

The internet is getting more useful all the time! You can register on the Council website for text messages to remind you which recycling bin to put out, find a new home for almost anything via the Oxford Freecycle site, and even, I discovered recently, pore over remarkably detailed aerial photographs of the neighbourhood on Google Earth. I was doing this to try and find out which house was responsible for playing top volume dance out into the garden through the small hours of Bank Holiday Monday. I had a great view of the house from the back when I got up to close the windows and put my ear plugs in, but I didn't know which one it was from the front. Now I do.

I couldn't say I've never annoyed my neighbours myself, though I do try to give them notice. But it seems a good time of year to make a general plea to respect others and keep the noise down. Especially if you've got your doors and windows open, and especially if it's after 11 at night.

Jo Lyon (lyon.jo@gmail.com)

Google also provides easy access to the voluminous 'Oxford Brookes Masterplan' 2007 – the University's plans for the Headington and Wheatley sites (and much else besides). Buried in the 'socio-economic' impact document – and I recommend those of a delicate disposition sit down before reading on - the Plan argues that: *'One of the disincentives for living in hall may be the ban on keeping a car. We will test this through market research. If it proves to be a major consideration, we will need to discuss with the City the potential for changing the current policy in respect of accommodation for continuing students, and the provision of onsite parking'*. The Plan goes on to state (take tablets now) that Sinnet Court... *'has confounded our expectations in that it has not been easy to fill. It may be that housing continuing students will require a radically different approach with, for example, smaller units, no on-site staff, and accommodation which more nearly matches the kind of property which students rent in the private sector'*... So that's it then. Watch this space for further news on the Disasterplan...

Sandy Ruxton (sandy.ruxton@gmail.com)

From the Chair

It's been a busy period, on both the campaigning and social fronts. There seems to be no respite in the flow of new planning applications for sites in, or close to, our area. The planning applications in respect of Warneford Meadow have yet to be resolved, but already development pressure has spread to the adjoining Southfield Golf Course, with the City Council identifying over half of it as potential development sites. Oriel College are also planning to build on the former nursery site within the Bartlemas Conservation Area. This underlines how important it is that we have a strong Association to represent local residents' views. **Do come and support DRARA by attending the AGM at Southfield Golf Club on Monday 24 September.** We are planning to have a talk on a matter of local interest and contributions from the Police and local Councillors.

Peter Coggins



Warneford Hospital Playing Field, Park Hospital and Warneford Meadow

The five applications in respect of these sites were considered at the City Council's Strategic Development Control Committee (SDCC) – its overall planning committee – on 25 April. The Committee decided that it could not consider the applications and resolved that:

1. It would decline to comment on the principle of development in respect of any of the applications
2. The applicants be advised to withdraw all the applications and to engage in constructive dialogue with the planning officers, in light of the recently-adopted Local Plan, and to submit clear and precise full planning applications.
3. If the applicants chose not to take the advice in the previous point, Council officers would submit reports to a future meeting on the current applications, with clear recommendations to enable the SDCC to determine them.

The Mental Healthcare Trust clearly wanted a decision to be made at the meeting and has not taken the Councillors' advice to withdraw the applications. Instead it has appealed to the Secretary of State on the ground of non-determination by the Council. These applications will, therefore, be decided at a Planning Inquiry which will take place in the autumn. DRARA, together with five other residents' associations and Friends of Warneford Meadow are continuing to work together and will make a joint objection to these applications at the Inquiry.

Southfield Golf Club

The City Council set out its preferred options for Oxford's 'Core Strategy' in a document published in the Spring. This identified sites for development that exceed 10 hectares. Large parts of Southfield Golf Course have been selected: an area of 25 hectares adjoining the Club House (the western site) and a smaller area on the far side of the Course (the eastern site), adjoining Hollow Way. The only current road access for the western site, an area that could accommodate over a thousand houses, is from Hill Top Road. DRARA has strongly objected to the selection of both sites, the western site on the grounds of inadequate road access, increased traffic, and loss of green space, wildlife habitats, and a sports facility; the eastern site on the grounds that it would render the golf course uneconomic, thereby opening up the major part of the course for

development. To see the Council's proposals visit www.oxford.gov.uk/corestrategy. **Peter Coggins**

Warneford Meadow Town Green Inquiry

From 8-12 October Vivian Chapman QC will chair an inquiry in Oxford Town Hall to determine Paul Deluce's application to have Warneford Meadow designated as a Town Green which would preserve it as a community asset. The main opponent will be the NHS who own the land. Paul and about twenty local witnesses will give evidence at the inquiry to demonstrate that Warneford Meadow and Orchard have been freely used by local residents for recreation and exercise for more than twenty years. Written statements with evidence of use by another fifty residents will also be submitted. Paul would like to hear from anyone in the DRARA area who has regularly used the meadow, in the present or past. Photographic evidence is also very important.

