

Growth Hub Newsletter

December 2025

Support for your business

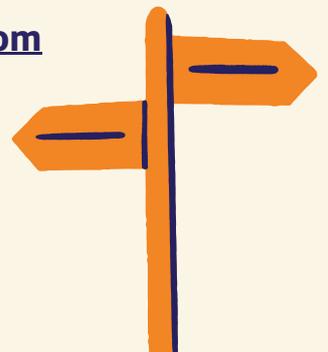
We offer SMEs within Oxfordshire fully funded business support. Complete the Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Support Tool today, to get started and receive your business support plan signposting you to profit boosting, market growing business support.

Get started...

Complete Enterprise Oxfordshire's Business Support Tool:

[Business Support Tool](#)

If you have any questions or requests for support please email us directly at: **business@enterpriseoxfordshire.com**



Enterprise Oxfordshire Business

As we approach the end of 2025 and look to 2026, Enterprise Oxfordshire are proud to share some of the support that Oxfordshire's SMEs have received over the past 6-month period of April 2025 – September 2025 as part of our ongoing core business support offer here at Enterprise Oxfordshire.

We continue to provide a range of specialist support through our dedicated team and sub-contracted team which includes over 20 business advisors, that businesses within Oxfordshire can access all fully funded. Alongside their invaluable expertise, we have a full programme of webinars, workshops, peer support sessions, mentoring opportunities, strategic business reviews, and networking events to help our clients thrive.

It's always important for us to stay flexible and responsive to the needs of Oxfordshire's SMEs. We base our support on the insights gathered from our online Business Support Tool (BST). To date, we've had 507 businesses complete the BST since April 1st, 2025. This has provided us with a wealth of data to tailor our offerings more effectively. This information allows us to continually evolve and react to the needs of our community and underscores the importance of our continued focus on providing relevant and impactful support.

Enterprise Oxfordshire has delivered along with our sub-contracting organisation for the year the following outcomes:

Outcomes	Achieved between April 25 – Sept 25
Number of businesses light, medium, hard triaged evidence through Business Support Plans and email traffic	1422
Number of new jobs created	141
Economic recovery plans developed and monitored after 6 months	429
Referrals to other programmes/activities	803
Number of businesses surviving for at least 6 months as a result of receiving support	461
Jobs safeguarded in supported businesses	616

**Try our
Business
Support
Tool!**

We are looking forward to 2026 and continuing to offer a wide and varied range of support to Oxfordshire's SMEs and helping their ambitions take flight!

To access this support go to our Business Support Tool or you can contact us directly at business@enterpriseoxfordshire.com.



A celebration for West Oxfordshire and Cherwell SPARKS and Accelerator Programme

Entrepreneurs and businesses in West Oxfordshire and Cherwell got together to celebrate growth, learning and support at the end of November.

Reflecting on the completion of round 2 of the West Oxfordshire & Cherwell SPARKS and Accelerator programmes. The afternoon highlighted the amazing support giving participants the opportunity to connect and network with entrepreneurs and business leaders from across West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Districts.

Over the past year, more than 135 exciting new start-ups and 300 established businesses have benefitted from tailored business support programmes delivered locally. This exciting and inspiring afternoon gathered some of these businesses together to showcase their achievements, share future ambitions, and strengthen the spirit of enterprise across our districts.

We heard from programme funders, Councillor Duncan Enright, West Oxfordshire District Council and Councillor Lesley McLean Cherwell District Council, who outlined their ambitions for supporting small business success in the future. In addition, Sarah Beal - Enterprise Oxfordshire Business' Business Support Manager shared highlights and key outputs from the programme, reflecting the impact it has had across our region.



Sarah Beal



Round 2



Belle Brookes, Squid Content Ltd – Keynote speaker

The celebration marked the completion of round two of the West Oxfordshire & Cherwell SPARKS and Accelerator programmes delivered by Enterprise Oxfordshire Business and stands as a testament to the spirit of entrepreneurship thriving across the region. With the participation of more than 44 new start-ups and over 72 established businesses, this milestone event was not just a conclusion, but a vibrant showcase of ambition, collaboration, and community achievement. The gathering brought together entrepreneurs, business leaders, and supporters to reflect on shared successes and look eagerly toward future opportunities.

