidays approach – FOC family fun at the new splash pad at Wallingford's Riverside Park and Pool!

Councillor Community Grants Funding

A new round of funding from the Councillor Community Grant scheme has launched in South Oxfordshire, to help local charities and organisations across the district.

As part of the scheme, every ward in South Oxfordshire has funding to support local projects that directly benefit local residents. Organisations can now apply for grants from £250 up to a maximum of £5,000 from each ward councillor where the project is located.

Before applying, applicants are encouraged to get in touch with their local councillor to discuss their project and visit our website for further information and details on eligibility. Applications are made online and are open until midday on Friday 20 October 2023.

The last round of funding, which closed earlier this year, awarded £179,824 to help 99 projects across the district. Recipients ranged from biodiversity and wildlife projects, to those improving mental and physical health and wellbeing, improvements to community buildings and recreation areas, and more.

You can find out more about the Councillor Community Grant scheme on our website at www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants or by contacting the Community Enablement team at grants@southandvale.gov.uk.

Rural England Prosperity Fund

More than £1.2m is being made available to help improve the rural economy across our districts. We've secured funding from the government's Rural England Prosperity Fund, which can be used to provide a boost to projects such as creating rural business hubs, setting up community energy schemes and diversifying farm businesses beyond agriculture.

Any organisation with legal status will be able to apply for the funding when it opens in the Autumn this year. This will include:

- Public sector organisations;

- Higher and further education institutions;
- Private sector companies;
- Voluntary organisations;
- Registered charities.

Before the application process begins, the Economic Development team wants to understand which organisations might apply and for what type of project, and so is asking anyone interested to send an Expression of Interest in the run up to the funding scheme opening later this year.

There are more details on the scheme on the SODC Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) page.

South Oxfordshire Bathing Water Status

Organisations across South Oxfordshire are planning to apply for bathing water status on the River Thames at Wallingford and Henley, which, if awarded, should result in a safer, less polluted environment for swimmers, river users and wildlife. Although not in our own ward, this would have a hugely positive impact for so many of us locally.

SODC is aiming to work with Wallingford Town Council to make a joint application to the government department responsible for granting bathing water status – the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It is also supporting a bid for bathing water status being made by Henley Town Council. Both applications will be supported by environmental charity Thames21.

Thames21 will use data gathered from the 2023 bathing season in the applications. This will include the numbers of those using the river as well as water samples taken by Thames21 and local trained volunteers. Thames21 plan to publicise the water quality data on an online story map on their website during the bathing season.

If bathing water status is awarded, Thames Water would be legally required to treat waste outflows to a much higher standard, meaning they could not release water into the river without ensuring the removal of bacteria which is harmful to the health of people and wildlife.

It would also mean that during the bathing season, from May to September each year, the Environment Agency would be required to monitor the water quality and publicise the results.

SODC and Wallingford Town Council applied for bathing water status at Wallingford Beach in November 2022, supported by Thames21 but that application was turned down. In a letter to councillors, the Minister for environmental quality and resilience, explained that the Wallingford application was rejected because too few bathers use the area.

As Cllr Freddie Van Mierlo, SODC Cabinet member for climate change and nature recovery, said: “It was extremely disappointing that the Secretary of State for Environment rejected the application for bathing water status at Wallingford last year, despite strong local support and work by South Oxfordshire District Council. The idea that Wallingford Beach should be rejected because it is not being used enough is perverse logic. There will be more bathers when there is confidence in the water quality. The suggestion from Defra appears to be that something will only be done if swimmers are willing to brave dirty water first.

“If the government is unwilling to support cleaner waters in South Oxfordshire, the council will move ahead towards that goal, working with Thames21 and our council partners.”

Make a Splash at Riverside

More Wallingford water news, because I'm aware that families all over Haseley Brook and South Oxfordshire will be excited about this project as summer approaches! The newly refurbished splash pad at Riverside Park and Pools in Wallingford will be ready to welcome visitors from Saturday 8th July. Opening times are 9am to 6pm, and it is free to use with no bookings required.

The refurbishment work, which started in May, has introduced lots of new and exciting features including:

- Water arches
- Raised features
- Tap Tap activators children can use to trigger water sequences
- Play zones for children of different ages and abilities
- A whoosh shower
- Sky drenchers... and more!

As well as the bright and colourful new features, the council has focused on the health and safety of children and families in the design of the splash pad. Uneven paving slabs have been removed, repairs have been carried out on the promenade and perimeter area of the site and a new disabled access pathway has been installed from the splash pad to the car park to make access easier for those in wheelchairs and those using buggies and pushchairs. The new surface of the splash pad is made of a rubber crumb with UV protection to prevent algae forming which will reduce the chances of slips and falls when children are running around. The splash pads, which will use water from the river and rainfall, will also minimise water and power use, which will also mean it reduces its carbon emissions.

South Oxfordshire District Council, which owns the site, used £296,450 of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money, which comes from developer contributions to the local area to finance the project.

Rubbish Updates!

It's important that residents are aware that if they have problems with waste not being collected, or if they notice situations whereby Biffa operatives are putting electrical recycling into general waste trucks (for example), please report directly to Biffa, either by phone on 03000 610610, or at admin.southoxford.biffa.co.uk. They can then investigate and resolve for you. If you have already done this and the issue continues, please escalate to the Council's waste team at waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk, or by calling 01235 422146.

Parishes may also be aware that a man has been ordered to pay more than £1,400 after garden waste was found dumped near Great Haseley.

Magistrates heard how, in January 2022, the resident had carried out work at a property in Great Haseley and had been paid £150 to remove four bulk bags full of garden waste. However, he failed to ensure that the waste was disposed of properly and it was then found dumped on the side of the road along the A329.

The resident claimed that he didn't have enough space in his vehicle to take the waste away himself and so had paid a scrap metal collector to do it for him. However, he didn't know who the person was and failed to provide any evidence of this arrangement. He was fined £200 and was also ordered to pay full prosecution costs of £1,247 and a £34 victim surcharge.

Anyone producing or transporting controlled waste must ensure it is disposed of legally and that a record is kept of what the waste is and where it's going. It would be helpful if we could remind our residents of this responsibility in parish magazines/communications, with the advice that if you see a fly-tip or suspect that someone is involved in fly-tipping, please report via [southoxon.gov.uk/flytipping](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/flytipping), or call 03000 610610.

Have Your Say on Air Quality

Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils have put together a new plan of action for the next four years to improve air quality in the districts and now they are asking residents to have their say on the proposals.

The current plans have been in place for eight to nine years and have been reviewed to ensure that the current pollutant levels are taken into account and that the right plans are in place to deal with the current obstacles. This has led to a new Joint Air Quality Action Plan for both districts, and the council would like to hear what local organisations and residents think of it.

The good news is that in the last five years most places have seen a consistent reduction in one of the main pollutants which is measured, Nitrogen Dioxide.

The councils would like residents' views on the action plan and have devised a survey to collate opinions.

The [survey is available here](https://survey.southandvale.gov.uk/s/AirQualityActionPlan) (or <https://survey.southandvale.gov.uk/s/AirQualityActionPlan>). It opens on national Clean Air Day (15 June) and runs until 27 July.