

Spring has finally come to our neighbourhood!

Many of us welcomed the longer days and warmer weather by participating in OxClean in our area – a big thanks to all of you for putting in a few hours on the 6th March! In this edition we are focusing on all the spring and summer time activities being planned for our neighbourhood and beyond, plus giving you an update of the plethora of work being done by our various DRARA groups.

Watch this space for updates! For further information and updates you can always go to the DRARA website, www.drara.org.uk

Cindy Carlson (carwal9704@yahoo.co.uk and tel 242949; **Henrietta Gill** (henrietagill@yahoo.co.uk ; Tel 726 818

From the Chairman

DRARA taking the lead in East Oxford: The Residents' Associations and community groups representing the interests of the residents of St Mary's, St Clement's and Iffley Fields wards, have now met twice to share issues of common concern. The East Oxford Residents' Associations Forum is in the process of becoming constituted and further news and views will be circulated to DRARA members in due course

Community Notice Board: DRARA has a Community Notice Board just inside the door of the Co-op at the bottom of Divinity Road. Anybody who wants to put up a notice, please contact me as I have the key!

Oxclean: Cleaning up Oxford involved a lot of you cleaning up on Warneford Meadow and around our local streets as well as South Park, but my little effort was to plant up the street beds outside my house on both sides of the road. We still need to encourage other residents with similar beds nearby to take a little care and perhaps plant them up with bulbs or annuals.

NAG: The Neighbourhood Action Group meets with the Police and other community leaders every couple of months. Issues vary from priorities in policing, litter and antisocial behaviour. I represent DRARA on our NAG. The biggest issue for DRARA residents is the policing of the 20mph, which police apparently do not yet have the powers to enforce.

Cowley Road Carnival: I am delighted to announce that DRARA will be contributing financial support towards bringing this important community event back to the Cowley Road this year.

Elizabeth Mills, DRARA Chairman



Spring 2010

DRARA EVENTS : WHY DO WE DO THEM??

Whenever I say I live on Divinity Road, there is pretty inevitably one of two main reactions: "Oh you poor thing - all that traffic – it's impossible to park isn't it?" or "Oh you lucky thing – you have great street parties there don't you?" It took a while to sink in, but I have now realised that these two facts are inextricably linked and that this is what makes the DRARA events calendar so worthwhile and special. It is often very tempting to take a bunker mentality when your car's wing mirror has been damaged for the umpteenth time, or you find your windscreen wipers sitting at a crazy angle or kebab leftovers on your bonnet; you take ten minutes to get out of your parking space or ten minutes trying to find one; your front room is vibrating to someone else's car stereo or the sound of violent over revving as some poor person is stuck in the chicane gully again, or you take your children's lives in your hands as you negotiate a tiny gap in the flow in which to hurl them into their car seats and get out of the way of the next car.

DRARA is all about being in and enjoying our community and achieving a sense of cohesion and belonging which is so important in a neighbourhood such as ours beset on all sides by traffic and HMOs. It shows that people are interested in and supportive of both the people they live amongst and the physical environment in which they dwell.

Running a schedule of events for our community is a way to stop the world and the cars and take back our streets - to just hang out together and have fun - whether it's an historical walk or open gardens to open our eyes to unknown aspects of the everyday places we pass each day, or the Meal in the Street when we can all come together and have a laugh sharing good food and drink. Events like Film in the Street provide the opportunity for enjoyment and entertainment, with a sense of belonging and shared ownership of our neighbourhood, taking pride in the area in the face of thoughtless drivers or mindless vandalism. Perhaps the greatest benefit of community events is that people from a wide range of different backgrounds get a

chance to collaborate, and to have fun together. When daily pressures of life seem to grow each year, it's good to feel the support and warmth of friends and neighbours who look out for each other and who cherish the simple value of community.

These are some collaborative thoughts from Henrietta Gill, Clare Gibbons, Paul Wolf and Vicki Cullen. If you want to join in and help with organising events, please contact **Henrietta Gill**, email: henriettaqill@yahoo.co.uk and have a look at the events calendar on the back page!!

DRARA ENVIRONMENT ACTION GROUP IS GROWING !!

Over the past few months, The DRARA Environment action Group has been meeting regularly to share ideas about how to live better and have more fun and money by using resources more effectively. We have been active too.

