**Dear town and parish colleagues**

This week’s email is a bit of an update of some of our services, along with a look ahead to the bank holiday weekend.

**Notice of Vacancies**

As things currently stand, there will no elections until May next year, but if a parish councillor resigns or passes away councils will still need to publish a Notice of Vacancy. Please use the updated template attached, which makes it clear that a poll will not take place until 6 May 2021. The attached form is for towns and parishes in South Oxfordshire.

**Section 106 claims**

We’re still accepting new S106 claims and processing them through the appropriate decision-making channel.

However, where a committee decision is required it will take longer than normal as a number of committees have been postponed due to the current situation. We are looking into alternative ways to make decisions, including virtual meetings and will share the details in a future update. We are also prioritising the small number of funding claims that will expire within six months where possible.

We apologise for any delay this may cause to the delivery of your projects and thank you for your understanding.

If you have already submitted a claim, your designated officer will be in touch to provide further advice.

If you have any specific queries, please email the team on infrastructureclaims@southandvale.gov.uk or call us on 01235 422576.

**Waste collections**

**Extra garden waste collections**

Please help us to spread the message to residents that we are collecting extra garden waste collections for customers of our brown bin service. Here’s the message we’re sharing with residents:

If you’re a garden waste customer, this weekend’s the perfect time to get your lawn, flower gardens and vegetable patches in tip top condition as we’ll be collecting one extra bin load of garden waste after the bank holiday.  A bin’s worth of waste is considered around three large bin bags, and should be left next to your brown bin on your usual collection day during:

* week commencing 18 May – South Oxfordshire

**Friday waste changes**

If your waste collection is usually on a Friday, then this week it will change to Saturday to give our crews the bank holiday off.  Collections will be on Saturday 9 May and from 6am so we recommend putting bins out the night before.

To find out more head to our website visit [southoxon.gov.uk/bankholiday](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/bankholiday)

**VE Day**

Needless to say, VE Day commemorations this weekend will be very different to how many people had planned, but we can still make it a day to remember.

We’re asking everyone in our districts to ‘make it red, white and blue’ this weekend to help mark what’s an important date in our history. We’d love our town and parish councils to get involved too by encouraging residents to get baking red, white and blue, cakes, buns or muffins, or dressing front gardens houses, cars, pets or lockdown partners up in red, white and blue – and yourselves too!  Anyone taking part can send photos and videos to our social media channels (links below) or email them to our communications team: communications@southandvale.gov.uk

We’ll be marking the occasion while reinforcing the importance of staying home and staying safe, and we’d appreciate your help in making sure that message is out there. The VE Day commemorations are an opportunity for us to get creative and there are some great ideas for marking the day while observing the lockdown that [the government has provided online](https://ve-vjday75.gov.uk/get-involved/), and which we’re echoing in our public communications

**Our social media channels**

South Oxfordshire – [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/southoxfordshire/), [Twitter](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Csav_showar%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CI8G0R76K%5Ctwitter.com%5Csouthoxon).

**Grounds maintenance update**

Here’s how our grounds maintenance service has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our contractor is continuing to carryout essential work - maintaining our parks and gardens, the land around play areas, and other open spaces so local residents can exercise safely within them. In line with government guidance we closed our play areas and exercise equipment from 24 March.

Crews are observing the social distancing measures while they cut grass, clear litter and weeds. The teams are also undertaking urgent tree work, regular site inspections, maintenance checks and essential repairs of play areas – they may be closed but people can still physically get to some of them, so we need to make sure they’re safe. The team in South Oxfordshire is also still maintaining the cemeteries at Kidmore End and Wallingford.

Comms Team

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

[www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/) @southoxon

[www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/) @whitehorsedc