District Councillor Report
Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye September 2023

New grant fund for nature

We have set aside £50,000 to award to organisations who wish to carry out projects to enhance our wildlife and encourage public access to green areas.

In a new partnership with Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), the money will be given as grants through TOE's Local Environment Fund to help boost local nature recovery efforts and reduce the impacts of climate change. 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 places.

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, for example replacing stiles with gates for better accessibility and/or 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.

www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/local-environment-fund. The first deadline application deadline is 2 October 2023, then 8 January 2024. Submissions close at midday.

To check that your project idea meets TOE's funding criteria, contact Rachel Sanderson, Local Environment Fund grant administrator admin@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk and 01865 407003

Award nomination for Building Control

The councils' Building Control team has been nominated for Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Team of the Year in the **LABC Building Excellence Awards 2023**. The team were nominated by one of its customers, which shows the quality service they are providing. The final takes place in January and I'll update you on the team's result.

Some reminders of item in my last report but still relevant:

Councillor community grants funding open

The new round of funding from the Councillor Community Grant scheme has now opened. Organisations, including Town and Parish Councils, can now apply for grants from me as your local ward councillor from £250 up to a maximum of £5,000.

If you are thinking of applying, please get in touch with me first to discuss the project and then visit the **South Oxfordshire Councillor Community Grants webpage** for further details on eligibility. Applications are made online and are open until midday on Friday 20 October 2023.

For more information, contact the Community Enablement team at
grants@southandvale.gov.uk

Improving energy efficiency online events

The climate and biodiversity team held an online event in July for town and parish councils and community groups on "Improving Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings". Recordings and

copies of the presentations are available on our website **South Oxfordshire** The team is planning a similar webinar on Tuesday 10 October. For that event the focus will be on how town and parish councils (and other community groups) can enable more retrofitting of residential properties in their areas. Keep an eye out for more information coming soon.

River Thames water quality updates

Anyone planning to use the River Thames at Wallingford and Henley for swimming, boating or fishing this summer will be pleased to know that the environmental charity Thames21 is doing regular water quality sampling as part of its campaign to improve water quality and gain bathing water status in those areas. The charity is publishing its water quality updates on its website. The Thames 21 website has details for **Wallingford** and for **Henley**.

Cornerstone Arts Centre events and activities

Fun for babies and toddlers

And for the autumn season, there will be classes and workshops just for those early years and their parents and/or guardians. The fun starts in September with weekly classes Baby Boppers and Story Time With Laura. These classes focus on providing tots with fantastic sensory play experiences and socialising opportunities. Parents and/or guardians can also book children aged up to 7 on their workshop Riddle and Rhyme Time on Thursday 26 October. Join acclaimed children's poet James Carter in an interactive session with soothing music, rhymes, and the opportunity to write a poem with the special guest at the end.

Contact me at
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