The street clean up at the beginning of March was a great success with over 25 people of all ages coming together to clean up the streets. Warneford Meadow, Barracks Lane and all the DRARA roads were covered and large amounts of rubbish and recyclables were collected. It was great to see the streets so clean. Many thanks to everyone who took part.

The DRARA's Freecycle in the afternoon was also very enjoyable event. It was good seeing people so happy having found things they really wanted which might otherwise have gone to landfill.

Our Green Flashes are continuing on a monthly basis. They have included suggestions on issues ranging from eco buying, energy conservation, to recycling along with information about relevant local events. If you are not receiving these, please let us know so that we can add you to our list.

The third of our public meetings was held at the end of March so that we have now heard from Low Carbon West Oxford, Headington and Wolvercote. Each group has developed in such different and inspiring ways to promote Low Carbon living, each one has given us food for thought and encouraged our plans of action!

We now have two groups: The Eco Renovation Group and The Food Group. The Eco-Renovation group is specifically looking at how to reduce the use of energy in our cold, draughty houses. The group's mantra is insulation, insulation, insulation!

The Food Group is looking at how we can promote local, sustainable, fair traded food. Ideas have included coming together to share delicious home grown or home cooked food as well as exchanging seedlings, plants and excess vegetables, and encouraging one pot planting so that more people try growing herbs or vegetables and realise what a pleasure it can be.

If you would like to join us in any of our activities please contact

Claire Ball: Claire.ball20@ntlworld.com,
or **Anna Eden** annaeden49@hotmail.com

NEW GREEN BINS FOR FOOD WASTE

Many residents have complained that it was a waste of resources to deliver these to every household because so many in this area already compost their kitchen waste. And how likely is it that the 30% of student households in the area will ever use them?

The trouble with traditional composting is you can only compost uncooked vegetable materials. **Did you realise that you can put ANY food waste in these little green bins, cooked or not?** So stale bread, meat and bones, fish and chips leftovers, unfinished desserts and culinary disasters – all can be swept into the green bins and recycled weekly. Give it a go!

James Styring

TRAFFIC ACTION GROUP

The new 20 mph zone

After years of campaigning by DRARA and other residents' associations, the much-vaunted 20mph zones were implemented six months ago. Drivers are going slower both in our area and across the city, although not all obey the limits by any means.

When drivers drive at 20mph, the benefits are enormous: the roads are quieter, less aggressive, easier to cross and safer. We asked for our 20mph zone to be backed up with changes at street level. Traffic calming measures such as speed cushions are unpopular – motorists complain about them and if you live next to one, you suffer the screech of brakes, the squeak of suspension and then the acceleration away from the bumps.

The existing triangular build-outs on Divinity and Southfield Roads are ineffective. Instead, we asked for genuine chicanes to slow cars. We also asked for the future CPZ designs to support lower speeds. Neither idea was taken on board because maximization of car parking was prioritized.

Unhelpfully, Thames Valley Police have said they won't enforce the limits, so we are left with a 20mph zone which relies solely on drivers' good will and sense. DRARA is going to join others in lobbying the police to change their stance.

If you want to check how fast cars are going on your stretch of road, why not borrow East Area Parliament's

speed gun and do your own tests? Contact 07792 375423 / jamesstyring@yahoo.co.uk.

Controlled Parking Zone

DRARA reps attended the meeting in October 2009 at which the County Council approved in principle the implementation of the CPZ in our area.

We complained that pavement parking is an unworkable solution to the problem of shoehorning huge modern cars into narrow Victorian streets. Those who rely on wheelchairs would be the worst affected by pavement parking, and disability campaigners are planning a legal challenge to the sanctioning of pavements as car parks. We also expressed regret that neither the County Council nor Brookes is willing to take a stand on student parking and ban most students from bringing cars to Oxford.

What is happening now? The drawings are being finalised and the scheme is due for approval at around the time this newsletter goes to press. The Divinity Rd Area CPZ depends on whether or not the Magdalen Rd Area CPZ goes ahead. If a decision is made to go ahead with Magdalen, then Divinity has the green light. If not, the debate will continue. There isn't a firm timetable for implementation yet, but the parking shop has capacity for issuing permits from December this year. It is very unlikely to happen sooner than that. In April, the County Council will write to let residents know what to expect.

Improved crossing at Warneford Lane

After twelve months of encouragement, a County Council engineer has agreed to install a dropped kerb and a proper pathway across the mudbath (central reservation) at the end of Warneford Lane, to create a much more seamless pedestrian crossing between Divinity Road and South Park/Cheney/Brookes. He says it is funded from April this year, so watch that space!

