**From:** Communications
**Sent:** 15 October 2020 17:05
**To:** Communications
**Subject:** District Council update 15 October - Vale

**Covid latest**

As expected, this week the government announced its new three-tier system to identify what kind of covid-restrictions will apply in which areas. As things stand, Oxfordshire is in “tier 1”, which means we’re following the same guidelines as we have been for several weeks.

The government has also provided an update for residents who are particularly at risk of serious illness if they contract Covid-19. For the time being, the guidance to them remains that they should follow social distancing guidelines, and in “tier 3” areas carefully consider if they need to go to public places.

This currently doesn’t affect people in our area, and we’re not anticipating this will mean the shielding programme will be restarting imminently, but we have nevertheless been preparing for if and when that day does come. We’ll keep you up to date with what this will mean as the situation develops.

We’ve attached a useful poster that visually shows the restrictions that apply to the current ‘medium’ level tier that our districts fall in.

**Update on grants for businesses forced to closed due to local lockdowns**

This week the government also updated the information about how much businesses will be able to claim if they are forced to shut due to local lockdown restrictions coming into force. Previously they said there would be two levels of grant available after three consecutive weeks of closure, depending on the size of the business.

They have now confirmed that the grants will be available after just **two weeks of closure** as follows, subject to businesses meeting the eligibility and local restriction criteria.  There is now three levels of grant available depending on the business size ranging from £1,334 to £3,000 per month.

For more details, including information on what businesses are eligible for which level of grant, please see our [Covid grants webpages](https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/business-and-economy/business-rates/financial-support-during-covid-19/).

**Staff are saving thousands of miles each week**

Ahead of Clean Air Day last week council staff took part in a short commuting survey to see what impact the lockdown was having on our commuting miles. Fewer miles by car, means less congestion and cleaner air!

193 colleagues – just under half of the council staff - completed the survey and, perhaps unsurprisingly given the majority of staff are working from home, there’s been a significant reduction in the number of miles travelled by car.

Before lockdown those staff who responded to the survey and  were driving to work clocked up a total of 22,399 miles a week getting to and from the offices– this has dropped significantly to just 1,743 miles a week, which is a 92 per cent reduction! Here are some other headlines from the report:

* Before lockdown – according to the survey responses - drivers were on average travelling 119 miles a week and that’s now an average of just 9 miles. This represents a saving of 110 miles on average every week, not to mention the fuel savings.

* Before lockdown 43.6 per cent of those taking part in the survey were travelling 100 miles or more every week and this is now just 2.7 per cent.

**The Park & Charge project – consultation on electric vehicles**

We’re working with Oxfordshire County Council on a project to install Electric Vehicle charging points in a range of public car parks in 2021. As part of that work, colleagues at the county council have launched a survey gathering data on residents’ opinions on electric vehicles.

The results of the survey will inform decisions on public charging infrastructure across the whole county and so we’re helping to promote it to our residents. The survey is available [**here**](https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Park_and_Charge/answerQuestionnaire?qid=6713379&fbclid=IwAR0jc4_13jm4x0JHEvFpKEPP52QLdNhEMXiAyZeC-jVYV9J7uLoNjxSQMqE).

**Housing Needs team secures more than £130,000 to help prevent homelessness**

Our Housing Needs team has recently secured £130,380 for South and Vale to provide support and accommodation for households made homeless as a result of the pandemic.

The funding includes six units of what’s known as ‘Housing First’ accommodation, which is supported housing for former rough sleepers. We will deliver this in partnership with SOHA and Aspire Housing.

The team is already doing an incredible job at preventing homelessness in our districts – recent statistics show that in the Vale 79.1 per cent of potential homelessness cases were prevented.

For comparison, the South East average is 54.9 per cent and the next best performing of the Oxfordshire district-level authorities is West Oxfordshire on 59.2 per cent.

Here are some more details and statistics:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Total number of homeless prevention cases  | Number of at-risk households secured accommodation for at least six months  | Percentage of successful prevention cases |
| England | 139,420 | 81,500 | 58.50% |
| South East | 20,400 | 11,200 | 54.90% |
| Cherwell | 281 | 148 | 52.70% |
| Oxford | 375 | 201 | 53.60% |
| West | 142 | 84 | 59.20% |
| South Oxfordshire | 311 | 256 | 82.30% |
| Vale  | 277 | 219 | 79.10% |

**National Community Safety campaigns**

This week, across our social media channels, we are supporting the following national awareness and communications campaigns:

* Hate Crime Awareness Week 10-17 October
* Anti-social behaviour campaign called Having *that* conversation
* Anti-slavery day – 18 October

Comms Team

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

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

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