

District Councillor Report – Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye, March 2026

Budget 2026-27

The budget was passed with some Green party amendments agreed, and a commitment by the LibDem administration to further investigate some other suggestions made by the Green group – the amendments were to create a £50,000 parallel nature fund to the Climate Action Fund, and a grant scheme to cover start-up costs and legal fees for small-scale housing charities and Community Land Trusts for development of plans and capital bids.

Council Tax will rise by the maximum (£5 for a Band D home) allowed before a referendum needs to take place, case in the last six years (but the District part of your Council Tax is only around 6%, so a very small proportion). This is to bring South Oxfordshire's Council Tax in line with the national average for rural areas.

Planning and the government's new National Planning Policy Framework

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have joined a host of other local authorities, businesses and non-government organisations in signing an open letter from the Town and County Planning Association. The letter has been sent to Rt Hon Steve Reed MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The letter supports the climate-focused policies in the Council's proposed Joint Local Plan; it urges government to reconsider proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that would prevent local authorities from requiring higher energy efficiency standards for new buildings. These have been included in the Joint Local Plan.

The letter warns that by restricting local authorities in this way, the draft NPPF would halt progress on the delivery of buildings in England that release less carbon and it would also the ability of all councils to address climate change locally and meet our climate obligations.

Don't forget –

The **CIL community grant** is open for applications.

Applications for the second round of the Community Infrastructure Levy Grant Fund opened on Friday 30th January for town and parish councils and not-for-profit community groups in South Oxfordshire.

A total of £750,000 is available to support projects that improve or create new community amenities, such as community centres, sports and cultural facilities, play areas, and open spaces.

Grants of £75,000 to £250,000 will be awarded for projects that are needed as a result of more development in the area.

More information, including details on how to apply, is available on our website: [Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) Grant Fund – open – South Oxfordshire District Council](#). The closing date for applications is 30th March 2026.

And also, don't forget – local government reorganisation consultation has launched

[Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Oxfordshire – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – Citizen Space](#)

The government's Local Government Reorganisation consultation has launched. It seeks views on **all** the three proposals put forward to reorganise local government in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

The district council is working on an extensive communications and engagement campaign to run alongside the government consultation to publicise this and to encourage as many people as possible to take part.

This includes a refreshed TwoCouncil.org website, which will be launching soon – this explains the option the District Councils in South and Vale are favouring (Ridgeway and Oxford & Shires councils) plus links to the other two options: One Oxfordshire and the City Council's Greater Oxford three councils proposal.

Garden Waste Permits for 2026

Existing garden waste permits will expire on **31st March**. To continue receiving fortnightly collections from **1st April** and to avoid any interruption to their service, residents will need to buy a new permit. **New permit sales will open mid-February.**

The vast majority of the 69,000+ customers will be able to buy their permit via their 'MyAccount' or by visiting southandvale.gov.uk/gardenwastepermit

Offline Support: Residents who need assistance, should call the Customer Services team on **01235 422422**

Cornerstone music events

Then on **Saturday 14th March**, award-winning singer and actress **Patti Boulaye OBE** presents Here I Am, a joyful one-woman show filled with unforgettable songs and hilarious stories from her remarkable career on stage, screen, and beyond.

And to finish with a bang, **King Pleasure and The Biscuit Boys** hit the stage on **Saturday 28th March**, delivering high-energy swing, blues, and rhythm & blues from one of the world's most celebrated vintage bands.

You can book [Cornerstone website](#) or call the box office: 01235 515144.

For any support or queries please email me: sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk.