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Don't miss...

Two special events for members

24 September – Energy Seminar

12 November – Transport symposium

See page 5 for details

Do we have your email?

Members who give us their email address receive short monthly bulletins highlighting current consultations and other time-critical news. If you'd like to receive this bulletin just email membership@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk, subject eBulletin. We never pass on email addresses to third parties.

Oxford United stars Simon Hackney and Steve MacLean joined pupils at St Gregory the Great Catholic School to launch Spring Clean 2011 – see page 4 for the full story



Controversy – cars, carbon and culture

By Peter Thompson, Chairman

This spring has been a busy time – a whole range of issues have arisen relevant to our aim of keeping Oxford a wonderful place to live, work and play. And a **green** place too – as this newsletter shows.

Our current activity is focused on formal consultations. In terms of the shape and size of the city, the two most important of these relate to the 'Sites and Housing' consultation, which closes on 22 July, and the consultation on the 'Preferred Options' for the new **Barton development**, just north of the Northern Bypass.

At an earlier stage of consultation on this project we suggested that **breaking down the barrier of the 70mph dual carriageway** was critical to the success of this 1,000 home development. This problem is becoming widespread as cities expand beyond ring roads built in earlier eras. A seminar organised by Graham Smith, supported by the Society, used the Barton development as a case study and inspired and enthralled professional planners from across the country who are faced with similar issues. Graham reports on this on page 7.

Meanwhile, we have again responded in full to the City Council's consultation. Several aspects of the proposals are controversial, including the treatment of **Ruskin Fields** and the effects on **Old Headington** and **Northway**, allotments, and the existing Nature Park. We are concerned that the Council's priority of providing more housing – especially affordable housing – should not be pursued at the expense of creating genuinely successful communities. Our full response can be seen at [Barton Area](#) on our website or ask for a copy.

The consultation on Sites and Housing also involves policies for the designation of specific, smaller sites on which housing could be developed within the period of the current Core Strategy (up to 2026). The most vigorous debate here concerns building on public **car parks**. Retailers, in particular, have been vociferous in objecting to the loss of parking spaces, which they see as detrimental to their businesses. Of course, the vitality of the city's neighbourhoods depends on the presence of thriving commerce, but this must be balanced by many other factors. The city and its communities are certainly not going to be pickled in aspic and we have to be objective in scrutinising our crystal balls and influencing as best we can how we would like the city to be in 2026.

Linking up with Low Carbon groups

One fast-emerging issue is **energy** – its production, security, cost to the consumer, and to the environment. The latter is not just a matter of climate change, but also, for example, the merits of wind turbines in the landscape or the installation of solar panels on historic buildings. Like it or not, issues of energy will increasingly touch on everything we are concerned with, like planning and travel behaviour.

We are thus increasing our contacts with groups such as Low Carbon Oxford, Low Carbon West Oxford, which leads the way in local energy projects, and Low Carbon Oxford North. This latter group is currently seeking investors to raise £145,000 (in units of £500) to install photovoltaic panels on the roofs of Cherwell School (as has already been done on Matthew Arnold School). A reasonable return is offered to investors and the school is enthusiastic about reducing its environmental impact. It also ties in with our own **involvement with schools** in promoting another environmental issue, through OxClean. For those who would like to know more, see the article by Low Carbon Oxford on page 6 and please come along to our **Energy Seminar** on 24 September (see page 5).

The Localism Bill revisited

Our other major preoccupation is 'Localism', which I referred to in the last Newsletter. Little has happened to clarify the position, although the *Plain English Guide to the Localism Bill* was amended on 15 June. The Bill entered the Committee stage on 20 June.

Meanwhile, the local region of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) organised a seminar in Oxford on 19 April to discuss the effects of the Bill on conservation. This was attended by several members of the Executive, and I was asked to speak on 'Communities, conservation and consultation – a meaningful debate'.

