

Christmas is coming. Here are some handy tips from the Council for minimising the environmental impact of collective overindulgence... Green box those glass jars and bottles, cans, tins, and newspapers. Use special red bags for unwanted clothes, shoes, and linen. Recycle Christmas cards at Tesco or WHSmith. Take cardboard, plastics and flat batteries to the Redbridge Recycling Centre. And finally... compost your Xmas tree at the Morrell Avenue entrance to South Park from 3-15 January. Happy recycling! **Sandy Ruxton** (sandy.ruxton@ntlworld.com) and **Jo Lyon** (lyon.jo@gmail.com).

DRARA latest

The AGM in September was well attended – we were able to review DRARA's activities over the past year and discuss local issues with ward councillors, Anne Ashley from Oxford Brookes, and Thames Valley Police. The real draw, however, was Annie Skinner who gave a fascinating presentation based upon her recently published History of the Cowley Road. This showed that, although the area has undergone many changes, it's reputation as a focus for informed and articulate political activity, comment (and even protest) is nothing new!

The Executive Committee were re-elected en bloc at the AGM and many thanks for your support and participation over the past year. You will be familiar with most of us but newer members include Elizabeth Mills and Lynne Trener who bring a new wave of enthusiasm and ideas. Contact details for all committee members can be found on the membership cards given out during this year's membership drive.

Finally, DRARA is already working on events, ideas, and campaigns for 2006. The Events Group promise another series of street-based activities. We will also be organising a public meeting early in the New Year on formal and informal HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) where we hope to include contributions from Andrew Smith MP, Oxford City Council, and DRARA members. **Mark Norman**

DRARA has also applied to Oxford City Council for website funding. We believe a lively and up-to-the minute website can play a fundamental role in keeping residents informed on local issues, and provide a forum through which we can express our views and support for DRARA campaigns.

If our application is successful (we will know by the end of March), the City Council will release the funding almost immediately so it could mean a new DRARA website could be and up and running by the summer. **Lynne Trener**

DRARA events coming up

There were plenty of DRARA events held this year, and all were well attended, particularly the Meal in the Street. Thanks to everyone who helped make them happen!

DRARA Newsletter
Winter 2005

www.drara.org.uk



One of the most difficult aspects of organising events is getting enough help setting up and clearing up – so to try and make this easier and encourage people to get involved we are putting together a DRARA Events Handbook over the winter. This will have information and resources for organisers, plus 'Just Do It!' sheets to help people carry out specific jobs.

Next year we are planning to repeat Play in The Street, possibly in Sinnet Court, which is a great safe space. At the recent events planning meeting we also agreed that it would be good to hold an event in May, probably in upper Southfield Road, which hasn't held an event since 2002. One suggestion is to do a 'Lounge in the Street', where people bring their furniture, rugs, TV and so on and set up a room in the street to hang out in and do whatever they would be doing in their lounge...

We also decided that we would hold next year's Street Meal (provisional date: Saturday 8 July) in Divinity Road again, as this year's was such a huge success. Finally, Divinity Road will also host next year's Film in the Street (provisional date: Saturday 16 September). Other suggestions included a boules competition in the summer if we can find a suitable place to hold it – it needs an area of gravel or sand: please let me know if you can think of anywhere!

We're always looking for ways to get more people interested and involved in DRARA events – do come along to the next meeting and share ideas. It's at 8 pm on Thursday 23 February at 30 Warneford Road. **Judith Fitzgerald** (gfitz@farmersweekly.net)

Stop press! There will be a DRARA Brookes Sports Afternoon on Thursday 29 December from 2-5pm: Unihoc on Astro from 2-3pm, then in the Sports Hall from 3-5pm for badminton, basketball and football, plus squash from 4-5pm). Bring something to drink and eat. For more information, call Andy Roscoe on 241214.

Sinnet Court update

Thanks to DRARA and local residents for giving us the opportunity to host 'Film in the Court' back in September – a good time was had by all, including ourselves!