Paul is also seeking assistance in paying for the legal costs, which are estimated at £20,000. If anyone is able to help (Gift Aid available for donations over £100) please contact Sietske Boeles, 108 Southfield Road (728153) or email FOWM@btinternet.com for further details.

There will also be a **Warneford Orchard Harvest Fundraising Event** in front of Jack Howarth House at the end of Hill Top Rd, adjacent to Warneford Meadow, on October 7th from midday to include:

Apple pressing with a traditional wooden handpress, apple produce contest, apple bobbing and other children's games, stalls and music. Also a tour around the Orchard with an apple expert. Further details and offers of help contact Sietske on 728153

Grassroots news round-up

Leon Close bus stop reinstated!

For over a year following the re-ordering of Cowley Road, the bus stop at the junction of Leon Close remained firmly closed. However a series of letters and emails from DRARA to the City Council, County Council and Oxford Bus Company have resulted in the bus stop being reinstated. A bit of pressure can make a difference...

Post Box at the bottom of Divinity Road

When the Post Office and Londis closed for the redevelopment of the site at the bottom of Divinity Road, the Post Box was also removed. We assumed it would be replaced when the work was over and the Co-op opened, but sadly this has not been the case: it was on private land and removed at the land owner's request. Royal Mail currently has no plans to reinstate it, arguing in response to my complaint that "there is sufficient depth of posting facilities within the immediate area" – with 'immediate' being defined as 'within 500m'.

If you are unhappy with this decision, contact Oxford's Collections Manager, Philip Gee at philip.gee@royalmail.com, 01865 781986, or Royal Mail, Alec Issigonis Way, Oxford OX4 2ZZ. In addition, we could ask Mr Tom Crampton Smith, who is the land owner of the Co-op site, to request the reinstatement of

the Post Box. Please copy letters to Elizabeth Mills at 11 Divinity Road (elizabeth@eminence-grise.co.uk)

DRARA website: www.drara.org.uk

The new website has received very positive feedback, and many local residents – and others from further afield – have been checking the website for up-to-date information about events and activities, and campaigns affecting the DRARA area. But the website is only as good as the information the webmaster receives, so if you spot something that needs updating, you have an idea how to make it even more useful, or you see a glaring omission, just complete a "Contact Us" form online. **Elizabeth Mills**

Driving and parking on local streets

Residents' parking – stage one about to start

The County Council is planning to start preliminary work on the introduction of a controlled parking zone (CPZ) for the Divinity Road area.

Parking and traffic surveys have been scheduled to start in September and there will be consultation with DRARA and local councillors, prior to detailed consultation with residents. DRARA surveyed traffic flows and parking volumes in July and October last year to assess the impact of university and school terms on traffic and the number of parked cars.

The key points to emerge were that in October, when students come back, the increases were: Divinity Road: 65%, Southfield Road: 62%, Bartlemas Road: 27%, Warneford Road: 52%, Minster Road: 13%, Hill Top Road: 29%. In October there were 551 residents' cars parked in the DRARA area. Of these, we believe 271 – just under half -- belonged to students. Commuter parking also significantly increased – particularly in Hill Top Road, the bottom of Divinity Road and the top of Southfield Road. Similarly, when we counted the total number of journeys through the DRARA area at morning and evening peak times we found there were 1613 journeys entering and exiting our streets in July while in October this rose to 2329 – a 44 per cent increase in traffic volumes.

DRARA has sent the results of the surveys to the Council and they will be very useful when we begin discussions with the County Council on residents' parking. For details see www.drara.org.uk.

We welcome your ideas on suitable residential parking schemes – bearing in mind that if the scheme goes ahead we will lose a high percentage of the parking we currently have available. Please email lynne@setpoint.co.uk or call James on 07792 375423.

'Life Begins at 20' Campaign

DRARA was one of six residents' groups which presented a petition calling for the introduction of 20 mph zones in residential streets to County Councillor Ian Hudspeth in July. A 20 mph zone has been introduced in Portsmouth and the County Council is monitoring the results of that scheme closely to see if lessons can be drawn for Oxford. **Lynne Treney**

Oi, Please Don't Park There!

