District Councillor Report- Cllr Robin Bennett, October 2022

**New council address**

From Monday 3 October, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils will have a new temporary home at Abbey House in Abingdon until the new headquarters on the Didcot Gateway site is ready. The councils have been based at Milton Park since 2015.

Most council staff can and prefer to work remotely, which means we need significantly less office space. We therefore took the opportunity to bring the lease to an early end to save significant sums in rent by operating out of much smaller office space at Abbey House, which the Vale owns. Our new address will be:

**South Oxfordshire District Council**

**Abbey House**

**Abbey Close**

**Abingdon**

**OX14 3JE**

All phone numbers for our services will remain the same and are available on our website.

**Hackney carriage fare limits introduced for first time in South Oxfordshire**

Licensed Taxis operating in South Oxfordshire will have a maximum fare they can charge passengers. This is to ensure passengers, especially those who rely on taxis to travel around such as those on low income or with disabilities, are not priced out of using taxis as the cost of living continues to rise. We recognised this is a challenging time for taxi operators, as their overheads are also rising, and have tried to ensure a fair balance so their businesses remain viable. South Oxfordshire were one of only six councils in the country who didn’t set a tariff.

The fares only apply to hackney carriages, not private hire, as passengers are able to shop around with private hire vehicles to get the best deal, unlike a taxi rank. The fares only apply for journeys within South Oxfordshire and the new maximum fare for a two-mile journey on Tariff 1 will be £8.10, rising to £11.25 for Tariff 3 (applicable from 2am to 5.59am on weekdays and all day Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day).

**Cost of Living crisis support**

I attended a ‘cost of living summit’ recently, hosted by Oxfordshire County Council, to see how we combine to offer more support to those who need it. This is in response to our recent council motion. If you need any further information on the support that’s available locally, please head to our website: **www.southoxon.gov.uk/costofliving**

**Outdoor Table Tennis tables for free in your local park?**

If you can get the groundwork prepared and the table installed by February 2023, our Active Communities team has funding available for 15 free tables in South/Vale.

Once installed, you’ll be responsible for the groundworks, insurance and maintenance of the tables, but tables will be paid for and delivered as part of the funding. All applications will be considered in the order of receipt, by Friday 14 October at the latest.

**£320,000 of capital funding available for projects in South Oxfordshire**

Our Capital Grant Scheme 2022-23 is now open for applications. SODC are able to provide a minimum of £1,000 and up to 50 per cent of the total project costs to eligible voluntary and community organisations. If you belong to or work for an organisation that you think could benefit from this scheme, you can find out more information on our website: [**www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants**](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants)**.**

The closing date for applications is midday on Friday 21 October.

**Councillor Grant:** I have now awarded all the funds in my 2022 district councillor fund, for-

Berinsfield community flagpole

YoCo towards next year’s Berinsfield group

Accessible play equipment in Dorchester

Henge educational arts/history project