A celebration for West Oxfordshire and Cherwell SPARKS and Accelerator Programme

The SPARKS and Accelerator programmes were launched with a clear and ambitious goal: to foster the growth of early-stage entrepreneurs and support the development of established small businesses in West Oxfordshire and Cherwell. Funded by West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council, these initiatives are designed to offer practical resources, expert mentoring, and structured opportunities for local businesses to thrive. By combining tailored workshops, one-to-one coaching, and targeted networking, the programmes have created a nurturing environment for innovation and sustainable growth.

Both programmes have been delivered by Enterprise Oxfordshire and funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. They are part of a wider mission to support local economic growth and innovation in West Oxfordshire and Cherwell.

As Helen Brind, Head of Business and Skills at Enterprise Oxfordshire, explains:

“These programmes offer a real opportunity to budding business-owners and up-and-coming start-ups in these districts to take the next steps in their business journey.”



Councillor Duncan Enright, West Oxfordshire District Council



Councillor Lesley McLean, Cherwell District Council

The round two celebration of the West Oxfordshire & Cherwell SPARKS and Accelerator programmes was more than just a milestone; it was a resounding affirmation of the region's entrepreneurial spirit. As participants, supporters, and council partners look ahead, the message is clear: West Oxfordshire and Cherwell are fertile grounds for ambition, creativity, and business success. With ongoing support, strong networks, and a culture that champions enterprise, the future for local businesses has never looked brighter.

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Directory

Join our fast growing Oxfordshire Business Directory.

Enterprise Oxfordshire have developed a Business Directory platform for businesses to support each other and promote themselves.

[Business Directory](#)



Oxfordshire Networking Groups

Looking to make valuable connections and boost your business success? Discover the best ways to find networking groups and events near you.

[Oxfordshire Networking Groups](#)



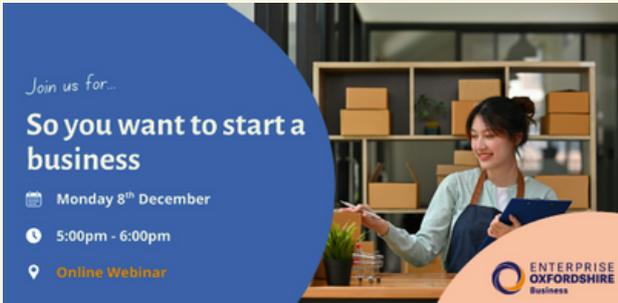
Other Resources Available to Businesses

As part of Enterprise Oxfordshire's ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SMEs we always try to ensure that other services and grant opportunities which may be available to business within Oxfordshire are highlighted and signposted on our 'External Recourses' website page.

[External Resources](#)

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Events

We have lots of exciting events planned for December 2025 and into 2026, including the few listed below.



Join us for...

So you want to start a business

Monday 8th December

5:00pm - 6:00pm

Online Webinar

ENTERPRISE OXFORDSHIRE Business

Dreaming of starting your own business but don't know where to begin? Look no further!

[Register Here](#)



OxBOoSt
Oxfordshire Business Opportunities & Support Network

A network for all Enterprise Oxfordshire clients to connect, collaborate and exchange ideas.

Date: Tuesday 6th January

Time: 4:00pm - 5:00pm

Online event

Join Today!

ENTERPRISE OXFORDSHIRE Business

The 'Oxfordshire Business Opportunities & Support network' for all Enterprise Oxfordshire Business clients & anyone who wants to learn more.

[Register Here](#)



ENTERPRISE OXFORDSHIRE Business

Join us for...

AI Advantage 2026: Smarter Growth

Tuesday 13th January

9:30am - 11:30am

Online workshop

Ready to make 2026 the year your business gets smarter with AI?

[Register Here](#)

[View All Events](#)

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Events

We have lots of exciting events planned for December 2025 and into 2026, including the few listed below.



