

SODC ward councillors' report

Shiplake – 12th May 2025

Election - OCC

The Oxfordshire County Council election was held on the 1st May and resulted in an overall control for the Liberal Democrats - who took 36 of the 69 seats. More detail is available in the County Report.

By-elections - SODC

Following the resignation of two Liberal Democrat district councillors in Wheatley and Watlington, two new Liberal Democrat district councillors – Peter Ramsdale and Ben Higgins respectively - were elected via by-elections also held on 1st May.

South Oxfordshire tops recycling league table - again

Recycling rates in South Oxfordshire have risen by 1.3% to 62.9% during 2023/24, according to new figures released by Defra.

This is the second year in a row SODC has topped the table, with Three Rivers DC in second place with 61.9%. The average across England was 42.3%, a 0.6% increase compared to 2022/23. Tower Hamlets had the lowest rate with just 15.8%.

Read more :-

<https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/south-oxfordshire-tops-2023-24-recycling-table/>

Next steps for Joint Local Plan

SODC has announced that the dates for the start of the public hearings for the South and Vale Joint Local Plan. This stage of the examination involves our appointed Planning Inspectors (Inspectors R A Bust and C Mulloy) holding hearing sessions to hear from the Councils and other participants about whether the local plan is sound and has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements.

The first week of hearing dates and the topics covered are as follows:

- **Tuesday 3 June 2025:** Matter 1 – Procedural and Legal Requirements followed by Matter 2 – The Duty to Co-operate
- **Wednesday 4 June 2025:** Matter 3 – The Housing Target/Requirement
- **Thursday 5 June 2025:** Matter 4 – The Employment Land Requirement

Sessions will commence at **9:30am** unless detailed otherwise on the [Examination website](#).

All the hearing sessions will be held at Bee House on Milton Park, OX14 4SB. Those who made representations seeking changes to the local plan at the Publication stage in autumn 2024 can register with the Programme Officer by 6 May if they would like to speak at the hearings as a participant. The hearing sessions will be held in public and anyone can attend in person to watch (subject to capacity at the venue). The sessions will also be available to watch online via a livestream from Bee House.

The [Joint Local Plan examination webpage](#) contains all the details produced by the Inspectors: the Matters, Issues and Questions (ID02), Guidance Notes (ID03) and a draft Hearings Programme (ID04).

Everyone Active grants 2025/26

SODC has launched another round of 'Everyone Active 2025/26' in South Oxfordshire to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and the role they play in providing high quality active opportunities for our communities.

There is a budget of £50,000 - with a maximum of £1,000 for each application - for projects that benefit more than one individual becoming active or sustaining activity, to groups of residents, in South Oxfordshire.

They can fund up to 100 per cent of the total cost of a project and it must be completed within 12 months of the award decision.

The grant scheme is open to a wide range of not-for-profit groups and sports clubs, town and parish councils/parish meetings, not for profit pre-schools, PTAs and local authority run schools or academies for non-statutory elements of the education programme.

The grant scheme will close when all the budget has been allocated or on 26 May 2025, whichever is sooner.

Please help us to spread the word! For more information visit the [Everyone Active grant scheme webpage](#) or email grants@southoxon.gov.uk

50,000 residents join new garden waste scheme

Around 50,000 residents are now signed up to the new garden waste permit scheme in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts.

The new permit system launched on 1 April, with customers receiving a sticker permit for their bins to identify them as fully paid-up garden waste customers. This kind of scheme is offered successfully by many other local authorities, including in neighbouring West Oxfordshire.

As this is a change to how the garden waste service is managed, to continue receiving garden waste collections, everyone will need to make an annual payment for their permit. This includes customers who previously paid by direct debit as this replaces the existing direct debit scheme. Everyone's payment year will now run from 1 April to 31 March each year.

When customers sign-up they will be sent a garden waste permit sticker to put on the top of the lid of their brown bin. Each bin needs its own permit and all customers will receive a new sticker annually each time they renew. The permits will help the waste collection crews identify which bins should be emptied.

Benefits to customers include a new online system so they can manage their account and change their details much more easily. This will also mean the councils can contact people quickly if there are any major disruptions to the service, such as during adverse weather.

The online account will also make things easier when people need to renew in 2026. When customers pay for a permit, there will be a link to sign up for a "My Account" and the account sign-up is also available on the councils' websites.

People can sign-up for a garden waste permit online at: www.southoxon.gov.uk/gardenwaste

An FAQ page covering all the changes is available on the garden waste section of the council's website :- [South FAQ](#)

SODC is also advising everyone not to get caught out with a full bin and no sticker!

- If residents have already bought a permit but haven't received it yet, it is more than likely in the post. There will initially be a grace period - so their bin will still be collected.
- However, this year, after the initial transition to the new scheme, SODC won't collect from bins that don't display a sticker.
- The new scheme runs annually from 1 April to 31 March. If residents previously used the service, they will likely have paid pro-rata up to 1 April by direct debit. They will still need to buy a permit now.
- If people know of anyone unable to sign up online, please let them know SODC can support them over the phone.

[Mike Giles & Leigh Rawlins](#)

District Councillors