

SODC ward councillor's report

Shiplake – 11th July 2022

Covid-19

The reliability of data on Covid cases is now much reduced following the end of test and trace. However national figures suggest sharp falls in cases and this appears to be supported by hospital data and makes sense for this time of year.

At 1st July, **reported** cases in SODC were at to a weekly rate per 100k of population of 312 (it peaked at 1,504 on 6th Jan) – a 4x increase since last month following the Jubilee - although it may be that reporting is incomplete. Indeed Reading BC have ceased reporting their figures because of fears about accuracy.

It seems reasonable to assume that levels will remain low as we go into summer.

Ukraine

Refugee arrivals continue to arrive as the war in Ukraine goes on.

Energy rebate

The energy rebate of £150 for Bands A-D properties has been actioned. It is much simpler to do so for direct debit payers where the Council Tax account and Bank account have the same name. For residents who pay by other means much more administration is required to enable payment to the correct person. Where payment details have not been forthcoming credit has had to be made as last resort to the relevant Council Tax accounts.

Staff are now moving on to progress the (overall much smaller) discretionary scheme covering bands E-H.

There's more information on the SODC website at southoxon.gov.uk/counciltaxrebate

Councillor community grant scheme

The 2022/23 scheme is now for its first round (of 2). The first round closes on 1st September but there will be a second round for the same fund which may close at the end of January 2023. The overall value is as in previous years.

Household support fund

SODC has opened a voucher scheme to support households who can't afford to pay for life's essentials.

The scheme is part of the Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) which was extended by the chancellor in the recent budget. A portion of funds allocated to Oxfordshire County Council have been allocated to SODC as part of a wider support package across the county, which includes help for children eligible for free school meals through the holidays.

Funding is limited and the scheme is open initially to people who have not had support from it before. However, the councils will open it to second applications if funds remain.

Electric Vehicle (EV) charging

A number of parishes have asked for information relating to installing EV charging – with suitable supply and payment. Generally car parks are suggested rather than on-street bollards. However where homes lack off-road parking then the prospect of an EV vehicle is more challenging.

I am not sure if there is interest in this from the parish council? If so please let me know.

Crossways appeal for 11 new homes

This appeal by the applicants against refusal by SODC was held at Henley Rugby club from 5th July. The result will follow in due course.

Leigh Rawlins

District Councillor