START-UP CLUB
BOOTCAMP

Tuesday 13th January

5:00pm - 7:00pm

Online Workshop



SUP Club Bootcamp is back! Session 1 of 3, designed to help you to create and grow the business you always dreamed about!

[Register Here](#)



Working Well Members Week

Tuesday 27th January

12:30pm - 1:30pm

Online Webinar



Demystify Menopause
with Emma Thomas



One in ten women have left a role due to lack of support, costing the business £30,000!

[Register Here](#)



START-UP CLUB
BOOTCAMP

Tuesday 13th January

5:00pm - 7:00pm

Online Workshop



SUP Club Bootcamp is back! Session 2 of 3, designed to help you to create and grow the business you always dreamed about!

[Register Here](#)

[View All Events](#)

Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

Confidence and careers: Students shine at mock assessment centre day

Oxfordshire Careers Hub held a fantastic mock assessment centre day on 11 November for 30+ Year 11 and 13 students from Cheney School, Chipping Norton School, Oxford Spires Academy, Wheatley Park School and Whitelands Academy, supported by some of our Cornerstone Employers – Abbott, Blenheim Palace, Bowmer and Kirkland Ltd, Grundon Waste Management, Morgan Sindall Construction, NielsenIQ, Oxfordshire Advanced Skills, Oxfordshire County Council, Tokamak Energy, University of Oxford and Leonardo Royal Hotel Oxford, who also kindly hosted the event.

The students learnt all about the employers and their early careers opportunities, gained top tips on applications, online assessments, CV writing and interviews and took part in team exercises and 1:1 mock interviews. It was wonderful to see the students grow in confidence as the day went on and they experienced what assessments and interviews are like.

Maya Davidson, Apprentice Manager at NielsenIQ, said:

“What an absolute pleasure to have been invited along to this wonderful mock assessment centre day for students in Years 11 and 13. Seeing young people come into a room, understandably nervous about what’s ahead, and then leave with a newfound confidence in their abilities and future pathways was something very special. I wish we’d had opportunities like this when I was leaving school. Just brilliant!”

Anna McInnes, General Manager at Leonardo Royal Hotel Oxford, said:

“Being a Cornerstone Employer means being able to shape the future. We all started somewhere and we all needed guidance and support. I chose my career based on a school visit and now I want to be able to help future hoteliers in the same way. From taking part in the mock assessment centre day (and being able to host it), I left with a feeling of reward. It was great to engage with the students, talk to them one on one and build their confidence - and my own through showcasing the skills I have learned over the years. The advantage of hosting means I was also able to showcase what we do to the students in a better picture and of course show off what we do!”

Simon Parker, Careers Lead & Teacher of Design & Technology at Chipping Norton School, said:

“Our students made some great links with industry at the event, including offers of visits and work experience placements. The students were incredibly appreciative of the opportunity to engage with so many different employers in one setting. They found the mock assessment tasks and the networking sessions to be an invaluable experience, providing a realistic and low-pressure environment to practice essential career skills.”

Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

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enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

Confidence and careers: Students shine at mock assessment centre day

"This day has truly opened their eyes to some amazing opportunities they hadn't previously considered. Hearing first-hand accounts from industry professionals and apprentices helped them to visualise tangible career pathways and realise the scope of industries available right here in Oxfordshire. The positive atmosphere and the willingness of all the professionals to share their insights left a lasting, motivational impression on our group. Finally, a big thank to Leonardo Royal Hotel Oxford for hosting us on the day."

Watch this short film about a mock assessment centre day at Blenheim to find out more about how our Cornerstone Employers support them:

[Watch Now](#)

If you are looking to develop your school outreach, perhaps as part of your CSR programme, to offer volunteering opportunities for staff, or to develop your future talent pipeline, please get in touch with the Oxfordshire Careers Hub team at skills@enterpriseoxfordshire.com. You can also follow their LinkedIn page for all the latest news and events:

[Follow on LinkedIn](#)



Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

10th Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards open for entries on 3rd December

The 10th annual Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards will open for entries and nominations on 3rd December. With categories for apprentices, former apprentices, employers, training providers and individuals who champion apprenticeships and other vocational pathway with the next generation, there's something for everyone!

The awards will be declared open at the Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Christmas Networking Event at the Loose Cannon Brewery in Abingdon.

[Learn About OA Awards](#)



Opening soon...

The 10th annual Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards will open for entries and nominations on 3rd December!

Join us at the Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Christmas networking event to find out more.

 3rd December, 5pm - 8pm

 Loose Cannon Brewery,
Abingdon

#OAAwards2026

Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

Skills Bootcamps programme returns to continue 'significant impact' on Oxfordshire's workforce

A key programme – set to support hundreds of people's employability prospects in Oxfordshire – is returning to the county this autumn following a major impact on several sectors last year.

Skills Bootcamps – part of the Government's Skills for Life programme – is returning to Oxfordshire, with Enterprise Oxfordshire leading activity across the county supporting the upskilling of residents whether in work, self-employed, unemployed, or looking to return to the labour market.

A total of £2,366,600 has been awarded to Oxfordshire County Council and Enterprise Oxfordshire by the Department for Education to deliver a new phase of the programme.

Enterprise Oxfordshire are to partner with a significant network of organisations supporting with Skills Bootcamps delivery. Overall, it is set to engage several hundred people to gain in-demand skills with subsequent access to guaranteed job interviews with employers.

The latest Skills Bootcamps programme arrives following the conclusion of a previous phase – also led by Enterprise Oxfordshire – that is having a continued, ongoing impact on skills provision in the county. Last year's £1.7million Skills Bootcamps programme supported just under 200 learners to develop a variety of sector-specific skills, helping to fast-track individuals to potential, future interview opportunities and ultimately, paid work.

The latest programme aims to also provide the same support and guidance with courses designed to help residents upskill, retrain and progress into sustainable employment. Sectors highlighted in the latest phase include construction, green skills, digital, cyber security, transport and logistics, and health and life sciences.

The programme will in-particular boost opportunities for jobseekers, those re-entering work after a career gap, or retirees returning to employment, likely triggered by the cost-of-living crisis.



[Learn About Skills Bootcamps](#)

Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
[enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com](https://www.enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com)

Diamond Light Source: Collaboration sets example for the power of Community Employment Plans

Across Oxfordshire, there are multiple large-scale infrastructure projects being developed or planned. To maximise the benefits from the developments, Enterprise Oxfordshire offer guidance and support to develop and implement employer-led initiatives called Community Employment Plans (CEPs) – which aim to enable better access to job and training opportunities for local people.

CEPs can form part of Section 106 planning obligations for significant developments, with each Local Planning Authority in Oxfordshire having their own Local Plan. It is our aim at Enterprise Oxfordshire to support major developers and employers in creating their CEP alongside district Economic Development Leads.

Showcasing the success of CEPs, the construction of extension buildings at the iconic Diamond Light Source, the UK's national synchrotron light source science facility located at the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, have seen Enterprise Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse District Council and Sisk collaborate to create a plan for the development.

The CEP process began by agreeing objectives for the local community, including job and skills outcomes, such as apprenticeships. This ensured the contract was not just transactional, but aimed at delivering shared benefits, such as improved services and stronger community engagement. The process saw all partners maintain open communication channels for updates, support, suggestions, recommendations and changes – with regular update meetings scheduled to monitor progress and resolve issues early.

The Vale of White Horse District Council and Enterprise Oxfordshire supported Sisk to build connections, as well as making suggestions and forming introductions with many charities, organisations, and communities – helping Sisk to establish a rapport within the region. For instance, Deborah Nickless, Regional Social Values and Stakeholder Manager at Sisk went on to deliver a session at community support charity SOFEA around the construction industry.

Engagement with local communities and education providers was also delivered throughout, with opportunities such as the World of Work event at Didcot Girls School, enabling knowledge-sharing and advancing ambitions to get more women into the sector.

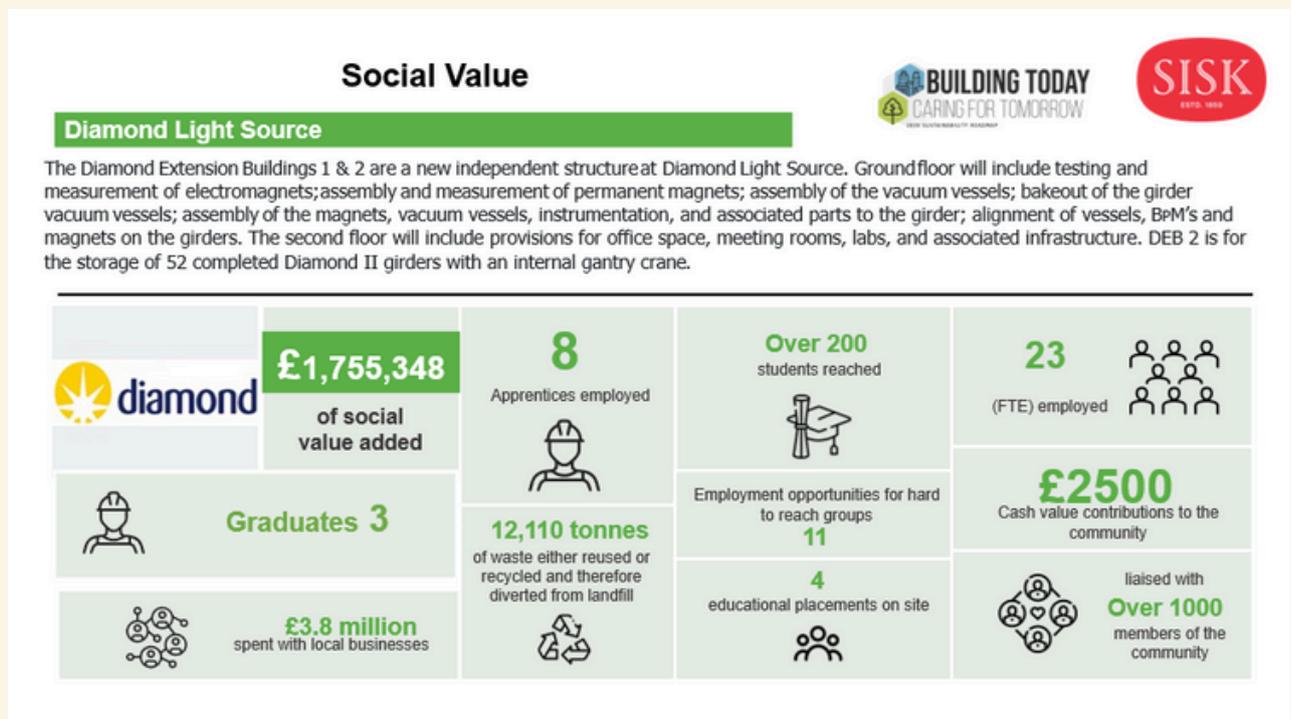


Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

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Diamond Light Source: Collaboration sets example for the power of Community Employment Plans

The development has added over £1.75m of social value, spent £3.8m with local businesses, sourced 23 employees from the local area, employed 8 apprentices and provided 4 educational placements on site.



Deborah Nickless said:

"It has been a pleasure working with Karen Tolley from South & Vale's Economic Development team and Andrea Harrison from Enterprise Oxfordshire. The success of our social values commitments for the Diamond Light project was a collaboration between us all, helping local people into work and supporting the local community."

[Read Case Study](#)

Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) statutory public consultation

Thames Water are holding a statutory public consultation on the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO), another development engaged with Enterprise Oxfordshire's Community Employment Plans initiative. They are proposing a new reservoir in Oxfordshire, near Abingdon, to supply water to 15 million people across the South East, including customers of Thames Water, Affinity Water, and Southern Water.

The statutory consultation runs for 11 weeks from 28th October 2025 to 11.59pm on 13th January 2026, and Oxfordshire residents and employers are invited to have their say on the proposals. The feedback gathered during the consultation will inform their Development Consent Order (DCO) application, which they expect to submit to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in Autumn 2026.