New residents arrived at Sinnet Court in September. Building on our experiences over the last 12 months we have revised our introduction procedure, stressing to all residents on arrival that they live in a residential area, and that inappropriate behaviour is not and will not be accepted.

Records show that false fire alarms are down considerably from last year. This is due to the penalty system which is being enforced by Sinnet Court staff and wardens, and to the students being more mindful.

Car parking in the local area is an ongoing issue, and we are still following the procedures outlined in previous DRARA newsletters. Of the 35 cars that have been reported to us to date only three have been traced to residents of Sinnet Court. We have reprimanded the individuals in question and the cars have not been seen again. I would like to encourage local residents to continue to call the Sinnet Court office to let us know about any cars that they believe to be our residents'.

Generally the number of calls we have received this academic year has dropped dramatically. So far we have received one noise complaint – we could not link this with any fault or specific room, but we sent a notice out to all residents of the block in question.

We look forward to working with DRARA in the future and arranging further events within Sinnet Court.

Amanda Green, Cherwell Housing Trust.

Oxford Brookes Liaison

I recently attended meetings of Headington Residents and Oxford Brookes Liaison Committee. At the latter there was a lengthy discussion about students parking, which is always top of the agenda. I reported that windscreen wipers had been tampered with in Southfield and Divinity Roads.

Brookes in are successfully running buses collaboration with Stagecoach. There has been a 21% increase of passengers on the U5 (the Cowley Road bus) and 66% of this is due to residents. They are very keen for residents to use these buses. See www.brookesbus.net for route details.

Anne Ashley, the Brookes liaison officer has sadly been involved in a serious road accident; she is back at Brookes but only part time at the moment. **Barbara Crossley**

1901 Census online

Since the 'Who do you think you are?' series on television, there has been an upsurge of interest in genealogy. Online at www.ancestry.co.uk it is now possible to search for people by name, approximate date of birth, and place of birth for the England or Wales censuses for every decade from 1851 until 1901.

New DRARA committee member Elizabeth Mills has gone one stage further – she is researching the names, origins, ages and occupations of all the residents of the DRARA area at the time of the 1901 census. She has discovered, for example, that the last houses in Divinity Road in March 1901 were numbers 88 and 89. Number 89 was occupied by Charles G Richards from West Lulworth, Dorset and his wife Hannah from Beaminster in the same county. Their children Harold, 6, and Hilda, 5, were born in Oxford.

And they had a general domestic servant living in – Maud Eustace, a local girl who was only 13. Mr Richards was the manager of a gentlemen's tailor and hosier.

Other 1901 DRARA residents included several butchers, many college servants, clergymen, clerks, cabinet makers, builders, a professional artist and a monumental sculptor.

Elizabeth's plan is to transcribe all the census information for the DRARA area and, in due course, put it on the DRARA website. Meanwhile, if you are keen to find out who lived in your house in 1901, she will be happy to look it up for you. Send her an email at elizabeth@eminence-grise.co.uk.

On the streets

'20's Plenty!'

Residents' associations in four parts of Oxford have recently initiated '20's Plenty!' campaigns in their neighbourhoods. A campaign in Jericho has been successful in introducing 20 mph speed zones. Such zones are good news for residents, especially cyclists and pedestrians. Cyclox (the Cycling Campaign for Oxford) and OxPA (Oxford Pedestrians' Association) are starting campaigns citywide in 2006. Please contact Peter Coggins on peterccoggins@aol.com or 723254 if you would support a DRARA '20's Plenty!' initiative and/or could spare a little time to be involved.

Bikes a low priority?

Oxfordshire County Council have released a consultation document on the future of the city's transport. On page 7, the first sentence under the heading 'The Strategy' reads: "The car is and will continue to be the predominant mode of travel... The County Council therefore wants to improve the reliability and safety of car trips by tackling key congestion 'hotspots'." If you have comments, take a look at their website and give some feedback: www.transaction.org.uk **James Styring, Cyclox**

SS Mary & John churchyard

The restoration of the SS Mary & John churchyard continues! At the end of the summer we had to mount a massive clearance effort, both because of the rampant plant growth and to create access to the graves so that headstones could be tested for safety.