We can then start a campaign for a proper zebra crossing (which would be very expensive and therefore another struggle!).



Thanks to Lynn Trener!

Lynne Trener, for ten years resident in Southfield Road and for five years a tireless campaigner for better road

conditions locally, is leaving the area. Without her hard work and enthusiasm DRARA's 20mph and CPZ campaigns would never have got off the ground. A heart-felt thank you, Lynne!

If any DRARA members would like to help with future campaigns – Enforcement of 20mph limits? Road closure? – please join!!

James Styring Contact 07792 375423 / jamesstyring@yahoo.co.uk.



OXFORD BROOKES LIASON

Brookes dates:

Easter Break: Friday 2 April – Friday 16 April 2010.

Term ends: Friday 21 May 2010. Term starts: Monday 20 September 2010.

Community Relations :

A recent Brookes brochure states: "We recognize that there are "hot spots" and there are three key issues that keep recurring: noise, parking and rubbish. We are working with Thames Valley Police to support Police Community Support Officers focused on areas where we find the most complaints; we are undertaking litter patrols and working to remind our students of the importance of being a good neighbour.

Students in halls are not allowed cars. However, we are no longer allowed to check vehicle ownership through the DVLA. We support controlled parking zones as the only enforceable way to limit cars in private roads.

As our students are adults, the university does not and cannot act in loco parentis."

The Brookes website states: "The university is committed to resolving any potential conflict quickly and employs a dedicated member of staff to address any concerns raised by local residents. There is a residents' complaints procedure in place to deal with disruptive behaviour."

Should you have any concerns please contact Andrea Siret, the Customer Relationship Manager, on 01865 48445 or community@brookes.ac.uk.

The two Police Community Support Officers funded by Brookes are due to start in April

Sinnet Court:

There has been an increase in the number of complaints about the behaviour of students from Sinnet Court, particularly on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Our local PCSO Mark Jones, whose area includes lower Southfield Road, is doing his best to address the problem. The main issues are associated with heavy drinking at night, and include noise, - shouting and kicking wheelie bins-, vandalism -smashing wing mirrors-, and vomiting and urinating. The problems are being raised at the Neighbourhood Action Group and at the Councillors liaison meeting with Brookes.

For incidents which require immediate action call the duty warden on 07786 962 015. If you are reporting an incident the following day contact the Sinnet Court manager, Amanda Green, on 202377 or amanda.green@A2dominion.co.uk.

Student Accommodation:

In 2008/9 the number of Brookes students living in private rented housing was 3,765, well above the Oxford local plan target of 3,000. The number for Oxford University was about 3,600. Brookes is building more than 800 extra student bedrooms in purpose-built accommodation in an attempt to meet the City Council target.

The areas (wards) with the highest concentration of students living in private rented accommodation- normally HMOs- are St. Clements with over 650 students, St. Mary's and Churchill with over 520, Headington with nearly 400, and Iffley Fields with around 300.

79% of Brookes full time students are aged 18-24.

WARNEFORD MEADOWS – WE WON!!!!

Judge David Waksman, sitting in the High Court, had upheld Oxfordshire County Council's decision to register the Meadow as a Town Green on 23 March 2010.

The judicial review of the County's decision to register the Meadow as a town green was heard in the High Court in

London over two days at the end of February by Judge David Waksman. The Mental Health Trust was represented by a top QC, the County Council by more junior but very expert barristers. The judge had to rule first on whether "No right of way" notices erected for a few months in 1989, for a different purpose, meant that residents should have known that the land was private; second, whether it mattered in law that users from Hill Top Road, the street nearest the Meadow, were a minority among all users. The law requires users to come from a "locality or neighbourhood"; the Inspector had ruled that the Divinity Road area, from which most users come and on which town green applicant Paul Deluce based his claim, was "insufficiently cohesive" to form a neighbourhood, but that HTR was cohesive enough. The judge also had to hear from another interested party, Christopher Whitmey.

Join us on Sunday June 27 for the Oxford Green Spaces sponsored walk in aid of the Warneford Meadow Town Green appeal. The walk will stretch from the Trap Grounds in North Oxford which achieved Town Green status in 2006, along the canal and Mill Stream to the Oxpens Meadow, then through green spaces eastwards up to the Warneford Meadow and along unsuspected green stretches back to the Trap Grounds. Please contact **Sietske Boeles** further information on :728153 or email : info@friendsofwarnefordmeadow.org.uk.