[Find Out More](#)

[Watch Video](#)

Oxfordshire Net Zero Business Support

Visit our webpage for advice on how to make your business net zero. Read inspiring stories, find net zero support, and discover funding and grants available to support your net zero journey. Along with lots more.

[Net Zero](#)

Other Net Zero Support

GREEN LEASE TOOLKIT

Green Leases - Legal Considerations
Tuesday 2nd December 9:30 to 10:30, online

This webinar is hosted by Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) and is free for all to attend. The workshop is presented by the Better Buildings Partnership's (BBP) and follows the Green Leases workshop at Harwell in Oxfordshire on May 2025.

The December webinar covers essential elements needed for a Green Lease. It is suitable for those assisting with commercial property leases, such as knowledge lawyers, estate services, etc. Content will include some legal details, though ZCOP welcomes all those interested in sustainable building performance.

BBP's Green Lease Toolkit is here:

[BBP's Green Lease Toolkit](#)

To sign up for the webinar or for more information, please complete the sign up here:

[Sign Up](#)

Oxfordshire Business Support

Made Smarter

The UK is set to be the global leader in the creation, adoption & exportation of advanced digital technologies.

Now's the time for manufacturing to evolve and with emerging technologies the possibilities are endless.

This not-so-distant future will boost our economy and create new jobs. Want to be part of it?

We can help you to leverage the power of these tools. The manufacturers of tomorrow use technology to streamline their processes. They are faster, more responsive, and more efficient. Ultimately, they make better products for less. Made Smarter helps you secure this competitive edge.

[Learn more](#)

South East Investment Fund

The British Business Bank is expanding its geographically-focused initiatives and will be committing £2.6bn of capital to support entrepreneurs wherever and whoever they are to access capital, driving the growth of smaller businesses across the UK's Nations and regions, including high-growth innovation clusters across the country.

[Learn More](#)

Small Business Saturday

6th December 2025

Small Business Saturday celebrates the UK's much-loved 5.45 million small businesses and encourages the nation to show their support, particularly by spending and shopping small.

Small Business Saturday takes place on the first Saturday in December but is not just a date. It's a year-round national movement to spotlight the small businesses that make a big difference to our communities and economy.

[Learn More](#)

Oxfordshire Business Support

As part of our ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SMEs, we always ensure that other services and opportunities which may be available to business within the county are highlighted and signposted.

Business & IP Centre Oxfordshire

At the Oxford Westgate Library
Supporting Oxfordshire residents to start, protect and grow their own business.



[Learn More](#)

OSEP

OSEP provides support, empowerment, and advocacy for local social enterprises, enterprising charities, and purposeful businesses in Oxfordshire. Email: hello@osep.org.uk



[Learn More](#)

District Council Support for Businesses

[Cherwell District Council](#)

[Oxford City Council](#)

[South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

[Vale of White Horse District Council](#)

[West Oxfordshire District Council](#)

New Oxford Living Wage rate for 2026/27

Oxford City Council has announced that the Oxford Living Wage will increase to £14.06 per hour from April 2026. The Oxford Living Wage, set at 95% of the London Living Wage, is a voluntary minimum wage employers can opt to pay, designed to help workers meet the high cost of living and working in Oxford. In 2024/25, over 175 organisations committed to pay the Oxford Living Wage, benefiting more than 30,000 employees – the highest participation since the initiative began in 2018.

Councillor Chewe Munkonge praised the milestone and urged more employers to adopt the new rate: “As we announce the new amount for 2026/27, I encourage all our current employers, and many more organisations in the city, to commit to paying their staff at least the Oxford Living Wage and help to make Oxford a better and fairer place to live and work.”

[More Info](#)

Non Business News/Events:

Abingdon, Sports and Leisure:

The Snowman Live with Wantage Band 2025 - 14th December 2025

[More Info](#)

The Oxford Magazine: What's on in Oxfordshire

[Learn More](#)

Oxfordshire County Council News

[Learn More](#)

Experience Oxfordshire: What's on

[Learn More](#)

If you have anything you would like sharing in future editions, please
email: business@enterpriseoxfordshire.com