

Welcome

I do hope you like the newsletter redesign. Any comments gratefully received.

I'm proud to have been elected as Chair of DRARA in succession to Elizabeth Mills at our AGM in October. I've lived on Divinity Road for over 26 years and in that time have been a local councillor, school governor and afterschool club chair, allotment trustee and campaigner on all kinds of local issues. DRARA is an active residents association and there are plenty of challenges to keep us all busy.

At its first meeting the new Committee took the opportunity to reflect on DRARA's successes and agree on what needs focusing on in the coming year. As Chair, I want to see DRARA understand and support the needs of our diverse community within its clear geographic area. This diversity brings huge benefits, but it would be unrealistic not to acknowledge that it also has its challenges.

DRARA's work with older people in our community is greatly admired, particularly

its 'dementia friendly' initiative. We want to supplement this with an increased engagement with young families in the area and improve relations with students and other short term residents in our area. Improving our communications by newsletter, a revamp of our website, a new facebook page and having DRARA on twitter are intended to support this process.

Finally we want to retain our enviable and envied capacity to lobby local institutions, leaders and businesses on



Martin Stott, DRARA's new Chair

topics and issues that impact on our residents and to do so in an informed and constructive manner.

If you have ideas about what DRARA should be doing or if you want to help us build our community, do get in touch with any member of the Committee.

Very best,

Martin Stott – Chair, DRARA

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e: Martin.stott@talk21.com

Twitter: @divinity 65

Hello to the new DRARA Committee

At the DRARA AGM, there was some change round in the Committee with some people stepping down and some new additions. Here's an introduction to who's who and doing what for 2014.



Claire Gibbons
Secretary



Nick Welch
Newsletter



Georgia Styring
Events

Maggie Hartford
Environmental



Deborah Tricker
Website

Mark Redhead
Treasurer



Anne Hall
Membership



Ivon Asquith
Brookes Liaison



Tom Knollys
Planning



Sietske Boeles

Plain ambitious?

In March 2013, the government announced a new Cycle City Ambition Grant fund worth up to £3m. Oxford's cycling campaign group Cyclox contacted the County Council straightaway, suggesting filling in all of gaps in the cycle lanes on main roads. The County finally came back saying: what about rebuilding The Plain to make it all a lot slower, safer and easier for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians?

Cyclox suggested turning The Plain into a 'Dutch' roundabout, with a separate priority track for cyclists around the outside. But the County said that old graves and two big trees were a problem and when we tried drawing a Dutch design, it didn't look like it was going to work.

In August 2013, the government announced that Oxford would get £850,000 for works at The Plain with contributions from the councils at £100,000. The grant has to be spent soon and there hasn't been time to look at lots of options in detail or change things too radically. The County are now settling towards narrowing and slowing the traffic, but keeping cyclists on the road. It looks like they may retain the two lanes coming from town over Magdalen Bridge (unlike the single lane shown in this early plan), but there will be



a new cycle lane in the middle for people heading for Cowley and Iffley Roads. While it isn't perfect, it does look like it will be an improvement on what is there at the moment.

Planning in the DRARA area

There have been a number of planning applications affecting the DRARA area since the last Newsletter.

An outcome to the requirement for 'landscaping' to the side of 251 Cowley Road (on the corner of Southfield Road) is still awaited. The condition was imposed when permission was granted for the changes to the side elevation. A scheme consisting simply of installing plain metal bollards around the new area of tarmac has been rejected by the council.

A retrospective application for change of use of 44 Divinity Road into an 8-bedroom HMO (it had been a 6 room HMO) has been approved, despite concerns about overcrowding and lack of amenities.

An application for two new houses to the side of 195 Divinity Road (Sandy Mount) was withdrawn (there is existing permission for one house).

A decision on an application for the land behind 229-333 Cowley Road for a new house, fronting Bartlemas Road is awaited; permission was refused for an earlier application for two flats on the site.

Bordering the DRARA area, the Mosque in Manzil Way has won approval for a variation in the conditions of the original application, which includes approval for a landscaping

scheme that does not provide any tree screen along the boundary with Divinity Road gardens, despite this being a condition of the original planning permission. The City Council has been asked for response to explain why this condition has been dropped. Existing permission for a mortuary and caretaker's house may be implemented as part of future works.

The City Arms, on the corner of Magdalen Road is applying for a Lawful Development Certificate for the retention of a TV screen on the outside wall of the pub, on the basis that an external TV was shown on the plans for changes to the pub in 2007 and that the screen has been in use since then.

Planning in East Oxford:

Plans for additional student accommodation on the areas of former Travis Perkins site off East Avenue (which allocated for employment use) have been withdrawn.

Licensing:

An application to extend the hours of operation of the Bullingdon Arms to 2.30 am Monday to Thursday and to 3.30am Friday and Saturday has been rejected.

planning@drara.org.uk



Foodie on Tour

Mum, wife, food writer and all-out food addict, I'm constantly on the lookout for the most exciting, delicious, or downright devilish food experiences. Having lived in Oxfordshire for over fifteen years, I now live in East Oxford, having a whale of a time getting to grips with the local food scene – I'll be bringing you up to speed on all the latest food news.

I love Oxford. Having been a 'townie' for pretty much all of my life, the joy of having everything on your doorstep is absolute bliss for me. Restaurants, bars, coffee shops ... how do you ever get bored, or run out of somewhere new to eat, in a city like ours?! For me though, East Oxford has to be the pinnacle of this – filled with independent restaurants, new venues opening (and sadly closing) quicker than you can blink.

Here are a few of my favourite recent additions:

Oli's Thai

38 Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RB

Magdalen Road is quickly becoming my favourite Foodie half-mile, with the likes of Magdalen Arms, OxforK and the Rusty Bicycle already residing. Oli's Thai have brought something exciting and completely new to the equation.

Serving up stunningly fresh and tasty authentic Thai food, at very reasonable prices, Oli's is also open for coffee and Thai groceries outside of lunch and dinner service. If you haven't been yet, you are seriously missing a trick.



Taberu Restaurant

100 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JE

Finally, delicious sushi I can eat within walking distance from my home. Not only that, but they're starting a delivery service – eeeek! Much better than Yo! but not the best I've ever eaten (they have a tendency to be overly generous with a zigzag of mayo on their sushi rolls), you won't find it cheap, but the portions are ample and the food is delectable.



Wolvercote Supper Club

Address confirmed on booking

Supper clubs have been popular in London for some time now, but have only recently hit Oxford. The concept being restaurant dining, mostly with strangers, in the comfort of someone's home – think Come Dine With Me, without rifling through the host's knicker drawer (oh, and you pay of course). With four now up and running in the area,



Wolvercote Supper Club led the charge and will take some beating. Run monthly by über hostess Caroline Sweetman, the Wolvercote Supper Club will get your taste buds tingling with African and Middle Eastern inspired dishes. At a mere £22.50 per person for four to five courses, it's a bargain – you may even make a few new friends.

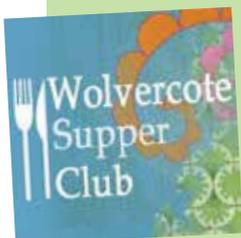
Jacobs Inn

130 Godstow Road, Wolvercote, Oxford OX2 8PG

If the opening of this newest venture by the Jacobs & Field boys passed you by, then you've had your head firmly in the sand. Previously The Red Lion, Jacobs Inn launched at the end of July after a huge media build up; it wasn't all just fur coat and no knickers though – they serve up mighty fine grub. If you're familiar with their Headington based café, then you will recognise their fabulous breakfast menu and selection of deli items for sale, alongside burgers, sandwiches and steaks. If the potted pork and lemon tart are on the menu when you visit, give them a try... you can thank me later!



You can follow FoodieOnTour on Twitter [@FoodieOnTour](https://twitter.com/FoodieOnTour), or check out her blog www.foodieontour.co.uk





Updates from DRARA Groups

University liaison

Ivon Asquith

There has been an increase in the number of complaints about the bad behaviour of students. Most complaints are about noise and most of the students are from Brookes. This has been reported in The Oxford Times (31 October) and on BBC Radio Oxford (7 November). Brookes have strengthened their disciplinary procedures so that offending students will have to see a senior manager at an earlier stage; and the City Council are rolling out their House Champions scheme in student HMOs. The President of the Brookes Union has started a blog, Love Thy Neighbour. It is very important that residents report incidents to Brookes so that they can monitor the effectiveness of the stronger disciplinary framework.

Events group – events@drara.org.uk

Georgia Styring/Lisa Moor

In 2014, we are hoping to bring some new and exciting events to the DRARA area as well as the return of well established firm favourites such as 'Film in the Street'. Events like the ones DRARA runs help to bring a community together by enabling people to meet their neighbours, have fun and get to know their streets more. We're hoping that whatever we can organise, people will come out and support us in our endeavours and most importantly have fun! If you'd like to help in any way, or have any ideas for events, please do email us at events@drara.org.uk.

Environmental Action group

Maggie Hertford

Guerilla gardening: If you see someone mending the wooden struts that protect the mini-gardens around the trees in Divinity or Southfield road, or shifting soil, or planting herbs – no, we are not from the council. We are volunteers from Drara's Environmental Action Group, doing a bit of guerilla gardening to make the area more attractive. If you live near a 'tree pit', feel free to use the herbs or vegetables. If there's a dry spell next spring, please water the mini-gardens to keep the plants alive.

Energy saving: Our postcode, OX4, is one of the areas chosen for an ECO (Energy Company Obligation) scheme to fund insulation and new boilers for people on low incomes. The first step is to call freephone 0800 456 1050 to talk to an advisor and see if your home is eligible. If you are a tenant, your landlord must agree.

Membership – membership@drara.org.uk

Anne Hall

Membership of DRARA is by household rather than individual. The annual subscription is £5 for waged households and £2 for unwaged, students or those who are retired. DRARA's events, newsletters, and campaigning work, are all funded from subscription income. So by joining DRARA, you will be making a real difference to the local environment.

We have already started collecting subs for 2013/14 and a collector may have called on you already or will do so in the next few weeks. We are very grateful to those who have volunteered their time to collect. If you are out or away after two visits your collector will leave you a slip with subscribing details. We would be grateful if you would follow up these slips and also give us any email address changes. Thank you for all the subs we receive.

In the Hood

A guide to events and goings on in Oxford

With limited space in this edition, we've opted to just let you know about the local Christmas church services. For future editions, we hope to be able to bring you much more detailed listings of local events.

Christmas in the Parish

(for fuller details see stmaryandstjohn.org, or tel **242396**)

Mon 16 Dec 7.30pm – Christmas Concert in Ss Mary & John's
(Divinity Singers and E. Oxford Community Choir)

Wed 18 Dec 8pm – Carols in Bartlemas Chapel
(Bartlemas Singers)

Christmas Eve (Tue 24 Dec)

6pm – Crib Eucharist at Ss Mary & John's
(Light a candle at the crib, & Communion)

11.30pm – Midnight Mass at Ss Mary & John's

Christmas Morning

9.30am at St Alban's

10.30am at Ss Mary & John's

If you have any comments about articles featured in this newsletter, have ideas for future articles or would like to contribute yourself, please email newsletter@drara.org.uk or nickwelch@fsmail.net. We'd be very happy to hear from you.