

District Councillor Report Haseley Brook ward

04 November 2023

CLlr Georgina Heritage



Meetings Attended

I have attended the following SODC meetings since my last report:

- 12th October – Full Council meeting
- 16th October – Licensing Panel
- 1st November – Planning Committee

On Tuesday 7th November I have a meeting with a Community Enablement officer to discuss Community Grant applications in the Haseley Brook ward.

Real Living Wage

I'm delighted to report that a motion was passed at our Council meeting on 12th October to ensure all companies seeking to win council contracts are committed to paying, as a minimum, the Real Living Wage.

The cross-party motion was passed unanimously, and both SODC and Vale of White Horse councils are working towards accreditation as a Living Wage employer with the Living Wage Foundation.

SODC currently ensures all directly employed council staff receive at least the Real Living Wage and has done for several years. However it became evident that not all council contractors have been following this example. Whilst it is not in our power to change existing contracts, current suppliers and contractors are being urged to commit to the living wage, and all future companies seeking to win council contracts are now committed to paying the Real Living Wage as a minimum.

Affordable Housing Grant

A new improved grant process has been introduced which will encourage more affordable, energy efficient homes to be built in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

As part of both district councils' work to help meet the urgent need for genuinely affordable housing in the region, local developers, Community Land Trusts and self-builders can apply for a Section 106 affordable housing grant to build affordable homes that meet the councils' climate criteria.

Both councils approved an improvement to the existing affordable housing policy, to enable funds from Section 106 developer contributions to be used as a grant to build affordable homes that are energy efficient

and cheaper to live in and heat. The policy includes a revamped application process which includes clear evaluation guidelines and free expert consultation services.

The new application form now includes questions which determine how projects will minimise energy use and carbon emissions, as well as how they have identified locally appropriate species and set up long term management plans when adding tree planting and biodiversity improvements.

New SODC Grant Schemes

Rural Businesses and Organisations

A new grant scheme has launched for rural businesses and organisations based in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, as both councils have secured funding through the government's Rural England Prosperity Fund.

The fund is designed to support capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure that help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities.

Grant funding is available for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas, growing the local social economy and supporting innovation, investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.

Town and Parish Councils, public sector organisations, higher and further education institutions, private sector companies, registered charities, constituted community-based organisations, social enterprises (like CICs) are all eligible for the scheme.

A grant panel will then meet in February 2024 to discuss each project and assess which projects should receive funding.

Interested parties are encouraged to submit their application before midday on Friday 24 November 2023 by visiting [South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Food and Warmth

Launched by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils, this grant is aimed at local voluntary and community groups, and town and parish councils, who can use it to support those most in need in the districts. Organisations can apply for grants between £2,000 to £5,000, or up to £10,000 for collaborative projects between groups of two or more organisations. The grant can fund projects providing food and warmth to people who may otherwise struggle to access these crucial essentials over the winter.

The grant can cover capital and revenue costs for projects that support people with food and warmth, such as buying food and essential supplies such as household cleaning products, toiletries, hot water bottles and blankets and cooking equipment such as saucepans and slow cookers. Projects might also include cooking clubs, gardening clubs and educational activities that promote healthy food choices and saving energy.

The grant scheme commenced on 23 October 2023 and closes at midday 27 November 2023. Decisions are expected to be made within four weeks.

For more information on the grant and details on how to apply please follow this link: [South](#)