It's been easy to park over the summer, but come October we'll be vying for every inch of kerb space in the area. However:

Please don't park on the pavement. The elderly or disabled, and those with pushchairs or small children, all have the right to walk on a pavement which is not blocked by cars. Parked cars can damage the kerbs and pavements. Few parts of the roads in our area are so narrow that it is necessary for cars to put two wheels on the pavement. An added bonus of cars parking wholly in the street is that the road gets narrower; this makes cars passing through the area drive more slowly.

Also, **please don't park at corners.** This is dangerous for drivers and cyclists as the line of sight is lost, and corner parking can make it impossible for large vehicles like rubbish trucks and fire engines to turn the corner at all. Your car is also far more likely to get damaged when you park at corners. Please park at least five metres from corners. **James Styring**

2007 DRARA events – best year yet?

We've had a busy time with numerous new events this year, thanks to an enthusiastic events team, and all seem to have been very well received!

We kicked off on April Fools Day with "Freecycle Day" - a great opportunity to get rid of unwanted things to neighbours and pick up a few bargains for free! Lots of good feedback so I'm sure we'll be holding another.

On a sunny afternoon at the end of April, Vicki Cullen and I led a group of 30+ people of all ages round our local green spaces and historic places. I think everyone learnt something! Thanks to all who piped up with additional facts and information (particularly Richard English and Graham Salmon) and to Oriel College for access to the woods and playing fields. **Judith FitzGerald**

Music in the Street

Allow me to let you into the secret of organising a successful street event, writes **Miles Doubleday**: if you get sunshine, the event will be a success. Music In The Street came in a brief interlude between downpours: all of a sudden Bartlemas Road was basking in jazz on a summer's day. If the acts that followed were not as culturally diverse as we might have hoped for, the age range of the performers was truly impressive. The afternoon closed with a performance of spectacular self-promotion from a band featuring the event's musical coordinator (me!), and as soon as the music was over the clouds regathered....

Open Gardens

I had the idea for this event last summer, writes **Rebecca Phillipson**, when visiting the beautiful gardens of some of my friends in Southfield Road. The initial response was encouraging, and with a bit of door knocking we managed to get a good geographical spread. With this summer's weather, it could easily have been rained off, but the sun came out at lunchtime and proceeded to shine for the rest of the afternoon! The turnout exceeded expectations, with about 90 tickets sold, meaning about 200 residents taking part! Owners of the gardens which

opened have all said how much they enjoyed it, and hopefully next year's event will be even better. A big thank you to everyone who opened their garden.

The **Street Meal** this was back in Minster Rd this year with a Bastille Day theme, a lovely summer's evening, a great atmosphere, and some fabulous fireworks by Ivan. Many thanks to all who organised it this year, in particular Charlotte, Paul, Henrietta, Susan and Vicki.

The final event of the year will be **Film in the Street** in Divinity Rd on Saturday 22 September: keep your eye out for posters or look on the website nearer the time.

With my third child due imminently, I'll be taking a back seat in the events organising next year, so if you fancy taking over the helm to make sure we have a good programme of events next year do get in touch!

Judith FitzGerald gfitz@farmersweekly.net

Brookes Liaison

The new Vice Chancellor Professor Janet Beer took up her post on 1 September: for more details see www.brookes.ac.uk. She replaces Professor Graham Upton. Rebecca Harty, Community Communications Officer, will be on secondment to Oxford City Council from 4 June 2007 to March 2008, working on a community engagement pilot project. Tim Field, former Oxford Brookes Students' Union President, is Acting Community Communications Officer. Contact him on 01865 484 451. **Barbara Crossley**

Future of Bartlemas Conservation Area

Bartlemas is the smallest Conservation Area in Oxford, comprising allotments, and a hamlet dating back to the 12th century including a farmhouse, former almshouse and chapel. DRARA was recently surprised to learn that a City Council consultation about the future of the Area had been in progress for some time. The appraisal document is important as future planning applications will be assessed against it. At the East Area Parliament meeting in June, DRARA and others argued that the original consultation document had been watered down, potentially relaxing environmental and planning restrictions on future development. Following complaints about the lack of consultation, the Council arranged a further meeting in July with key stakeholders, including DRARA. As a result, some of the appraisal wording was tightened up.