We are trying to encourage wildlife habitat while also providing pathways to the memorials that have an educational value – we are busy researching the considerable links with local history. People already frequently stop to read the display boards on the wildlife and local history. It is also a great joy when families feel able to return, having for years hesitated to visit graves.

The landscaping of the frontage onto Cowley Road will soon start in earnest, with a new path direct to

the north door of the church, more stepping stones to the sitting walls round the labyrinth, and new plants, trees and a wildflower meadow. A few old trees have to come down first, but we hope the new ones will grow quickly!

Volunteers continue to meet every Saturday from 2-4pm (with a break 17-31 Dec inclusive). Anyone is welcome to join us! **Ruth Conway** (723085).

Parking

The number of cars parked in local streets seems to rise every year, making it increasingly difficult for residents to find a space close to their house. Some have suggested that the introduction of a Residents' Parking Zone (RPZ) might be the solution. Last spring the County Council approved this idea, in principle, for local streets with the exact measures to be developed in consultation with residents. It is planned for some time in the period 2005/06 to 2010/11. It is not an easy option, however, because the Council's traffic consultants said in their report on local traffic issues 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." So the introduction of an RPZ is likely to make things worse rather than better. **Peter Coggins**

Latest from our Councillors

Season's Greetings from your local City and County Councillors! A couple of seasonal items to start with...then updates on some old chestnuts.

Celebratory Lighting

You will have noticed that we have extended the celebratory lighting on Cowley Road this year. The East Area Parliament has funded additional lighting on The Plain, and, following last year's successful trial, provided more than 40 sets of window lighting free to Cowley Road businesses. We hope you will agree that this has enlivened Cowley Road!

However, we are chasing up the contractors on a number of issues (which I hope will be sorted by the time you read this). The lamppost lights on Manzil Way were not secured properly, some lights are not working and others are on all day (they are meant to only come on when the street lights do).

Green Fair

We are all planning to be at the Winter Green Fair on 17th December at the Town Hall. Please do seek us out and say hello.

'East Oxford' poster

We thoroughly recommend a new poster by DRARA resident Anna Eden, which pictures scenes and buildings from around East Oxford. Cllr Craig Simmons was pleasantly surprised to see his own handiwork pictured – the Gaudi-inspired mosaics on

his front house steps were the result of a couple of afternoon's work with daughter Beri (aged 4)! Copies cost £5 plus p&p – discounts available for multiple copies: pick one up from Anna at 49 Southfield Road, or contact Teresa Garlake on tgarlake@onetel.com.

Bingo Hall update

The old Bingo Hall has been purchased. Cllrs Craig Simmons and Sid Phelps met up with the new owner, Mr Ali, and were rewarded with a behind-the-scenes tour of the amazing building. Much of the building has to be protected, but there is still potential to use it in a number of ways. The Council are in discussions with Mr Ali about possible community uses, and Mr Ali himself is keen to use the large downstairs hall for events and – eventually – restore the whole building to its former cinematic glory.

Sid and Craig got the impression that this was clearly a labour of love – Mr Ali has fond memories of sneaking into the cinema as a young boy and is a bit of a film buff. The East Area Parliament has asked to be kept up to date on progress. We are all obviously keen to maximise the community use of the venue, and Mr Ali, in turn, seems keen to work with us.

Cowley Road finished (almost)

The Cowley Road works have kept Craig (with his County Councillor hat on) very busy this year, but we feel that his almost-daily site visits have helped to minimise problems.

We are pleased to report that, unlike Cornmarket Street, the Cowley Road works have been delivered on time and on budget. In general we are pleased with the results: wider pavements, more bikes racks, more bins, more trees and more benches. The 20mph zone – though more limited than we would have liked – is also welcome. However, there are inevitably some issues that need further work.

