

District Councillor Update: Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Ward member for Goring and South Stoke

July 2025



Dear Goring and South Stoke parish councillors and residents,

Please see below my latest set of updates. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Grant Opportunities

Councillor Community Grant Scheme – Launching in July

Each district councillor will have £7,500 to award to local projects or activities that benefit their ward area. This is more than in previous years and a fantastic opportunity for community and voluntary groups. We're particularly keen to support projects that:

- Help protect nature and the environment
- Support community and economic wellbeing

Applications will open soon and close on **5 December**. More information will be available shortly on our [grants web page](#).

Performing Arts Grant – Opening 28 July

A new round of the £60,000 Performing Arts Grant scheme will open for applications on **28 July**. The scheme is open to town and parish councils and voluntary and community performing arts organisations in South Oxfordshire. Applicants can request between £500 and £5,000 for projects that improve community wellbeing. Full details will be available on our [grants web page](#).

SO Charitable Lottery – Funding Boost for Local Groups

Eight local charities have received a share of £7,000 in additional funding from the SO Charitable Lottery. Run by South Oxfordshire District Council, the lottery has raised over £167,000 since 2018 to support voluntary and community groups across the

district. Tickets cost £1 a week, with 60p from every ticket going to local good causes. Residents can choose a specific group to support or contribute to the SO Charitable Community Fund.

Find out more at www.southoxon.gov.uk/lottery

Additional Revenue Funding for Local Charities allocated

The council operates a community revenue grants scheme with an annual budget of £333,996 to support local organisations, with funding decisions made by the cabinet member for communities based on recommendations from the community grants panel. For 2025/26–2026/27, **applications deemed worthy of support exceeded the available budget by £521,000.**

Following discussions with statutory officers, it was agreed that, subject to sufficient underspend from 2024/25, this shortfall could be met. After confirming that adequate funds are available, the council at our July Full Council Meeting SODC approved an additional £521,000 funding for over two years for a further fifteen local community and voluntary organisations.

Organisation	Activity / Project	Original Award (£)	Additional Award (£)
The Berin Centre	Growing the Berin Centre	16,083	23,917
SOFEA	Nourish and Flourish Kitchen: Community Impact	32,166	47,834
Wallingford Family Centre	Family Centre Staff	12,866	19,134
The Abingdon Bridge (TAB)	Thriving Minds “ South Oxfordshire	32,166	47,834
Oxfordshire Youth	Young Leaders and Transitions	52,684	78,345
Be Free Young Carers	Future Pathways for Young Carers	20,991	31,215
River Thame Conservation Trust	Community Currents	10,454	15,546
Wild Oxfordshire	Community Ecology and Partnerships programmes	22,432	33,358
Didcot TRAIN Inspiring Young People	Core Cost	26,202	38,964
My Life My Choice	MLMC in South Oxfordshire	16,277	24,204
MyVision Oxfordshire	Community Engagement Project	26,219	38,989
Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire	Supporting Families to Create Better Futures	20,104	29,896
Thomley Hall Centre Ltd	Enhancing lives of people with disabilities and their families	43,252	64,320
Oxfordshire Play Association	OPA Play and Activity Days 2025 and 2026	8,042	11,958
SeeSaw	Bereavement Support for Families in South Oxfordshire	10,386	15,444
TOTAL		350,324	520,958

Housing and Lettings

White Horse Lettings – Free Support for Local Landlords

We are raising awareness of our free lettings service for private landlords - White Horse Lettings - to help more people access affordable homes in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

The service:

- Supports landlords with finding tenants, contracts, and property inspections
- Offers ongoing guidance throughout the tenancy
- Allows landlords to retain 100 per cent of the rental income

White Horse Lettings have helped create over 1,000 new tenancies since the service began in 2007, with around 50 new tenancies a year.

For more information, visit: [White Horse Lettings - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)
Or email: whitehorselettings@southandvale.gov.uk

£10 Million Investment in Affordable Housing and Community Support

At its July meeting, South Oxfordshire District Council approved Up to £10 million investment in around 30 new homes for social rent.

The funding for housing was reallocated from the Didcot Gateway development project, which is being paused in light of potential Local Government Reorganisation.

More information available on the [District Council website](#).

Climate and Sustainability

New EV Charging Scheme for Residents Without Driveways

Oxfordshire County Council is offering a new scheme to help households without off-street parking charge electric vehicles (EVs) at home. 500 households across the county will be offered cable channels at a reduced cost, allowing charging cables to cross pavements safely. Residents can apply via [Oxfordshire County Council's website](#).

Hot Weather Support – Help Available

With recent heatwaves and more hot weather forecast, we've collected useful information for residents, including:

- Health advice and local air quality updates from www.oxonair.uk
- Swimming pool opening times and water safety guidance
- Food safety tips
- Changes to waste collections during high temperatures

Details are available on our news pages:

[Summer in South Oxfordshire - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

[Summer in the Vale - Vale of White Horse District Council](#)

Waste and Recycling

Binzone App – Important Update

Our Binzone app now requires up-to-date Android or iOS software to meet new internet security standards. Devices that can't be updated may no longer support the app. Residents with unsupported devices can still access bin collection information online at: [Binzone - our smartphone app - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Household Waste and Recycling Centre Consultation

Oxfordshire County Council is proposing changes to how Household Waste and Recycling Centres operate.

Suggestions include:

- Seasonal opening hours
- Allowing non-Oxfordshire residents to use facilities

You can find out more and take part on the [County Council's consultation page](#).

Partner Updates

WOW – Walk to School Challenge

WOW is a pupil-led initiative from Living Streets encouraging active travel to school. 25 schools in Oxfordshire are already taking part.

Schools can sign up at <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/FreeWOW> or email walktoschool@livingstreets.org.uk for more information.

Planning News

Changes to Government Neighbourhood Planning Support

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has announced that national neighbourhood planning grant funding and technical support (via Locality) will end in 2025. Neighbourhood plans will still be recognised as part of the planning system, and communities may continue to create them if they wish.

We understand this may raise concerns. A [briefing note](#) is available for neighbourhood planning groups, and further information is on our [website](#).

Joint Local Plan Examination – Hearings Update

The first stage of the Joint Local Plan 2041 examination hearings took place at Milton Park in June. Topics included:

- Legal and procedural requirements
- Duty to cooperate
- Housing and employment land requirements

You can watch all sessions via our [YouTube channel](#) and read a [summary of discussions and next steps on our website](#).