

Welcome to our Spring 2009 newsletter. Now that we have come through what felt like a particularly cold and wet winter it's good to see all the flowers blooming and to enjoy the longer days. With all the economic and environmental doom and gloom in the media, we've decided in this edition to focus on work some of our members are doing to improve our local and global environment. Articles on this page and the next highlight activities that are underway to help us think about how we can live more sustainably and support local businesses at the same time.

We also provide a calendar for this year's coming events so that we can get together with our neighbours and friends and make full use of the warmer, sunnier weather!

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) and **Henrietta Gill** (henriettaqill@yahoo.co.uk)

From the Chair

This is a particularly busy time on the campaigning front with DRARA seeking to ensure that the views of local residents are taken into account in Council decisions on planning and traffic issues. All-too-often in the past decisions have gone against us, so it was wonderful to get the news that the County Council has decided to register Warneford Meadow as a Town Green (see article below). It does show that an energetic, well-fought campaign can bring success.

That still leaves planning applications for two other local sites which, if successful, would have a big impact on the quality of life of local residents – the Bartlemas Nursery Site (see article below) and Brookes University's Gypsy Lane site. The Brookes application is for a complex of buildings, the tallest of which is 6-storeys high and will, if permitted, dominate the Conservation Area (sic) in which it is situated. The effect of the proposals is to increase the floor space on this site by a net 20,432m² (220,000 f²). Worryingly, they also entail the re-location of the student social centre from the Headington Hill Hall site to Gypsy Lane. DRARA has sent in a strong letter of objection.

On a lighter note, I can recommend, from personal experience, the Oxford Local Loaf. Very few food miles and it is delicious; two great reasons to join the scheme.

Peter Coggins, DRARA Chair



Spring 2009

Neighbourhood Environmental Action

Many local communities around the County have taken up the challenge of tackling climate change in their own neighbourhoods, and DRARA is no exception. Supported by COIN (Climate outreach information network) based at the Old Music Hall on the Cowley Road and ClimateXchange, a new Oxfordshire initiative to work with communities and groups of all kinds to reduce carbon footprints, DRARA has its own fledgling group. Co-ordinated by resident Amanda Root, it is an informal friendly gathering of local residents who would like to make some changes to their lifestyles which will reduce carbon emissions in all sorts of ways. "We all need a bit of a hand to make the changes which we know will be of benefit in the longer term" says Amanda "so this group is intended to inspire each other to stop putting off all the things we know could make a real difference – whether around the home in the way we use energy – or waste energy – in the way we travel around or where we buy our food from". The next meeting is at the newly revamped, and very community friendly, pub The Rusty Bicycle on Magdalen Street on Thursday 14th May at 8pm.

Contact Amanda for more information or to float an idea amanda.root@talk21.com or Ox. 725944

For more information on local carbon reducing activity of all kinds, go to the ClimateX website www.climatex.org.uk and be amazed and encouraged by the variety and the number of schemes up and running locally (see next article!).

Living Sustainably

Working and living to improve the impact we have on the environment isn't only about reducing our carbon footprint. It's also about trying to use local products and supporting local businesses more.

A group of local bread enthusiasts have joined forces to create an 'Oxford Local Loaf' as part of the OxfordBread Group (OBG) to help consumers obtain sensibly-priced artisan-style bread that is baked locally

by a master baker using 100% locally-grown organic flour. Supermarket bread is usually made with imported flour, and contains chemical flour improvers and processing aids which many believe are linked to an epidemic of gluten intolerance and coeliac disease. 'Local' bread also usually contains a large amount of imported flour because most 'locally-milled' flour is made from a mix of British and imported grain. Importing grain contributes significantly to CO2 emissions. OBG bread is baked by experienced master baker Geoff Coleman of the Cornfield Bakery, Wheatley, using a traditional, long ferment, process that allows the loaf to rise slowly and develop its natural flavours. The flour is stone-ground from a unique blend of over 150 ancient 'heritage' wheat varieties grown on organic fields at Sandy Lane Farm, Tiddington. The straw by-product will be used to thatch local buildings, and profits will be used to support the group's goals and local 'heritage seed' projects. Members will help choose the style of bread and rolls that are baked for the group once a week (with flexibility for holidays). Members pay for their bread in advance, and collect their loaves from convenient pick-up points throughout Oxford and the region (eg. shops, farmer's markets, veg box schemes, etc.).

Please contact the Oxford Bread Group at info@oxfordlocalbread.org if you are interested in becoming a member. The most local collection point is from the SESI scheme, 97A Divinity Road, on a Tuesday evening and the cost is £2.50 for a 800g loaf.

