

Welcome to this Christmas edition of the DRARA Newsletter from new Editors Sandy Ruxton (36 Southfield Rd) and Jo Lyon (19 Warneford Rd). We've taken over from Chantal Bryant, who has stood down after three years of dedicated service. Feedback is welcome, and any thoughts on future content. Contributions would be even better – if you want to write something please call or email either of us. **Copy deadline for the next edition is Friday 18 March.**

At the heart of the Christmas message (and central to other faiths) is the idea of helping others and providing protection. If you're thinking about making a donation this year, have you thought of Asylum Welcome, a local charity which supports asylum seekers and refugees, many of them families, separated children and young adults? They urgently need funds to maintain their essential advice and advocacy work. They are based at 276a Cowley Road, or see www.asylum-welcome.supanet.com.

Sandy Ruxton (sruxton2004@yahoo.co.uk, tel 432647) and Jo Lyon (joella.blogger@gmail.com, tel 241302).

DRARA latest

Many thanks to the well over 200 households who have joined again this year, and to the collectors whose efforts make this possible: about half the local households now actively support DRARA and this is very much appreciated by all of us who work to make it a positive, responsive and proactive organisation.

The DRARA AGM was successful and well-attended, giving residents the opportunity to discuss local issues with representatives from Oxford Brookes, Cherwell Housing, councillors and the local beat police. The Committee was re-elected en bloc: we meet regularly every two months but more help is needed if our work is to be effective. Please contact me, or any of the committee on the membership card, if you think you can help. **Mark Norman**

Sinnet Court

First term update Over 200 Oxford Brookes students are now settled in Sinnet Court. Resident manager Amanda Green acknowledges that there have been some teething problems, in particular around fire alarms going off, parking, increased litter and

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www.drara.org.uk



late night noise. However, she adds, "the majority of students have been well behaved and adhered to the guidelines and tenancy points set out before them. All our students are in their second year or above, and come from all over the world, from Saudi Arabia to Cameroon. We have a close social network and are looking forward to getting involved with the local community."

Activation of fire alarms has reduced considerably following the introduction of a £10 fine. "The majority of alarms are not set off intentionally," says Amanda, "but residents are now aware that steam from their shower will set the alarm off and the door must be kept closed".

Unlike students in private houses, Sinnet Court students are not allowed to have cars in Oxford; Brookes have admitted that enforcement efforts to date have not been effective. Amanda informed DRARA that Cherwell has now adopted the following procedure to enforce this ban:

- Twice daily patrols of Southfield, Divinity, Warneford and Minster Roads.
- Suspect cars are given a notice asking the driver to contact the office as they are believed to be in breach of their tenancy agreement.
- If Sinnet Court residents come forward they are given a verbal warning and asked to remove their car ASAP
- If Sinnet Court residents don't come forward Cherwell check the numberplate against a database compiled when the residents first moved in. If the database does not hold the relevant information they write to the DVLA.
- The DVLA can take up to 4 weeks to reply, but if the car's owner is confirmed by the DVLA as being a Sinnet Court resident a warning is given as above. If ignored, Cherwell will start eviction proceedings.

If you are aware of vehicles parked in the street which are apparently owned by Sinnet Court students, please report them to Amanda and Anne Ashley (Brookes Liaison Officer) (see contacts box) **Jo Lyon**

Residents' liaison On behalf of DRARA, Judith FitzGerald is meeting with Cherwell Housing Trust

on a monthly basis, to raise residents' issues and discuss action. It is important that local residents do raise concerns and problems, so Cherwell are aware of the impact they are having on the area. Contact Judith on 728741 or at gfitz@farmersweekly.net

Oxford Brookes University Residents'

Committee update Since Sinnet Court opened there have been many complaints about late night noise. The City Council's Licensing sub-committee voted on 29 July to reduce the Brookes bar's hours from 2 am to midnight on Mondays and Wednesdays. However, Brookes has appealed against this decision, and is also submitting a renewed application. In the meantime, despite the sub-committee's decision, the bar is allowed to stay open later: the current closing times are 2 am on Mon, Wed, Fri and Sat, and midnight on Tues, Thurs and Sun. The legal process is complex, but it seems possible that a final decision may be postponed indefinitely, as Brookes can make further applications at any time.

