

District Councillor Report

Haseley Brook ward

6th May 2026

Cllr Georgina Heritage

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Local Matters – What I’ve been doing

On **local planning matters**, the appeal against the refusal of planning application P25/S1430/O -**land at Watlington Road Lewknor**_(up to 25 homes) will be heard in Abingdon on 3rd June. I will attend the hearing and have been working with the parish council and neighbourhood plan group on additional responses, which were submitted to the inspector in good time.

The town and parish council **online planning forum** was on 21st April, which I and other district councillors also attended as it provided an overview of the new planning systems. The obsolete Ocella system has now been replaced and I found the online session to be very helpful, as I hope did the parish councils in attendance. If any parish councils would like me to send them the slides from this meeting, please let me know.

The **new planning system** is up and running but not yet completely functional, as there are still some teething problems to address. I’ve had a couple of calls with an IT officer to explore the system as a user, and I spent some time with one of our parish chairs yesterday afternoon looking at some of the areas on the system which look different to the old one, and to check for glitches. For example, we learned that if a planning reference number isn’t entered (ie “advanced search”), the system doesn’t like the ward name. I had no problems searching under parish names, but once the ward name is entered searches come up as “zero records”. This is now being investigated by IT, but please bear it in mind if searching for records without reference numbers.

We also learned for example that if you wish to read submitted comments, you currently need to do this via the Documents tab (not the Comments tab). And also that if you’re using a tablet and need to scroll through documents, you have to click the Hand icon to allow scrolling. Much of this is about getting used to something new, but officers are keen to be made aware of any issues. If you encounter hiccups with the system you are welcome to let me know and I’ll take it up on your behalf.

This may be a good time to remind parish councils that they can book **online planning surgeries** with officers. The planning team holds monthly surgeries for members of town and parish councils to discuss can general planning queries and they can book their 15-minute online meeting using [this planning surgery link](#) .

I had the opportunity to visit **Haseley Trading Estate** in April, to look at the site works so far. The schedule is running behind due to nesting birds and bats, but an arrangement has been made with Culham and the Haseley site is likely to be operational in early 2027. The much-awaited traffic plan is in discussion but may not be ready for consideration quite as early as previously hoped. I am on alert for the emergence of the traffic plan and will keep Little Milton and Stadhampton parish councils informed.

Understanding that drainage was one of the main concerns of the most local residents to the site, I asked lots of questions and was advised that the drainage and attenuation methods are expected to result in less surface water reaching the culvert than when the previous business (Ariens) was operating the site.

Efficiencies on site are resulting in a 97% recycling rate (including minimal groundwork waste due to crushing on site for hardcore). With the retained building, all parts are being retained or reinstalled where possible. In terms of screening, the planting will now be deeper which will have a positive impact from a visibility perspective. I asked for more details on this and the drainage, which might be of interest to parish councils and residents:

Drainage

- The Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) was a pre-commencement condition which has been discharged.
- The site before redevelopment was predominantly covered with buildings with associated hard standing, with surface water collected via the roofs of the buildings with minimal attenuation. The retained building area is approximately a quarter of what was there previously.
- Where the retained building and hardstanding is located at the front of the site, attenuation has been introduced to improve this area.
- The remainder of the site uses a number of strategies, the operational vehicle and new parking to the rear of the site have permeable paving to the parking bays, new areas of hard standing for access routes have attenuation to both to both areas of parking, there are interceptors within the surface water system and a dedicated separator for the fuelling bay.
- We have been in discussion with OCC who own the land we connect into and they have undertaken their own surveys for condition and will be undertaking remedial works.
- The wash bay has a dedicated separator and connects to the existing foul drainage system, the retained building has new connections to the existing systems.

Landscaping

- As part of discharging the pre-commencement conditions there has been further discussion with the landscape officer with some changes of species and adjustment of fence lines.
- In the north west corner of the site near the foot path the fencelines have been brought inward and planting species revised to increase density and screening.
- There have also been some changes to the mix to the fronts southwest corner to provide more screening in front of the new fence in line with the vision spay constraints we have from OCC.

Social Value

- Beard are delivering Social Value as part of the contract, with areas including, CO2 offsetting, work experience, homeless back to work events, wellbeing initiatives, women in construction, use of local supply chains within a 30 mile radius of the site where possible, and waste recycling reporting.
- Beard are keen to work with the surrounding primary schools to promote construction safety, and also a marvellous machines event.