The County is now entering into a 6 month monitoring period, after which they are planning to do any necessary tweaks. The East Area Parliament has already received several detailed suggestions from one DRARA resident, which we are following up. You can rest assured that we are aware of the major outstanding problems: poor drainage where paving is incomplete or uneven, problems with signage etc. We are working hard with the County to address these and the East Area Parliament has offered more than £20,000 from its own limited budget to subsidise any additional work.

Our main concerns are the continued high speeds (buses and cars) and some of the 'pinch points', which are particularly affecting cyclists.

We are continuing to work with traders, City Works, Environmental Health, County Highways and Planning to establish a licensing regime for pavement use. The aim is to keep a two metre strip

of pavement clear for pedestrians but also allow, where space permits (e.g. opposite Manzil Way), for the controlled display of goods and outdoor seating for cafes in summer. We have also been working with City Works to keep rubbish (trade and domestic) off the pavements. There has been a definite improvement but several serial offenders remain, who we will be taking action against.

We welcome further comments – please contact Samantha Tharme (samantha.tharme@oxfordshire.gov.uk) and cc Craig (craig@greenoxford.com).

Licensing (again)

The new licensing laws have now come into effect, and we are – as predicted – already getting complaints. We are assured that the information about licences granted will shortly be available on the City website, but officers are still overworked dealing with appeals, so realistically this is going to happen later rather than sooner. In the meantime, the best officer to contact to find out about specific premises is Lee Carter (lcarter@oxford.gov.uk).

The new laws don't seem to take into account the fact that many licensed premises are in residential areas and thus '24 hour' drinking might be a little disruptive (to say the least).

If anyone has a complaint that they can relate to specific licensed premises, then please do write to the Licensing Department with details and send us a copy. The new laws do, in theory, make it easier to revoke licenses – though this has yet to be put to the test.

East Area Parliament dates (all Wednesdays)

18 Jan 2006 18:30 Donnington Community Centre, Townsend Square

15 Feb 2006 18:30 St. Clement's Family Centre, Cross Street

15 Mar 2006 18:30 Donnington Community Centre, Townsend Square

26 Apr 2006 18:30 St. Clement's Family Centre, Cross Street

Cllrs Craig Simmons, Mary-Jane Sareva, Claire Palmer, Sid Phelps

In church this Christmas

Saturday 17 December

Carol Service in All Saints' Convent Chapel, 4.30pm

Sunday 18 December

Children's Christmas Service & Tea, St Alban's Church, 3.30pm

Carol Concert in Bartlemas Chapel, 8pm

Monday 19 December

Christmas Concert with the Divinity Singers and East Oxford Community Choir, SS Mary & John's, 7.30pm

Christmas Eve – Saturday 24 December

Crib Service (Light a candle at the crib), SS Mary & John's, 6pm

Midnight Mass at both SS Mary & John's and St Alban's at 11.30pm

Christmas Day – Sunday 25 December

Eucharists at SS Mary & John's at 8am and 10.30am, and at St Alban's at 9.30am

The Eucharist is celebrated every day during Christmas Week. On Monday and Tuesday there are sung Eucharists for the Patronal Festivals of St Stephen's House theological college (Monday 19 December, 10.30am, St John's, Iffley Rd) and of the Parish (Tuesday 20 December, 11.30am, All Saints' Convent Chapel). **New Year's Day – Sunday 1 January**

Eucharists at SS Mary & John's at 8am and 10.30am, and at St Alban's at 9.30am

Feast of the Epiphany – Friday 6 January

Sung Eucharist at SS Mary & John's, 6pm

Reverend Adam Romanis, (242396)

Useful contacts:

City Councillors, St. Clement's Ward:

Claire Palmer (Green), tel 0775 698549 or claire@greenoxford.com

Mary Jane Sareva (Green), tel 07776 075250 or cllrmjsareva@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: Anne Ashley, tel 484451 or amashley@brookes.ac.uk

Cowley Road Police Station (non-emergency): tel 335138. Local beat officers are PC 798 David Stares and PC 1299 Chris Griffin (david.stares@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk or chris.griffin@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk).

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).

DRARA: For more information, contact Mark Norman on 240146 or email (mark.norman@ashmus.ox.ac.uk)