Further general information on the meadow and orchard, the legal case and fundraising can be obtained from **David Sutton** (tel.248847) or **Andrew Carter** (tel 426955) or by visiting www.friendsofwarnefordmeadow.org.uk

OXFORD BROOKES UPDATE

Police Community Support Officers: Brookes are going to fund the costs of two new PCSOs to patrol the DRARA, Headington and Gypsy Lane areas. The working hours of the officers are still under discussion. It is expected that they will start work by April 2010.

Community Relations: Andrea Siret, community relationship manager for Brookes, has been visiting HMOs in parts of Divinity and Southfield roads with a Council officer, to discuss waste disposal and recycling with students. The Brookes student union is planning a campaign in the second semester about citizenship "to encourage our members to have a greater understanding of their role within their local community." David Whittingham, general manager of the student union, works with Andrea Siret and would welcome any suggestions from residents' associations. He attends Neighbourhood Action Groups in Headington and East Oxford. (dwhittingham@brookes.ac.uk; asiret@brookes.ac.uk).

Anne Gwinnett, Director of Corporate Affairs at Brookes, and Andrea Siret recently had a meeting with Elizabeth Mills and myself to discuss community relations. A meeting between Brookes and representatives from several residents' associations took place on 18 November; the next meeting will probably take place in February, rather than in six months time.

Cars: Since May the DVLA has refused to supply Brookes with identification of the owners of cars, which it makes it difficult to discover which students are using cars against the rules. Brookes has written to Andrew Smith MP about this issue, and hopes the resident associations will do so too.

Buses: There are now eleven new Brookes buses, run by the Oxford Bus Company, all manufactured in the UK and producing 80% fewer emissions than previous buses.

Location of Students: Our impression that there is a massive concentration of students in the DRARA area has been confirmed by Brookes. They have done an analysis by postcode of the location of their full time students who are not living in university accommodation. They estimate that there are 3,431 such students and the heaviest concentration is in DRARA.

Studentification: A public meeting was held on 23 September on the impact of studentification on local communities. The problems of noise, litter, parking, squalid houses, anti-social behaviour, lack of neighbours etc. are shared by many university towns throughout the country. The lead speaker was Professor Danny Dorling from Sheffield University. The meeting had to be moved from Cheney School because the school was afraid of offending Brookes. It was agreed that the local RAs would work on submissions to the N.E.Area Committee and the East Area Parliament on action plans which will address the issues associated with the high concentration of HMOs. This meeting was reinforced by DRARA's guest speaker at its October AGM, Dr. Richard Tyler.

Street Cleaning: Brookes have purchased a machine for cleaning the streets near the Headington campus. (Unfortunately it cannot be operated by students for insurance reasons.)

Landlord Accreditation Scheme: the City Council is just completing a consultation on this scheme. Brookes strongly supports it and thinks it should be mandatory (not voluntary as at present), and should include agents as well as landlords.

For further information, please contact: **Ivon Asquith** (ivon.asquith@btinternet.com).

What's happening with Planning Issues?

Brookes Planning: On March 18th Oxford City Council granted planning permission for this controversial development. DRARA is concerned that as a result our area may be prone to future sewage flooding. This development has a capacity of 23,000 m² and we understand that its sewerage will drain via an antiquated system through our area to the Cowley Road. We understand that Thames Water assesses the current sewerage capacity in St. Clements as critical. We have been alerted to this problem by Marston residents who recently experienced a number of serious sewerage floods which have affected residential properties around the Ferry Road. In their view the Brookes' overdevelopment at their Headington Hill site may be a main contributing factor. DRARA has asked councillors to investigate and we have also asked further clarification from the City Council and Thames Water.

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Planning application for the development of the Highfield Adolescent Unit: Planning permission has been granted for the development for a new adolescent unit on the Warneford Hospital cricket pitch. We would have preferred to have this much needed development elsewhere on Trust premises in order to save this popular sports ground. The development will start shortly but occupation of the development is subject to the Mental Healthcare Trust finding a replacement pitch.