SESI, the School Ethical Supplies Initiative run by Rina and Paul is our own local carbon footprint reducing scheme, operating as it does on a bulk buy principle to enable us to reuse our plastic bottles with fill ups of Ecover, Bio-D and Faith in Nature products (plus many more) You can download an order form from their website www.sesi.org.uk or phone Rina on 790690. SESI have a regular stall at the Saturday farmers' market, now moved to the East Oxford Primary School and running from 12-3 each week.

If you are not canny or brilliant enough to grow your own fruit and veg, don't forget you can order the Elder Stubbs produce from Restore on Manzil Way and they will deliver to Restore for you on a Friday. (Have you tried the new café – great cakes!).

There are other vegetable/fruit box schemes operating in the DRARA area too – Riverford Organics based in Devon are popular and have a free delivery service and include meat, dairy and other produce too then there is a more local scheme based in Pangbourne called Tolhurst Organic who are incredibly flexible and have shared drop off locations to keep the mileage to a minimum – phone Jane Iverney on Oxford 556151 or www.tolhurstorganic.co.uk for information. Then of course there is the variety and diversity of the suppliers on the Cowley Road, not forgetting Uhuru by

the Plain. The Co-op too is sourcing increasing numbers of local suppliers which you can find by digging around in their fruit and veg section on those occasions when the best laid plans to do something else haven't quite worked out!

Ever wondered about making a success of composting at home? DRARA resident Martin Stott has just completed the Garden Organic/OCC master composter course and has committed himself to providing free composting advice and support. First appearance, with composting buddy Clare Marsh (ex Southfield Rd for those of you with longish memories) will be at the DRARA 'Open Garden' event on 7 June. Martin is available for advice at an event or to small groups. To book, call by at 65 Divinity, phone 721482 or email martin.stott@talk21.com

The local car club is going from strength to strength too – a unique operation it is run by local residents group Oxcar and national organisation Commonwheels and costs £4 per hour including fuel with the bonus of a smartcard to access the vehicle so none of the hassle of a hire car. Email info@commonwheels.org.uk or contact local St Mary's Road resident Abi Johnson abi@abijohnson.com to make your first booking or enquire further. There are local bays in our streets for these vehicles so it couldn't be simpler for DRARA residents to access.

Henrietta Gill, henrietagill@yahoo.co.uk

Controlled Parking Zone Update

CPZ Design – Final Proposals Expected in June

The final Oxfordshire County Council proposal for the design of the controlled parking zone (CPZ) is expected in June.

Until this is made public, we do not know the number of parking spaces which will be available although the current recommendation is to allow two permits per household.

Attempts by DRARA to exclude temporary residents from obtaining permits have been unsuccessful and anyone will be able to apply for a permit - provided they meet the criteria.

This will include having DVLA documentation which shows the car is registered at an address within the CPZ.

Our thanks to everyone who signed our on-line and door-to-door petitions which object to the current CPZ design and the high ratio of pavement parking.

DRARA has been contacting disability groups and residents within the area to obtain statements as to the

impact pavement parking would have in terms of access and the ability to use pavements properly. These are being collated and will be used in a media campaign planned for May.

In April we also invited Ian Hudspeth, County Council Cabinet Minister for Transport to Southfield Road to demonstrate how narrow pavements are in sections of the road and that it will be next to impossible for pushchair users and people to walk side by side if cars are legally permitted to park on the pavement.

The CPZ is planned to come into operation in spring 2010.

Contact Lynne Treney, lynne@setpoint.co.uk or James Styring, jamesstrying@yahoo.co.uk, 07792 375423 for more information or get involved.



(an example from Marston of what 'authorised' pavement parking could look like for us!)

DRARA Fundraiser for Local Hospices

27th February 2009 saw a DRARA first, a DRARA sponsored event to raise funds for local charities! The Events Group organised a ceilidh at SS Mary and John Church in support of our local hospices, Helen and Douglas House and Sir Michael Sobell House. The Ald Brickham Band provided some lively music, while caller Peter North kept everyone dancing and (mostly) in synch with the appropriate dance moves. All those who came contributed food to share, lending a warm sense of community spirit to the whole event.

The evening was a huge success. First of all, as with other events, it brought together neighbours from all over the DRARA patch to meet, eat and dance. It was particularly good to see so many children and young people participating.

Secondly, we managed to raise £364 (not including expenses), which we have split equally between the two charities. So not only did we all have good fun, but we managed to provide others with some benefit of our dancing efforts.