Council Matters

Cabinet member for environment Cllr Sue Cooper recently wrote a useful reminder / update on **litter, recycling and the council's responsibilities**, including a link to the new BinDays app service:

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District

Councils are classed as 'Principal Litter Authorities' and have the responsibility for "maintaining the highway (and adopted highway) and ensuring that the relevant land within their areas is kept clear of litter and refuse so far as is practicable." The Council and its waste collection and street cleaning contractor, Biffa, use the Defra 'Code of Practice' to assess the type of cleaning required. Biffa is therefore employed to carry out the following tasks:

- Adopted highway, pavement and path mechanical sweeping
- Litter picking
- Litter and dog waste bin emptying (from bins belonging to the District Council on the adopted highway. (Parish Councils employ whoever they wish to empty their dog bins). This will be done as frequently as is required to ensure sufficient capacity is available for use. So there is no set timetable for bin emptying but if a bin is reported to the contractor as full, it must be emptied within a set timescale depending on the location of the bin.
- Deep cleaning including leaf fall – to be arranged in conjunction with the parish council.
- Fly tip removal

- Graffiti and fly posting removal from District Council owned property
- Dead animal removal

Town centres with heavy pedestrian and/or vehicle movements are cleaned on a daily basis.

Other areas are cleaned when it is needed. So if you think a particular location is in need of some attention, please email Biffa at admin.southoxford@biffa.co.uk or call them on 01235 422123 giving them details of the location including the street name and ask them to clear it. Likewise if you come across instances of other problems they have to deal with from the list above, it would be helpful if you could notify Biffa with details.

Recycling Update

We are disappointed to report that South Oxfordshire dropped to third place amongst English Council areas for our recycling rate for the year 2024/2025 having been top for the previous 2 years. Our rate actually dropped to 61.3% and the national figure for recycling also fell. These figures were for the year ending in March last year so let's try and get back to the top during this current year which has just started please? And better still would be to reduce the amount of waste we generate. The County Council has to pay a gate fee of so much per tonne to have our residual waste burned to generate electricity. That fee is quite high so reducing our residual waste would help ease the financial burden on OCC.

Just to note, the County Council provides the Oakley Wood household waste recycling centre and indeed others around the county like Redbridge. Since the booking system for these was introduced there have been concerns this might increase flytipping. So incidences of this are being closely monitored by the district councils. According to the latest figures that has not been the case but it is early days so please be alert and report any fly tips you see to Biffa please, carefully noting any evidence of where it might have come from. SODC has carried out a number of successful prosecutions on offenders.

And finally on all things bins...

We are pleased to confirm the launch of **BinDays**, our new web app for residents to find out when their bins will be emptied for their next two scheduled waste and recycling collections.

BinDays has been provided by our IT team to replace Binzone which we are no longer able to support, due to updated internet security standards. BinDays will provide a more reliable and easier to manage system going forward.

If people are using a smartphone, once they enter their postcode and select the 'install instructions' button, they will be able to add the app to their mobile for easy access next time.

Residents can access the service at whitehorsedc.gov.uk/BinDays or southoxon.gov.uk/BinDays

Please help us spread the word and share our social media posts later this week, and please do let us know if you have any feedback on BinDays.

Please note, the BinDays web app does not collect any user data.

Live streaming is being introduced for full council meetings, which will appear (via Microsoft Teams) on the council's [Committee Meetings YouTube channel](#)

Both South and Vale already livestream a wide range of meetings - from Cabinet and Scrutiny to Planning and Licensing - but were unable to stream full Council meetings due to space and technical limitations, as full Council meetings had to be held offsite. Thanks to newly available space at Abbey House, the councils can now host full Council meetings, meaning people will be able to watch the discussions and decisions that matter most to our communities. The intention is to strengthen openness, accountability and public engagement - ensuring more people can stay connected to the democratic process.

The first livestreamed SODC full council meeting will be on the evening of 14th May.

The **Renters' Rights Act** started coming into effect on 1st May, which introduces new powers for councils and new standards required for landlords and their properties. SODC will have a statutory duty to enforce the new landlord legislation, and we are anticipating an increase in demand for housing needs services from May. The council worked hard to prepare for the changes and the impact it will have on housing services – including raising awareness of the new legislation amongst private sector landlords and helping them get on top of the changes – as well as raising awareness with private sector renters in our districts.

You can find out more at www.southoxon.gov.uk/renters-rights-act and at gov.uk/rentingischanging

If you have any questions about the Renters' Rights Act you can email housing@southandvale.gov.uk.