District Councillor Report- Cllr Robin Bennett, November 2022

**£345,000 awarded to Berinsfield groups**

SODC have allocated £345,000 to help put on community events, to help buy new laptops, projectors, kitchen equipment, towards running costs and to help improve gardens and open spaces in the village. The money came from a special grant scheme just for Berinsfield that organisations and groups applied to earlier this year. The money will help them to continue to run events and vital services in Berinsfield.

Council officers sorted through the grant applications and asked three people from other organisations to help us go through them. Thanks to representatives from Abbey Woods Academy, St Mary and St Berin Church and Soha, we were able to confirm that the applications were looked at thoroughly and the money was awarded in a fair and transparent way. Here’s where the funds have been awarded:

• £18,110 to Berinsfield Adult Day Care Centre towards new kitchen equipment and laptops as well as funds to help the centre stay open

• £33,489 to Berinsfield Community Association towards improvements to their toilets, a new projector and screen, their broadband connection and to help pay for a new member of staff

• £41,518 to Berinsfield Parish Council to help improve the burials grounds – paths, drainage, compost toilet and garden storage, and to support their new Neighbourhood Plan

• £39,740 to Early Years Pre-School towards garden and landscaping work

• £43,839 to BIVC to help buy new laptops, website upgrade and IT storage, and to help with their running costs

• £97,191 to Berin Centre to help improve building security and landscaping, IT equipment and towards running costs for the centre

• £700 to Oxfordshire Play Association to help them put on community activity events

• £8,881 to ARCh towards recruiting and training new volunteers to work with local primary school children to help them learn to read

• £25,780 to Riverside Counselling Services towards their running costs and to help pay for new support groups for young people

• £35,752 to the Berry Youth Centre to go towards their ‘Beat the streets’ project

**Study looking at community facilities**

Oxford Architects will be meeting with people from the charities, organisations and groups that use or own buildings and spaces in Berinsfield to find out how they use them now and what more they think they’ll need in the future. This new information will help to build upon comments we’ve received in the past from residents and groups across the village.

The new findings will help us to look at how new or renovated community buildings and spaces could be designed so that charities, organisations and groups in the village can continue to offer services that residents want and need in the future.

If you would like to comment on current and future use of community facilities, please email the team: BerinsfieldGV@southandvale.gov.uk

**Active summer fun**

During the summer, SODC held some free skateboarding and scooter coaching sessions at the Skatepark for newcomers looking to take up the sport and for keen skaters and scooters to gain new skills. We also put on a free Family Fun Day at the Berin Centre for local families to enjoy. For children aged 2-7 years old, we ran some Real Play sessions - they help to encourage families to play together and help to develop children’s social skills.

Now we’re heading into the autumn, there are some more activities lined up:

• Join The Ramblers Association for a wellbeing walk each Tuesday at 11am – no need to book, just come along to the Church Hall and join the friendly group for a walk.

• Each Monday at 2pm-3.30pm, Move Together is putting on a Chair Exercise session at the Church Hall for £3 per session.

You can find more information on all our activities at www.southoxon.gov.uk/activecommunities

**Tree planting on Fane Drive**

You may have noticed that earlier this year some new young oak trees appeared along Fane Drive. The grounds team planted 12 new trees in the spring as part of our tree planting programme to keep all the trees in our district in good condition and to replace any we’ve had to remove.

Because some very large trees had to come down, we put the new oak trees long Fane Drive where it’s safe for them to grow and thrive.

**Garden Village Steering Group continues to meet**

The group is chaired by me, as district councillor for Berinsfield, and is made up of councillors from Berinsfield Parish Council, the county council and district council officers, as well as staff from Soha and Sovereign Housing, Berinsfield Information and Advice Centre, Homes England, The Berin Centre and Berinsfield Health Centre. After an in-person meeting the summer, last week’s meeting was online. For more information on the Berinsfield Garden Village project, or to sign up for the mailing list, visit [www.southoxon.gov.uk/Berinsfield](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/Berinsfield)

**A successful summer at Riverside Park, Wallingford**

This year the Riverside Park outdoor pool and campsite in Wallingford had a bumper summer season with nearly 21,000 visitors. On its busiest week, the pool had nearly 4,500 visitors, the highest number in over 20 years for a single week.

The pool and campsite opened for the season this year from late May through to early September and this season South Oxfordshire District Council in partnership with GLL, who manage the site and Better UK facilities for the council, introduced some new activities and initiatives for those using the pool and campsite. These included aqua aerobics classes, Swim Dr swimming lessons, the ability to book the campsite via the Better UK app and dogs were also allowed on to the campsite resulting in an increase in bookings.