

SODC Monthly Report - Caroline Newton

(Or What The Council Is Doing)

September 2018.

Planning

Local Plan update

We're continuing our dialogue with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the progress of the Local Plan.

We've updated our partner authorities who are part of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and continue to work to the approach agreed by Council to ensure we are in the best possible position to produce a 'sound' and robust Local Plan.

The timetable states that councillors will make a decision in December on which of the 15 available major housing sites will be included in the plan, following completion of necessary assessment and filtering work.

The final plan, outlining how the district should develop until 2033, will then be published and residents will have a chance to comment on its technical 'soundness' early next year. It will then be submitted for public examination by an independent planning inspector later in 2019. For more please see our Local Plan page.

Neighbourhood Plans

At a special Full Council on the 23rd August, the final step in the process was completed with members voting to 'make' the Benson and Watlington Neighbourhood Plans.

CIL update

SODC has just published the 2017/18 financial statement for our Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the contribution developers make to fund local infrastructure. The total CIL receipts amounted to £2,190,161 of which £205,890 has been transferred to town and parish councils.

SODC is exploring whether to take over on-street parking enforcement in the district.

The council is contacting Oxfordshire County Council (the highways authority), which is responsible for formally applying for powers and then delegating civil parking enforcement responsibilities, to find out whether this could be possible.

Councillors have also asked for work to be carried out to look at the business case involved in the district council taking over enforcement, including costs and projected income.

Thames Valley Police is currently responsible for this across most of South Oxfordshire.

Go Active Gold

Residents of southern Oxfordshire aged 60 and over can sign up for a month's swimming for just £5 thanks to a special September offer from South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils and 'Better' leisure centres.

Would-be swimmers simply register for the offer by visiting the GO Active Gold website or by calling 01235 422219 by 27 September.

The participating centres are:

Abbey Sports Centre, Berinsfield
Didcot Wave
Faringdon Leisure Centre
Henley Leisure Centre
Thame Leisure Centre
Wantage Leisure Centre
White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre, Abingdon

GO Active Gold Activities coming up for people aged 60 and over include: Walking Netball tasters on Monday 17 September, 11am to midday at Crowmarsh Pavilion, and on Wednesday 19 September, 11am to midday at Chalgrove Multi Use Games Area. There's also a Walking Football taster on Thursday 20 August, 10.30am to 11.30am at Wallingford Sports Park.

Health and Well-being event for gardeners

Carrying out a full day's gardening can cause aches and pains.

To help out, GO Active Gold are holding an event to give people advice on how to prepare their body before they start gardening and what they can do afterwards too. There will also be the chance to look at some garden centre displays and try out 'Yoga for gardeners'.

The event takes place on Thursday 13 September, 9am to 12.30pm at Wallingford Sports Park, entry is £4 - to book please email conor.grogan@southandvale.gov.uk or call 07717 326660.

It's a yellow letter day in South and Vale as residents are urged to confirm their details

Residents in South Oxfordshire are urged to respond to a yellow letter which have arrived through their letter boxes over the summer.

The 'Household Enquiry Form' requires people to confirm who currently lives in their property. South Oxfordshire District Council needs this information to make sure everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so in future elections, including the district, town and parish elections happening in May 2019.

If a household doesn't respond they will receive reminder letters. Council staff will also visit properties which haven't responded by the Autumn to confirm the details.

Fire-damaged council headquarters up-date

Demolition work has started at the former headquarters of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council. It is expected to take around three months to completely clear the site.

The contractors are salvaging as many leftover materials from the building as possible so that they can be recycled or re-used.

Opening the doors to volunteering

Help is now available in South Oxfordshire for voluntary groups who have difficulties recruiting volunteers for financial reasons.

Community groups have told South Oxfordshire District Council that one of the biggest obstacles they face when trying to attract volunteers is finding money to meet training and transport and insurance costs.

In answer to this, the council has launched a pilot volunteering grant scheme with a total of £25,000 to give away to help voluntary and community groups find the volunteers they need.

Small voluntary groups in South Oxfordshire can apply for a new volunteering grant of between £250 to £750 to help cover costs, for example the costs of training as a sports coach or the costs of additional insurance needed to be a volunteer driver.

New service to help victims and witnesses to report hate crime

Victims and witnesses of hate crime who are not comfortable talking to the police now have an alternative place to go to report incidents in confidence.

Hate crimes can be reported to specially trained staff at familiar locations across South and Vale, including at Citizens' Advice Bureaus. Incidents can be reported in person or by telephone.

Staff will be available to talk about the incident and can offer to report it to the police on their behalf. They will also refer people to Victims First, a service dedicated to ensuring that victims or witnesses receive the support they need to cope with and recover from their experience.

To find out where your nearest reporting centre is visit southoxon.gov.uk/hatecrime.

National Parks and AONB government review

SODC has written to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs expressing our wish to respond to, and feed into, a government review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which will assess whether AONBs can become National Park Authorities.

Residents' Surveys

The results of the 2018 Residents' Surveys, carried out among 1,100 residents in both districts at the start of the year, were discussed at Scrutiny meetings at the end of July.

These have now been published and press releases have been issued and shared with town and parish councils - you can view these on the South website at: <https://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=55&o=9492&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.southoxon.gov.uk%2Fnews%2F2018%2F2018-08%2Fresidents-satisfied-council%25E2%2580%2599s-work-%25E2%2580%2593-room-improvement&a=0>

Lottery offers more than jackpot with family theatre ticket giveaway

South Oxfordshire's community lottery has joined up with Cornerstone arts centre in Didcot to give away a free family ticket to the Christmas production of 'The Pied Piper'.

The ticket is being offered as an extra prize by SO Charitable Lottery, which supports local charities and voluntary organisations, in addition to a jackpot of £25,000 and smaller cash prizes.

Residents simply need to play SO Charitable Lottery before 29 September to be in with the chance of winning the ticket for the show, which is running at the arts centre from 14-29 December.

It costs just £1 per draw to play the lottery, with 60p from every ticket sold going to good causes in South Oxfordshire and helping to support local communities. Players can choose which local good cause to support when they purchase tickets and can see how much is being raised from week-to-week.