For more information about the process, please contact Barbara Crossley on 434088, or Barbara.Crossley@cancer.org.uk. If you are affected by late night noise (or other issues such as rubbish or flyposting), you can contact Anne Ashley, Brookes Liaison Officer and Alex Solaja, Oxford City Council's Environmental Officer (see contacts box). Please copy Barbara in. **Barbara Crossley**

On the streets

Parking The number of cars parked in local streets seems to rise every year, making it increasingly difficult for residents to park near their house. Some people have suggested that a Residents' Parking Zone (RPZ) might be the solution, and the County Council has approved this idea in principle, with exact measures to be developed in consultation with residents and for introduction some time between 2005/06 and 2010/11. It is not an easy option, however: the Council's report on local traffic issues states that "the introduction of an RPZ would result in a potentially substantial loss in available parking, as the existing provision would need to be rationalised and footway parking would not be permitted." It could be the introduction of an RPZ would make things worse rather than better. **Peter Coggins**

Trees The (former) tree site on the corner of Cowley and Divinity Roads has been swallowed up by the recent road works: it is not due for replacement until late 2005. We have also lost two

trees to vandalism: one at the corner of Warneford and Divinity Roads, and one near the corner of Divinity Road and Stone Street. Thanks to DRARA pressure, the Council did remove both these trees on 25 November, though nothing is likely to be replanted before February. This delay is in part because the City Council needs to apply to the County Council for funds for new trees: if they are not successful, there will be no replacement trees.

However, the trees in Divinity and Southfield Roads were the only positive thing to eventuate from the 'traffic scheme' we were given years ago by the City, and residents may well feel that the City Council should get on and replace trees within that scheme. To press for replanting SOON contact our Green Councillors and the City and County officers directly: Jason Hedley at the City Council Parks Department, (jhedley@oxford.gov.uk) and Judy Osborn at the County Council (judy.osborn@oxfordshire.gov.uk). **Louise Tod**

Litter With the opening of Sinnet Court residents will have noticed an increase in litter, especially fast food containers. DRARA has drawn this to the attention of the City Works and more litter picking has recently been done, though not, some have reported, nearly enough. To request litter picking, contact Andrew Castle at the Council's street sweeping section via the City Works hotline on 252900. More calls make it more likely to happen!

Sinnet Court also carries out twice-weekly litter picks. These cover the inside of Sinnet Court but also the pavement outside. Complaints about littering and requests for action can be addressed to manager Amanda Green (see contacts box) and copied to Judith FitzGerald.

Street sweeping with machines is done 2-3 times a year, and is scheduled for our area in January. Be aware that the Council has powers to tow cars left on the street in order to give the machines access. **Louise Tod & Judith FitzGerald**

Local developments

Cowley Road Matters

As many residents will be aware, in 2002 Oxfordshire County Council was awarded £1 million by the Department for Transport to improve the safety and environment of Cowley Road, and



create a situation where "people, cyclists, buses, cars and shops could all work well together, safely".

Over 2000 local people, including 'hard to reach' groups such as non English speakers, disabled people, children and the elderly, were involved in an initial consultation – run by East Oxford Action under the badge 'Cowley Road Matters'. A description of the process – including a 16 minute video of how different kinds of people got involved and how their input was used – plus the final proposal can be found on the East Oxford Action website via the link below. You can also view the plans in the Cowley Road Matters shop, just opposite Tesco on Cowley Road. **Jo Lyon**

http://www.eastoxford.com/beta/eoaltd/Cowley_Road/Cowley_index.htm

East Area Parliament

Since the May elections, the East Area Parliament (EAP) has agreed to spend money on: new play equipment in Meadow Lane with other sites under review; re-surfacing of East Oxford sports pitch; anti-litter signs for Cowley Road; funding for Carnival; cycle racks in St Clements; lighting for Manzil Way play area; festival and shop lighting on Cowley Road (previously paid for out of a central budget which has been cut). Ideas for further community projects are welcomed.

This month also sees the the EAP start a review of street cleaning, street bins and recycling. It plans to review current schedules to see whether the service can be improved within current budgetary constraints. It has also asked for the costs to install a plastics recycling 'bank' behind Tescos. Comments welcome. (see contacts box for how to get hold of Craig). **Craig Simmons**

Manzil Way Park

Long-planned improvements to the west end of the park look set to go ahead next year, following negotiation between the EAP and the Council. The EAP has been holding out (*or 'on'?* Eds.) for new toilet facilities, a proper police office, a store for park equipment and a seasonal café, and it now looks as if it will get its way. **Craig Simmons**

Extra equipment for children of all abilities will soon be installed in the play area. Funded by East Oxford Adventure Playground Association, this will complete the project begun a few years ago to totally re-design and re-equip this valued local amenity. **Mark Norman**

What's happening

Brookes semester dates

31 January - 18 March 2005: Teaching period

21 March - 1 April 2005: Easter break

4 April - 6 May 2005: Teaching period

7 May - 20 May 2005: Exams

East Area Parliament dates. All meetings start at 6.30pm and include a public Q&A session near the beginning. Members of the public wishing to raise matters with Councillors in private or wish to have a briefing prior to the meeting are welcome to turn up at 6.15pm. Councillors can also be contacted in advance in the normal way (see contacts box).

