

District Councillor Report

Haseley Brook ward

September 2023

Clr Georgina Heritage



Foreword

I've become aware that some district councillors include their own council and committee meeting attendance in their monthly report, and I thought Haseley Brook parishes might also like to see this information. My attendance record from May to date stands at 88%, and council meetings attended in September were as follows:

- 11th Sept - Licensing panel
- 13th Sept – Training (planning enforcement)
- 20th September - Planning Committee
- I also spoke as ward member at planning committee on 11th September and 20th September.

The next full council meeting will be on 12th October

Check it before you chuck it!

SODC is urging residents to 'Check it before you chuck it' as part of a drive to increase the amount and quality of recycling in the district.

It can be very difficult to remove non-recyclable items out of the large loads of recycling in our collection trucks or at the recycling facility, and if it's food waste or other messy items then it could result in whole truckloads of recycling having to be rejected. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have placed in the national top ten districts for recycling every year since 2009; the districts are currently second and fourth best recycling districts in the country, however we all need the occasional reminder!

An estimated 3,340 tonnes – the equivalent of just over 200 double decker buses – of items that residents put in their recycling bins during 2022/23 were not actually recyclable – that's 11 per cent of all the contents of our green bins for the whole year!

This autumn, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils will be placing stickers on all green household recycling bins to encourage people to 'Check it before you chuck it'. The sticker features a QR code for people to scan to help them check, along with a reminder that all items in the green bin should be clean, dry and loose.

Even if the label says that something can be recycled, we should still check to make sure, since recycling labels on packaging are often incorrect and we may not be able to recycle that item locally.

To find out which bin an item should go in, please ‘Check it before you chuck it’
at southandvale.gov.uk/checkit

These are the most common things that people wrongly put in their recycling:

Problem item	Where they should go
food waste	always in your food waste bin
soft plastic packaging (such as film lids from food cartons, salad bags and cling film)	your local supermarket may have a collection point, if not then please put them in your general waste bin
used sanitary products	general waste bin
used tissues	general waste bin
old unwearable clothes	in a tied carrier bag next to your green recycling bin
batteries	in a clear bag on top of your green recycling bin
small electricals (including disposable vapes)	in a tied carrier bag next to your black bin
empty crisp packets	your local supermarket may have a collection point, if not then please put them in your general waste bin

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

Regarding concerns around the historic use of RAAC, SODC released the following statement on 7th September:

“We are not aware of, and have no reason to believe, there are any issues with our council properties. However, in light of the increased national concern around Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), our property team is as a priority, currently reviewing our building records. We will follow up if necessary and this

will include taking concrete samples for further analysis if needed. Our approach is purely a matter of caution and diligence given the national situation”.

The update received earlier this week is that there is no known RAAC in SODC properties, however a working group is being set up to organise detailed surveys.

Available Grants

The **Community Grant scheme** is still open until 20th October and I can confirm that there are still funds in the Haseley Brook pot, so please get in touch if you have a project that could benefit from this grant.

The **Capital Grant scheme** has a total budget of £320,000, and voluntary and community organisations can apply for a minimum of £1000 and up to 50% of total project costs, to a maximum value of £75,000. The grant gives organisations a financial boost towards capital expenditure such as making improvements to buildings or play areas.

Applicants must show how their projects will support the council’s Corporate Plan priorities including ‘protect and restore our natural world’, ‘action on the climate emergency’ and ‘improved economic and community well-being’.

The Capital Grant Scheme is open for applications until midday on Friday 3 November 2023. There’s more information on this and the Community Grant Scheme on the council’s website: southoxon.gov.uk/grants

In partnership with Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment (TOE), SODC has created a **Nature Recovery fund** of £50,000 fund to increase biodiversity and encourage public access to green spaces in the district. Community groups, town and parish councils, charities and non-profit organisations are invited to apply to TOE for funds to help look after South Oxfordshire’s green spaces. Grants ranging between £1,000 and £15,000 can be used for tree and hedgerow planting or restoring community orchards, ponds, and nature-rich meadows.

Grants could also be used to improve access to nature for the public to enjoy and learn from. This could include replacing stiles with gates for better accessibility and also improving pathways.

The new fund uses money from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) paid by developer contributions. Early applications are encouraged, so any South Oxfordshire based group involved in protecting and restoring their local environment should contact TOE to find out more.