DRARA is monitoring closely both the appraisal, and a proposed development by Oriel College. We have registered concern at the College's plans to build student housing three floors high and uproot an orchard on the nursery site. We also fear the College may be considering further building within the Area; in particular, we believe no part of the allotments should be lost to future development. **Sandy Ruxton**

Bartlemas field allotments

Your nearest allotment site is the Bartlemas field, part of the Links Allotment Association. Lying between the defunct East Oxford Bowls Club on Cowley Road and Oriel College sports fields, the plots provide for about

50 members and is surprisingly secluded: just a few metres from Cowley Road you enter a place of rural calm. The Association was set up as part of the WW II campaign to 'dig for victory': I knew some of the old boys who marked out the Cumberland Road fields, though I suspect the allotments predate those. The fashion for allotments ebbs and flows: I have known periods when many plots lay vacant, but we are now fully let with a waiting list. Our soil is fertile but rather heavy and unforgiving, requiring hard work. We are adequately compensated however by having a lovely, tranquil setting and a really friendly and congenial group of ploholders.

Mike Kent, Co-Chair, tel: 724785

Update from local Councillors

Warneford Meadow

Your campaign to save Warneford Meadow was so effective that I felt that we should have voted on the application, when it was finally brought in front of the Planning Committee (see item, page 1). I was not impressed by John Goddard's Pontius Pilate-like refusal to take a decision that afternoon. Now the ball is out of our court and the decision will be taken by an inspector from Bristol. Letters to the inspector had to be in by the end of August, but it will still be worth turning up in person, when the date of the Inquiry has been decided.

Rats update

The East Area Parliament finally decided to do something about the growing number of rats in Manzil Way. We set aside about £600 of our budget to pay for three camouflaged traps which seem to have been successful. We have asked Environmental Health to keep an eye on the traps and remove any dead rats. I had thought we might be able to trap and relocate the rats, but apparently that would be illegal. Let us know if you see rats, or people leaving out bread, again.

Local trees

I have just been around South Park with the Tree Officer: surveys have shown eight to be dangerously diseased, and one had fallen already. Since the Osney willows debacle we have asked the Tree Officer to let us know before the felling of any tree. Then we want to know what is wrong with the tree and whether there are alternatives to felling. Unfortunately a valid case was made for each tree that the officers proposed to fell or remove and they are planning to go ahead with the felling within a month. I was hoping that they could go ahead with replacement trees but they say they don't have the budget to do this (each new tree planted costs £150). We were also shocked to hear that despite earlier assurances, they don't have funds to replace the diseased hornbeams and cherry trees in Manzil Way. The East Area Parliament has decided to set aside money to pay for replacement trees if the company responsible for the trench that killed most of them cannot be obliged to pay. We are hoping to see these trees planted by the end of the year.

The Bingo Hall

I had a brief chat with one of the young men who are taking on the running of the Bingo Hall. He insists that they do intend it to be a cultural venue, with plays and activities as well as music and dance. Certainly, the work

that has already been carried out inside the Hall looks to be of a good standard. We are hoping that he will come to the East Area Parliament on 19 September to answer questions from the local community.

Save local shops

Elise Benjamin and I are putting a resolution to the next full Council in September to get the go-ahead for a working group that can look at ways to keep the Cowley Road local, individual and distinct. Apparently there are "Well Being" national regulations that we may be able to use and Leicester has already been using this to protect the character of certain areas. Craig [Cllr Craig Simmons - Ed] is also putting forward a resolution to clarify the planning position on the distinction between retail and restaurant/café use of premises. so that we can better insist on a balance of services on Cowley Road.

A Delivery Space for the Co-op?

I have been pestering the County Highways people for 6 months now to get down to drawing the lines for delivery lorries for the Co-op at the foot of Divinity Road. On my last phone call I managed to locate Peter Brice as the man responsible for line markings. He assured me that he would see to it immediately. Do also phone him on 0845 310111 to urge him to actually make sure that it happens.

East Area Parliament

The next East Area Parliament meeting dates are:
19 Sep 2007 18:30 Larkrise Primary School, Boundary Brook Road
17 Oct 2007 18:30 St. Clement's Family Centre, Cross Street
21 Nov 2007 18:30 Larkrise Primary School, Boundary Brook Road

For more about the EAP, see

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/meeting-diary.cfm/detail/27>

Nuala Young, on behalf of our local councillors

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 cllrmysareva@oxford.gov.uk

County Councillor: Craig Simmons (Green), tel 202257 or craig@greenoxford.com

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

Acting Brookes Community Communications Officer: Tim Field, tel 484451

Cowley Road Police Station (non-emergency): All local officers can be contacted at 08458 505 505.

Sinnet Court: Amanda Green, Manager: 202377, or amanda.green@dominionhg.co.uk. Office staffed from 8am-6pm Monday-Friday. Out of hours incidents requiring immediate action call 07796 962015

DRARA Contact Peter Coggins on 723254 or email peterccoggins@aol.com
