

District Councillor Report – Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye, March/ June 2024

Greenspace Survey

Land use experts at **LUC** are supporting the council to gather information about greenspaces in the district.

As part of this LUC are asking residents and organisations to complete a short online survey to understand how they use greenspaces in their local area. This ranges from parks and recreation grounds to natural spaces like woodlands and meadows.

The survey runs from **Thursday 30th May to Sunday 30th June 2024**.

You can take part in and help share LUC's short survey here:

[South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse GI and Open Space Public Survey](#)

If you have any questions about the survey, please email the LUC team at **SouthandValeGI@landuse.co.uk**.

General Election information

The council have now published new General Election 2024 pages, including information for candidates and agents, on the website – everyone can access these by going to **southoxon.gov.uk/GeneralElection2024**

Here's a reminder of the key dates residents will need to know in the run up to polling day on 4th July:

- You must be registered to vote by midnight on Tuesday 18th June 2024.
- Postal vote and postal proxy vote applications – by 5pm on Wednesday 19th June 2024. Everybody who applies for a postal vote should receive their ballot pack by 28th June and we are not able to issue replacements before then.
- Changes to existing postal and proxy vote arrangements – by 5pm on Wednesday 19th June 2024.
- Voter Authority Certificate (voter ID) applications – by 5pm on Wednesday 26th June 2024.
- New proxy vote applications – by 5pm on Wednesday 26th June 2024.

New SODC Cabinet

Councillor David Rouane, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, confirmed details of the council's new Cabinet on Thursday 16th May.

There are three changes to the previous cabinet. I am now in Cabinet, the member for Corporate Services, so most of the internal workings of the council. Details can be found on the [council website](#).

Latest round of Rural England Prosperity Fund now open

The next round for Rural England Prosperity Fund applications has now opened and organisations can apply for the scheme on the council's website:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/business-and-economy/advice-for-businesses/rural-england-prosperity-fund/>

The fund offers up to £75,000 of capital funding for small businesses and community infrastructure projects that help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. Applications close at midday on Monday 1st July.

Funding categories are:

- Capital grants for small-scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- Capital grants for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation
- Capital grants for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.

£1.2 million boost for local infrastructure in South Oxfordshire

Over the last six months, the council has transferred over £1.2 million to invest in vital infrastructure delivered by the council, town and parish councils and other community organisations.

Investments have ranged from improved play areas and adding accessible features in a community swimming pool to improving public transport and extending a local rugby clubhouse.

As the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire collects financial contributions in the form of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (s106) – this is the funding from housing developers to support the growth of the district when new developments are created.

s106 funding transferred between 1st October 2023 to 31st March 2024 has totalled £244,690. During this six-month period the council has also transferred £996,479 of CIL to town and parish councils that have experienced CIL liable development in their area.

Follow this link for a breakdown of [s106 funds have been approved and paid out and CIL monies transferred](#) for South Oxfordshire (the document should download automatically).

Rural Crime Partnership

The Rural Crime Partnership is bringing together Thames Valley Police, local district councils and the Community Safety Partnerships to tackle crimes such as fly-tipping, burglaries and theft in rural areas.

There will also be more support for local communities on crime prevention as well as an increase in the gathering and sharing of information about rural crime.

Initiatives include:

- New covert cameras to be used by the Police's Rural Crime Taskforce alongside off-road bikes to target criminals in hard-to-reach areas.
- Working with farmers to improve security. Farms will be eligible to sign up for security checks and will be given DNA marking kits for agricultural machinery. These kits include property marking labels to deter theft, and where theft happens enable machinery to be tracked back to the farm.
- A new Rural Crime Advisor will work to promote rural crime prevention and engage with rural communities, industries, farms and organisations such as Young Farmers and the National Farmers' Union, to help them become harder to target for criminals.
- New surveillance equipment will help district councils catch fly-tippers and tackle hot spot areas.

Planning for an emergency

There is a new government website for [emergency preparedness](https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk). We have added the site to the emergency pages on the councils' websites.

The new prepare campaign is not based on any imminent intelligence, just designed to help people prepare for emergencies, be more informed about hazards, and get involved in activities to support themselves and their community before, during and after an emergency.

<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk>

Contact me here for any District Council issue:

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Or call me & leave a message:

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