



## **DRARA Annual General meeting minutes, held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023,**

**6.30pm**

### **Asian Cultural Centre**

**Present:** Cindy Carlson (secretary, acting as chair), 9 committee members; 37 DRARA members; Cllr Jemima Hunt (St Clements), Andrea Siret (Head of Community Engagement and Social Responsibility for Brookes); Grace Duffy (Brookes student warden), Cllr Tom Hayes (St Clements), Cllr Anna Railton (Grandpont).

**1. Cindy welcomed** all to the meeting (54 in attendance)

**2. Apologies:** Lydia Matthews; Anthony Eccles; Clare Ridley and Ron Gibbons; Geraldine and Peter Coggins; James Schumann; Margaret Coombs; Anne Hall; Trish Attwooll; Isobel Gilman and Chris Cornforth; Nick Welch; Ilaria Parodi and Max; Mena Remedias; The Prangleys; Cathy Gough; Rebecca Phillipson; Leila Lake; Kathy Peto; Danny Emyln-Jones; Mariabelle Headlam; Mary Ashdown, Catriona and James Ferguson. Sergeant Benjamin Clark sent apologies for the police.

### **3. Talk by Aaron Anstey and Rosamund Ions from Low Carbon East Oxford**

Aaron reported on LCEO's activities, notably the monthly Repair Café at East Oxford Market, and the energy advice stalls at the East Oxford Farmers Market and Temple Cowley Shopping Centre. He also provided some useful statistics on home energy consumption.

Rosamund outlined practical low-cost/no cost ways to insulate your home, including adjusting the heating controls on boilers and radiators, draughtproofing doors and windows and chimney blocking. She displayed a number of materials, including radiator foils, which can be obtained from LCEO free of cost.

Some East Oxford homes that have implemented green measures are available to view. See link for further info. <https://oxford.greenopenhomes.net>

There was a lively discussion of energy reduction measures, including the pros and cons of heat pumps.

Maggie Hartford, who volunteers at the Citizens Advice Bureau, outlined some of the measures that can be taken for people in fuel poverty and highlighted the excellent work of Better Housing, Better Health who do home visits.

One resident shared a useful tip - using wheat-filled heat bags to heat the person not the room. Patrick Gray suggested joining a wind turbine owning co-operative as an effective and financially sound way to contribute to the reduction of carbon.

**4. Andrea Siret, Head of Community Engagement and Social Responsibility for Brookes,** reported on the team's initiatives, covering:

#### **Student community wardens**

Andrea outlined the wardens' responsibilities, including home visits to student houses and regular street clean-ups. The team was represented by local student warden, Grace Duffy.

### **Oxford City Council's Out of Hours Wednesday Night Noise Awareness Service**

Andrea encouraged DRARA residents to contact the team directly with any issues on 07483 010709, between the hours of 9pm and 3am.

In the 6 weeks the team has been running this semester, they have received 10 phone calls/text messages, been involved in 13 incidents, and carried out 10 successful interventions.

### **Communications**

The Community Engagement Team has continued to strengthen their communications, including:

- Welcome letter sent to all DRARA residents – permanent and student. The leaflet includes info on the Out of Hours service.
- Visits to student properties
- Talks with Sports Club representatives
- Contact with landlords and letting agents

Andrea emphasized her team's close co-operation with the Council and the Police.

### **Complaints process**

Andrea outlined the stages of the formal complaints process and reported on complaints so far this year. The total so far is 72, which is down significantly on previous years.

She broke down complaints into categories, with by far the largest category being noise, followed by waste management and anti-social behaviour.

Andrea also reported on a Personal safety event held for students.

She concluded by welcoming all communications between residents and Brookes. A full list of contacts was included in the printed reports to DRARA made available at the meeting.

In the general discussion that followed, Andrea and her team were thanked for their work, which in some cases has had positive results, but there were still various concerns:

**Rubbish management** – this is still a major issue.

It was pointed out that some major problems were caused at the start of the term by landlords and cleaners dumping the contents of properties on the streets.

Andrea is communicating with landlords about this issue.

**Noise** – in particular from 'party houses'. Andrea was urged to target these known 'party houses' especially strongly.

Andrea reminded residents that they should use the noise app to report problems to the Oxford council team who are in direct contact with Brookes. A complaint will trigger action in identifying the house and initiating the complaints procedure.

**Noise and ASB from transient students** walking down Divinity Road en route for the Cowley Road.

This is partly managed by Out of Hours Wednesday night service, but not completely. Andrea acknowledged that this was a hard problem to deal with. However, some of this transient traffic was from sports club groups, and she is making a special effort to contact all the clubs, both official Brookes clubs and more unofficial groups.

There was concern that the complaints procedures were not strong enough, with one resident urging a 'three hits and you're out of Brookes' policy. In response, Andrea explained that as repeated complaints are received, the process of warnings and fines is escalated, with very few going on through to the final stage of the Student Conduct Procedure, which is expulsion from the University.

She stated that the advisory stages seem to be effective in preventing further antisocial behaviour. A review of the figures for last year showed 25 advisory meetings during 2022-23 compared to 37 at the same time the year before.

One poignant plea was made for students NOT to adopt neighbourhood cats, as several have gone missing since the start of term.

#### **5. Councillor Jemima Hunt reported on the East Oxford LTNs**

Jemima began by saying how surprised she was to hear of the decision to install an ANPR camera on Divinity Road. This had not been a matter that the whole council voted on.

