

## **South Oxfordshire District Councillor Report – Sam Casey-Rerhaye, May 2022**

### **Homes for Ukraine**

The system is working and in full swing across Oxfordshire to support the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. We are working with all the Councils on a co-ordinated approach. While we still have limited government guidance in some areas, in particular around grant payments, all partners across the county are working together to find solutions and put guests at the heart of any action required.

The accommodation and safeguarding checks are progressing well, with the backlog of home checks almost completed, and with no significant concerns raised this week.

The £200 payments to our guests to help them with immediate costs while they settle in are being made by whoever makes the first physical contact with them as part of these checks.

We have been doing with Asylum Welcome to develop a proposal to expand the community liaison officer resource available in each district and the city. The purpose would be for this resource to coordinate, advise and refer guests to the support that is available to them, including across housing, education and health. This has now been agreed and recruitment to these posts has begun. When recruited the roles will be based within our community support hub.

For any queries:

- **Website:** [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine)
- **Oxfordshire Ukraine helpline:** +44 1865 966444 / 01865 966 444 (opening hours: 8.45am - 5pm, Monday to Friday. Closed weekends and bank holidays).

**Email:** [ukraineresponse@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ukraineresponse@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **Jubilee Grants**

We have decided that instead of giving grants for Jubilee celebrations, we will give them for tree planting in the District. This is to support the Queen's Green Canopy, [The Queen's Green Canopy](http://TheQueen'sGreenCanopy) ([queensgreencanopy.org](http://queensgreencanopy.org)) and our own Corporate Plan objectives of enhancing nature and tackling the climate emergency.

I will let you know how to apply as soon as this is arranged but it will be in time for the tree planting season this winter.

## **No Mow May**

In addition to existing wildflower meadows, next month both councils will trial leaving additional areas of land uncut for No Mow May, a national campaign aiming to let grass grow long to help boost biodiversity.

At the end of the month, people are asked to take part in Every Flower Counts: <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/> a survey which will help to reveal how many bees the UK's lawns can feed and the councils will also review how the trial has impacted each area.

## **Cornerstone's summer of fun**

Cornerstone's summer programme is now in full swing with a line-up of shows and activities from science extravaganzas to live blues music. With classes, workshops, and gallery exhibitions including 'Oxfordshire Artweeks: Inspired By Nature' from 3 May – there's something for everyone. Please look at their website: <https://www.cornerstone-arts.org/>

## **Council Tax Rebate**

The rebate announced by the government will be paid by the Council directly into the bank account from which the direct debit for council tax comes from. This rebate is for those in Bands A-D.

For those who do not pay by direct debit, the Council will be in touch to organise the rebate with the Council Tax payer. Please be careful of scams around this rebate.

## **Oxfordshire Climate Change survey**

The County Council is running a survey to discover people's understanding of and opinions about climate change across Oxfordshire. This is part of a countywide project we're involved in to increase understanding of the impact of climate change and inspire behaviour change.

The survey results will be used to help develop a new online tool to help people across Oxfordshire find climate actions they can take which are relevant to them.

Residents can take part in the survey using this link:

[https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/climate-change/survey\\_tools/survey14870](https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/climate-change/survey_tools/survey14870)

**Sam.Casey-Rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk**  
**01235 635566**