

SODC Councillor's Monthly Report February 2021

Councils launch a dog fouling awareness campaign with maps showing locations of the highest number of complaints. Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District councils have put together dog fouling maps of local towns and villages showing the areas with the highest number of complaints about owners not picking up after their animals. Using the maps the councils want to highlight the issue of dog fouling and remind owners that it is an offence for a person in control of a dog – an owner or dog walker – not to clean up immediately if the dog has fouled on public land. The councils' envirocrime officers can issue a **£50** fixed penalty notice to someone who fails to clean up after their dog. If the case goes to court this could cost the owner or person in charge of the animal up to £1,000. In the past year the councils' joint envirocrime team has received **118** complaints about dog fouling. These included a video message from a mother and young daughter from Wantage after the child got covered in dog mess not cleared up by the animal's owner. They also got CCTV of a night-time dog walker allowing his pet to foul a neighbour's path. The councils are also trying to tackle the issue of dog walkers putting their pets' mess in a plastic bag and leaving it as litter on the ground or near a litter bin or sometimes hanging in a tree! The councils' envirocrime team patrol popular dog walking areas and talk to dog owners and other residents about the problem. Dog owners have been issued with fines for dog fouling and residents are being encouraged to report incidents of dog fouling via the councils' website pages. I (David Turner) am pleased to say that none of the Parishes in Chalgrove Ward have shown up as hot spots.

Residents in Southern Oxfordshire should not go cold and hungry this winter. The Winter Support Grant Scheme is now available for residents in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse who need help to buy food and heating their homes this winter. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have been working with Oxfordshire County Council and other district councils to distribute the nearly £1.4million given to the county by the Department for Work and Pensions in December 2020 as part of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme.

South and Vale businesses urged to sign up to mailing list for the latest news on financial support. Businesses in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are being urged to sign up to the South and Vale Business Support mailing list to ensure they keep up to date with the latest news about the financial support available to them during the ongoing restrictions. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are currently administering a number of government-funded support grants which cover the periods during national lockdowns and localised tier restrictions, as well as further support for pubs. Each time the government announces a new grant it can take several weeks before they provide councils with the specific details they need in order to open the scheme for applications. To ensure they find out as soon as new grant funding becomes available locally, businesses are urged to visit svbs.co.uk to sign up to the Business Support mailing list.

The following information was sent to Town & Parish Councils on 29th January:

Vaccinations in Oxfordshire latest

You may have seen on the news that a roll out of COVID-19 vaccinations in Oxfordshire began at the Kassam Stadium in Oxford on Monday. The new vaccination centre, which is run by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust is vaccinating priority frontline patient-facing staff first. It will then begin providing vaccinations for the public from Monday. Vaccinations appointments will take place between 8am and 8pm and are **by invitation only**. People aged 75 and over will be invited via the national booking system to make an appointment and should not just turn up to the stadium without a booking.

The latest Covid rates across Oxfordshire. The latest weekly Covid-19 rate for South Oxfordshire is 261.2 cases per 100,000 population, and 247.8 in the Vale. These numbers are still significantly higher than they were in December and so we are supporting the Director of Public Health at the County Council, Ansaf Azhar to press the message that we are a long way from being out of the woods, and people should continue to follow the rules closely and to keep themselves and their families safe. We are also sharing messages to encourage people to get the vaccine, along with warnings against vaccination complacency. The science currently shows that it's likely people who have had one or both parts of the vaccination can still spread the virus to other members of the public, even though they're more protected against contracting the disease themselves. This means that anybody who has had the vaccination must still adhere to the lockdown rules and all social distancing measures, including wearing masks where required. We're also working with our colleagues across Oxfordshire to see what we can do to help increase take up of the vaccine among our BAME communities, as there are national concerns that those communities might include groups less likely to get vaccinated. Please do help to share these messages among your communities. Feel free to share our social media posts too.

Additional Restrictions Grants for businesses. The latest Additional Restrictions Grant scheme for businesses is now open for applications. This is the discretionary scheme to provide financial support to businesses who have been excluded or unsuccessful from other government grant schemes. We're processing applications on a first come, first served basis, so please encourage businesses to apply immediately. To find out if they're eligible and to apply for the grant, local business owners should visit the Additional Restrictions Grant page of our business support website.

Help businesses keep their finger on the pulse. The first businesses to find out about the first-come first-served Additional Restrictions Grant were those that are signed up to the South and Vale Business Support newsletter. Nearly 700 more businesses have recently signed up to the newsletter following a promotional campaign. If businesses in your communities aren't signed up, they're hearing news about support schemes later than the 2,153 businesses that are already on the mailing list. Encourage them to sign up at our business support website: www.svbs.co.uk

Anyone for (Table) Tennis? Would your community benefit from new table tennis equipment? We're making preparations to keep people active after lockdown, and so we're working with Table Tennis England on a project to help town and parish councils like yourselves fund the sport in your areas. If you already have table tennis clubs or sessions in your communities or you can demonstrate a need for it, then Table Tennis England will

match any funding you put up to purchase tables and equipment. If you'd like to know more or to submit an application, please get in touch with our Leisure Development Officer by emailing Cath.Dale@southandvale.gov.uk or calling 07801 203551.

Councillor Community Grants – deadline extended. We've extended the deadline for you to apply for community funding from your local district councillor. They each have a total of £5,000 of grant funding to award to projects or services that offer community benefits in their ward area. Following feedback from councillors and community groups, we've extended the deadline by two weeks to **midday 19 February**. You can find out more on our website <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/councillor-community-grants/>

Comms Team South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
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David Turner
SODC Councillor (Chalgrove Ward)
1st February 2021