We would like to organise another fundraising event during the winter next year and would welcome ideas from you as to who we should raise money for and what sort of event you would like to come to.

For more information, and to provide your ideas (and offers of help!!) please contact Cindy Carlson, carwal9704@yahoo.co.uk Ox 242949 or Henrietta Gill, henrietagill@yahoo.co.uk

DRARA Community Events

Freecycle Day : Sunday May 17th. Following last year's success, the Freecycle day is a chance to clear out all your unwanted stuff and to swap it around for some new ! And all for free.... See the DRARA website for more info www.drara.org.uk .

The local open gardens scheme is going ahead again this year too – June 7th 1-5 – see the website too

And the ever popular Meal in the Street is set to be at the top of Southfield Road this year, and is on July 11th from 6pm onwards. Volunteers are of course badly needed for all these events, so if you can help, contact Henrietta Gill, Events Co-ordinator asap. henrietagill@yahoo.co.uk.

Henrietta Gill, Events Group

Update on Warneford Meadows

Great news! If you haven't already heard, the County Council voted by 10 votes to three to register Warneford Meadow as a Town Green.

However, this does not necessarily mean that the campaign is over. FOWM is concerned that the narrow definition of a community, used by the Inspector to support the case for designation, could lead the Health Trust to seek Judicial Review of the Inspector's decision. FOWM wants to enlist the support of MP Andrew Smith, the Prospective Parliamentary Candidates of the other parties and councillors, and to this end organised a Community Social Event at the Golf Club on Friday 1 May to both celebrate the decision and engage the politicians. Further fund raising events are planned throughout the summer so please do what you can to support FOWM.

from FoWM Steering Group. Please contact Sietske Boeles on 728153 or email fowm@btinternet.com

Campaign to Save Bartlemas Conservation Area Gathers Pace

In November last year a proposal by Oriel College to build accommodation for 35 students on the former Bartlemas Nursery Site was rejected by the East Area Parliament. Oriel have now appealed and the application will go to a Public Inquiry later this year. DRARA is not opposed to some development on this site, however it argues that the current proposal will harm the historic Conservation Area as it is: too high (2.5 times the height of the existing building); too bulky (4 times the volume and floor area); and too close to the medieval core of the Grade 2 listed Farmhouse. It will also replace the existing green buffer, which maintains the sense of seclusion and isolation of the Area, with a three-floored complex 47 metres long which will dominate the Farmhouse, the Chapel and the allotments and block views into and out of the Area. Please sign the online petition at <http://www.PetitionOnline.com/tranquil/petition.html>.

If you require further information and/or want to get involved in the Campaign, **contact Sandy Ruxton on 432647 or Richard English on 723323.**

Bad Night's Sleep?

If you're sick of being woken up in the middle of the night by rowdy, drunk students on their way home from a cheap drinks promo night, you may soon be able to rest your weary head.

On 11 March, Inspector Brian Cooper and Sgt Nick Garside met a group of ten Southfield Road residents to discuss night time disturbances in the area. Occasional night time disturbance would be tolerable, but 10 plus nights a month is not.

Brookes' requirement that residents identify where culprits live (assuming they are OBU students) is unworkable unless you happen to live next door to or opposite them.

Thames Valley Police is very keen to resolve the problem but staffing is an issue and there are more pressing concerns on Cowley Rd itself. The police suggested residents keep detailed logs of disturbances, but DRARA prefers a solution that *prevents* the problems, as getting involved in the small hours defeats the object: you are by then disturbed and fully awake.

Certain student-oriented late nights appear to fuel the disorder (Wednesdays is Fuzzy Ducks) and these are the nights that police will target the area.

We agreed the best policy would be for Brookes to fund wardens or even extra police, and this is what both DRARA and the police will ask for when we meet

Brookes to discuss the problem in May.

James Styring, DRARA committee

Useful contacts:

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

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

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.

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

Community Police Contact Information

The contact details for the team should you wish to contact our new community police team are as follows:

Neighbourhood sergeant –
PS 4272 Andy Barefield
Andy.barefield@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Neighbourhood Specialist Officers –
PC 5727 Oli Jacques
Oliver.jacques@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

PC 5597 Sarah Baker
Sarah.baker@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Police Community Support Officers -
PCSO 9759 Emma Fitzsimmonds
Emma.fitzsimmonds@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 9929 Kerry Carnegie
Kerry.carnegie@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 9764 David Atkinson
David.atkinson@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

They can all be contacted on the non-emergency telephone number (0845 8505 505) or by email at eastoxfordneighbourhood@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk which is an inbox for the team regarding any general enquiries