

Christmas information

As a reminder that as usual, the council offices will be closed to the public from Christmas Day until New Year.

The last working day will be Friday 22 December. Our Customer Contact Centre and front desk reception will close at the usual closing time of 4.30pm on that day. The office will re-open as normal on Tuesday 2 January 2024.

The council's emergency out of hours helpline during the break is 01235 422410 (South) and 01235 422420 (Vale).

Warm spaces

Residents needing a warm place this winter are welcome to come to our leisure centres, which are opening up as Warm Spaces again this year.

The following centres are available for people to come to charge their phones, have a warm drink and a friendly chat:

- **South Oxfordshire:** Abbey Sports Centre, Didcot Wave, Henley Leisure Centre, Parks Sports Center and Thame Leisure Centre.
- **Vale of White Horse:** Wantage Leisure Centre, Faringdon Leisure Centre and White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre.

The Warm Spaces scheme will run from **9am-2pm on weekdays** in the café and communal areas of the centres. All the centres have been registered on the official [Warm Spaces website](#).

National landscapes

Last week, all designated "Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty" (AONBs) in England and Wales have been renamed as 'National Landscapes'. The new name reflects their national importance and the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis.

This means our local AONBs will now be known as the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and The Chilterns National Landscape. You can find out more about the name change and the National Landscapes' vision on the [National Landscapes website](#).

Do you know what a carbon sink is?

To recognise Climate Literacy Action Day on **Monday 4 December**, we're encouraging all members to complete their [Climate Action Training on LEAH](#) and take part in our quiz which puts your climate action knowledge to the test. [The quiz is available here](#), and you can find out more on our A-Z of climate terms on our [South Oxfordshire](#) and [Vale of White Horse](#) websites.

Shop local this Christmas

Many small businesses in our districts will struggle with the cost-of-living crisis this winter, and every sale makes a difference. To help, we are encouraging our residents to support South and Vale businesses in the lead up to Christmas.

The message we'll be broadcasting is that as well as helping to grow our local economy, shopping locally is also great for the environment and boosts job growth in our communities, and you'll even find one-off products that aren't available on Amazon.

This festive season, we need your help to shop locally in our South and Vale towns – Abingdon, Botley, Didcot, Faringdon, Henley, Wallingford, Wantage and Thame – to help support our independent businesses and please share the word! Please look out for and share our social media messages supporting this campaign.