She acknowledged that it was reasonable to install an ANPR system for the use of emergency services, as had been done in several London boroughs, but she stressed that no London boroughs had added taxis to the list of exemptions, as has already been done in Cowley.

The ANPR cameras are due to be installed in January. There will be a need to monitor the traffic situation very carefully and keep up the pressure on councillors.

Jemima said that we need to keep asking questions, She urged people to write individually to the council, addressing their emails to Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, but also copying in Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the County Council.

In the general discussion, people expressed strong concern that there would be a major increase in traffic, caused by taxis making the most of the through route.

It was noted that we will need to get organised for monitoring in January.

Patrick Gray stated that the news item in the local papers stating that the Co-op was pulling out of our area, partly in response to LTN issues, was entirely untrue.

#### **6. South Parks report**

Rob Waterston, Chair of Friends of the Friends of South Parks, reported on various issues:

Fences around trees - the steel fences around trees with dead limbs have been erected for safety purposes while they are being felled/having limbs amputated.

The veteran oak is being left to die and has an extra wide fence to ensure that no one is injured when it falls.

Toad distillery has been sold to Diageo who plan to close down the distillery and open a café complex with public loos. Plans are available to view.

The broken boundary railings will not be replaced because of the enormous cost. The council's long-term plan is to remove all railings and replace them with fences.

The small building close to the playground is being investigated by the Council for asbestos. There is a chance that the building may be made available to turn into a community-run coffee shop.

#### **7. Warneford Hospital development plans**

Cindy Carlson reported on a meeting with Warneford Hospital officials. Future plans for the site involve construction of a new, purpose-built hospital beside Warneford meadow, but the meadow will not be touched. There are also plans to build a research centre next to the new hospital, while the old Victorian building will be re-purposed as a graduate teaching centre. Building work is scheduled to start in 2025.

#### **8. Report on the DRARA year**

Cindy covered the committee's priorities during 2022/23:

- a) LTNs - DRARA has campaigned hard to keep the streets safe for residents and pedestrians. The good news is that the LTNs will be permanent. The bad news is that ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras will be installed with an exemption for taxis to replace the bollards on Divinity Road. The Southfield Road bollard will stay in place.  
DRARA aims to raise questions with the council and closely monitor traffic flows following the installation of the camera. Four houses in our area have a Telraam (special device to monitor different types of traffic flow), so we can have data on changes in road use before and after the installation of the ANPR cameras
- b) Green measures – DRARA has encouraged a green measures in our neighbourhood, by holding a bi-annual litter-pick and maintaining the street planters and gardens. The environmental and freecycle Whatsapp groups are going strong.  
DRARA is in correspondence with the council to hold landlords to account about waste dumping.
- c) ASB – DRARA continues to work closely with Brookes, especially through the work of Karen Metcalfe, DRARA’s Brookes liaison officer.  
DRARA monitors licensing of HMOs and any breach of agreements or attempts to enlarge houses.
- d) Engagement with students - DRARA subs collectors visit every house to explain about DRARA and welcome new residents, many of whom are students. This year there has been a special effort to make the visits earlier in the year, in order to talk to students when they are settling in and to encourage cooperation with neighbours. So far, there have been some positive conversations.

Cindy thanked all those active in creating events, such as the Tea Party, Open Gardens and First Mondays.

She also thanked the committee members.

### **9. The DRARA committee – new members needed and re-election of members**

Cindy reported that more committee members are needed. There are currently 2 vacancies. The committee would especially value someone with good website skills.

Jane Bingham also asked for a volunteer to design the DRARA newsletter.

It was proposed that all the existing committee members were re-elected. Proposed by Patrick Gray. Seconded by Tim Bolton. Approved by all present at the meeting.

Alison Williams proposed that Cindy become Chair, as the position is currently vacant. Tom Knollys seconded and the motion which was approved by all.

Committee members for 2023-24 are currently as follows:

Cindy Carlson	Chair
Currently vacant	Secretary
Alison Williams:	Treasurer
Susan Lisk, Linda Forrest	Events
Tom Knollys:	Planning
Deborah Tricker:	Traffic
Margaret Wolf:	Communications and emails
Jane Bingham:	Newsletter
Maggie Hertford:	Environmental Action
Karen Metcalfe:	University Liaison

Lydia Matthews: Anti-social behaviour and Licensing  
Ex officio members:  
Rob Waterston – Chair of the Friends of South Parks  
Nick Welch – Liaison on Warneford Meadow

There is a vacancy for the post of secretary, which will be covered by Cindy for the time being, but a replacement is urgently needed. The committee is open to offers of job shares and job flexibility.

### **8. Any Other Business**

Two concerns were raised:

**Possible vandalism to ANPR cameras** - There was concern about the positioning of the cameras – would they be vulnerable to vandalism?

It was reported that the ANPR cameras installed in Cowley had been installed high up – above head height – and had not yet been touched.

### **Electric car charging points**

Currently there is only 1 working public charge point, on the corner of Stone Street, and this is usually occupied by the Co-wheels car.

There is a call on DRARA to put pressure on the council to replace/repair 2 charge points as a matter of urgency.

### **Attachments:**

DRARA Committee Reports

Report from Oxford Brookes University on Community Engagement

Low Carbon East Oxford document