15 December 2004 St. Clements Family Centre, Cross Street

19 January 2005 Donnington Community Centre

16 February 2005 Crown House Club

16 March 2005 St Clements Family Centre

Christmas celebrations (at SS Mary and John's Church unless stated otherwise)

Friday 17 December, 1.30pm

SS Mary & John's Primary School Christmas Celebration

Saturday 18 December, 2.30pm

Singers from the Porch/ Steppin' Stone Centre

Sunday 19 December, 3.30pm (at St Alban's, Charles St)

Children's Nativity Service - especially suitable for very young children and their families

Monday 20 December, 7.30pm

Divinity Singers and East Oxford Community Choir's Christmas Concert

Tuesday 21 December, 8.15pm (at Bartlemas Chapel)

Bartlemas Singers' Carol Concert

Friday 24 December - Christmas Eve

6pm Nativity Celebration for All - Light a Candle at the Crib. **11.30pm** Midnight Mass

Saturday 25 December - Christmas Day

8am, 10.30am Eucharists

Sunday 26 December - St Stephen's Day

8am, 10.30am Eucharists

Monday 27 December - St John's Day, 11.30am (at All Saints' Convent Chapel)

Patronal Festival of the Parish and of St John's Home

Artweeks

City Artweeks (including East Oxford) is from Saturday 28 May to Sunday 5 June 2005. If you are thinking of signing up to open your home or studio to visitors, please remember to get details to the Artweeks Co-ordinator, Caryn Paladina, PO Box 281 Oxford OX2 9FX **by 31 December**.

You can find out all about it by logging on to www.artweeks.org, or you can phone me on 245378 if you want some encouragement! **Alison Berman**

Coming up in 2005

Friday 7 January, Asian Cultural Centre, Manzil Way, 7.45pm. Members of East Oxford Community Choir are planning a French evening in early January to celebrate l'Epiphanie and the Fete des Rois, with singing, wine and galettes. There will be a rehearsal from 6.30 – 7.30pm on Tuesday 4 Jan. Open to all ages. There will be a small charge. Please contact Trish Attwooll on 242482 or trishattwooll@yahoo.co.uk if you'd like to take part.

Sunday 15 May, Warneford & Bartlemas Roads
Street Fair: details to follow...

Saturday 17 September (tbc) Outdoor film: details to follow...

Help wanted

DRARA is hoping to hold several events in 2005 – but at the recent Events Meeting only the Street Fair (Judith FitzGerald) and the outdoor film (Andy Roscoe) had someone who was able to commit to coordinating such an event. Paul Wolf, lynchpin of many past events, needs to take a step back in 2005, not least because he is more involved in Cowley Road Carnival, and the Street Meal in Minster Road is taking a break.

There are some ideas that could be followed up – a summer cricket match, for example, or a street meal on a different road – but we need new people to come forward and get involved with planning and execution! The next events meeting is on **Wednesday 9 February 2005** at 8pm, at 108 Divinity Road. All welcome.
Jo Lyon

Useful contacts:

City Councillors, St. Clement's Ward:

Claire Palmer (Green Party), 26 Union Street, OX4 1JP Tel 0775 698549 or claire@greenoxford.com
Mary Jane Sareva (Green), 60 Morrell Avenue, Oxford OX4 1ND Tel 07776 075250 or cllrmjsareva@oxford.gov.uk

County Councillor: Craig Simmons (Green), 41 Magdalen Road, OX4 1RB Tel 202257 or craig@greenoxford.com

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

Brookes Community Liaison: Anne Ashley 484451 or amashley@brookes.ac.uk

Police Local Beat Officers: PC 3069 Steve Bowen; PC 798 David Stares; PC 1299 Chris Griffin (chris.griffin@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk). Cowley Road Police Station: 335138

Sinnet Court: Amanda Green, Manager: 202377, or amanda.green@dominionhg.co.uk. The office is staffed from 8am-6pm Monday-Friday. For out of hours incidents requiring immediate action call 07796 962015: this will reach a student warden (24 hours).

For more information about DRARA activities, contact Mark Norman on 240146 or by email at mark.norman@ashmus.ox.ac.uk