Future housing developments on green spaces in East Oxford:

The City Executive has just approved their five-year plan for the development of much needed housing in East Oxford. However a number of sports facilities such as the former Bowling Green opposite the Regal, Lincoln College Cricket Ground at Bartlemas Close and the former St Augustine School playing fields are all under threat.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP (NAG)

The East Oxford Neighbourhood Action Group is “a multi-agency, problem-solving group that consists of relevant partner agencies, key stakeholders and, most importantly, members of the local community”. The NAG is primarily responsible for advising the Thames Valley Police on policing priorities, and providing a means by which the Police, the Oxford City Council, the Oxfordshire County Council, and other agencies such as Oxford Brookes University can meet on a regular basis to discuss matters of mutual concern.

Low level vandalism and anti-social behaviour, street drinking, and drug dealing are the subjects of regular discussion, as are littering (caused by cards promoting nightclubs and other venues being indiscriminately tucked under the windscreen wipers of parked cars), and the effects of the large vehicles parked outside O2 blocking the flow of traffic on the Cowley Road.

The police have regular “surgeries”, and invite anybody to come along and meet them to discuss matters of concern. I attend the NAG on behalf of DRARA, and report any recent incidents which have been passed to me. However, it is clear that many of those incidents are not also reported to the Police. It is very important residents not only inform a DRARA committee member of any incident via the online form on www.drara.org.uk, but also inform the police via their non-emergency telephone number 0845 8 505 505 or their online reporting form <http://thamesvalley.police.uk/reptcr/reptcr-repform.htm>

BITS AND PIECES

Reporting anti-social behaviour: Despite the fact that many of us have suffered increased incidents of anti-social behaviour this year, this isn't being translated into reports to the police. If you experience problems with noise, drunkenness, petty vandalism or other nuisances please could you not only report such incidents as soon as possible after the event by calling the non-emergency number (08458 505 505), but also let the DRARA Committee know too – preferably by emailing through the website.

Dog Fouling: A new effort to reduce dog fouling in our streets is underway. A leaflet about this campaign will be on our notice board in the near future.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Sunday 25th April between 1pm and 5pm
Open Gardens Part One : Spring.
Look out for posters or at the DRARA website for more information. A small charge will be made for each garden.

Sunday May 1st at 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Historical walk and talk – Explore the neighbourhood with Malcolm Graham.

£4. Tickets are strictly limited to 20 and must be booked in advance. Email draraevents@googlemail.com to book. Suitable for children over 12 years.

DR MALCOLM GRAHAM, Oxford's best known local historian, is the former head of Oxfordshire Studies with Oxfordshire County Council, including managing the county's extensive photographic archive of over 400,000 images. His doctoral thesis was on the suburbs of Victorian Oxford, and he later produced a book: *The images of Victorian Oxford*. He has published extensively on the history of Oxford since the 1970s. Of interest particularly for those of us in the DRARA area are: *On Foot in Oxford, no 12: East Oxford*, (Oxfordshire County Council Libraries Service, 1987) and with Laurence Waters, *Cowley and East Oxford Past and Present*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2002). He could not be better qualified to lead our walk!

Saturday June 20th 5pm – 11.30pm

Meal on the Street. Celebrate 10 year's of this favourite DRARA event and the solstice too! To be held in the mid stretch of Southfield Road. More helpers needed – please contact Henrietta Gill henriettaqill@yahoo.co.uk or 726 818

July tbc : family play day at Sinnet Court Relax with the kids in the safe play space at Sinnet Court

Saturday September 18th 2pm-11pm

Freecycle and community clean up in the afternoon including tea and Then. . . . Film in the Street in the evening

Useful contacts:

City Councillors, St Clements Ward: Nuala Young (Green), tel 749459 or cllrnyoung@oxford.gov.uk
Mary Jane Sareva (Green), tel 07776 075250 or cllrmsareva@oxford.gov.uk

County Councillor: Larry Sanders (Green), larry.sanders@oxfordshire.gov.uk and Sajjad Malik (Labour), sajjad.malik@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxford City Council Environmental Officer: Alex Solaja, tel 252821.

Brookes Community Liaison: Andrea Siret, tel 484451 or community@brookes.ac.uk

Cowley Road Police Station (non-emergency): All local officers can be contacted at 08458 505 505 or eastoxfordneighbourhood@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

Sinnet Court: Amanda Jane Green, Manager: 202438, 202377 or amanda.green@a2dominion.co.uk. Office staffed from 9am to 5pm Monday-Friday. Incidents outside of office hours please contact our student warden team on 07786962015

DRARA Contact Cindy Carlson on 242949 or carwal9704@yahoo.co.uk