Many interesting views emerged, including the observation that none of the objectives of the Bill are precluded under **current** legislation – they just don't get pursued. The steps needed to develop a neighbourhood Plan through to adoption were examined and the likelihood of this happening was questioned. Such plans must in any event conform to Local Plan or Core Strategy policy, rather than vice versa, hence any real transfer of control to local communities is limited, if not illusory. And given that the Bill hands 142 new powers to the Secretary of State, it has been suggested that it should be named the Centralism Bill! It remains to be seen how much the Bill affects our activities.



Peter Thompson with Liz Grosvenor, Membership Secretary, at the Headington Festival in June. Despite the rain, the turn out was good and we recruited some new members. We were able to help others with local planning and transport queries.

Libraries – time to reflect

One of the hottest topics recently has been the proposals for withdrawing funding from several libraries, with the suggestion that some could remain open with the support of local volunteers. We joined in the storm of protest and Richard Bradley, Vernon Porter and I met with the Director and Councillor responsible to discuss our views, and particularly the format of the promised consultation.

Our view is that all libraries should remain open and a much more comprehensive review of the library service should be carried out, to explore possibilities such as sharing facilities, better exploitation of property assets, provision of additional facilities and income-generating opportunities. In the event, the consultation began in June and is to run until September. The proposals on which it is based do include some of our recommendations and the starting point is that all 43 libraries should stay open, which represents something of an about-face by the County Council. However, it seems that many of the libraries will need to rely on voluntary assistance and their future may remain in jeopardy if substantial volunteer effort is not forthcoming. We will be preparing a detailed response to the proposals but the situation is a little brighter, at least for most of the city's libraries.

Our own core strategy

A group of us on the Executive have been looking closely at what we do, how we might do it better and what more we should perhaps do. One of the pleasures of our Society is that we don't have to find square pegs for square holes – we shape the holes to fit the pegs, which is what makes it fun. We'll report on the outcome of this in due course, meanwhile do join any of our special-interest groups if you want some fun!

Peter Thompson, Chairman

Paul Cullen – a tribute

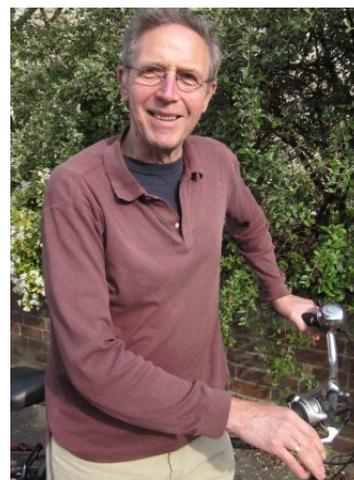
Councillor Stephen Brown writes

Members will have been shocked to learn of the untimely death of Paul Cullen, on 2 May. Paul suffered a heart attack while cycling with his wife, Ros Weatherall. His contribution to and influence on the Civic Society was quietly immense through his work as former chair of the Transport Group, leading the successful '20 is Plenty' campaign and generally supporting Ros in her achievements with our OxClean campaign. He was a founder member of the Society's *Oxford Streets for People* programme and played the leading role in setting its direction. At the time of his death he was leading our work on the 'Oxford on Foot' initiative, which aims to give greater recognition to the needs of pedestrians.

I had the privilege of knowing Paul as a friend, neighbour and colleague in his work with both universities as a Transport Planner. He was widely admired by academics and students alike for his caring, calm, concerned approach to life. Occasionally diffident in coming forward, his contributions were always perceptive and this commanded great respect.

However, Paul's reach and influence were much wider than academic circles. He knew that a holistic approach to solving problems was essential. This shone through with his achievements as Chair of the Oxford Pedestrian's Association and as an active member of Cyclox. Indeed, as an example of the regard in which he was held, he was scheduled to give the keynote address to the Jericho Community Association on his vision for the future of Jericho on the evening after his death.

Paul will be sorely missed by many within the Society and the wider city for the expertise he so readily shared and for his genuine warmth and kindness. His vision, quiet ambition and determination will be remembered in our continuing work.



Oxford Streets for People

Paul Cullen will be greatly missed by the Streets for People team, in which he played an active and inspiring role. Shortly before his death, Paul took the lead in developing a proposal – **Oxford on Foot** – which we hope will influence the City Council's approach to those who want to enjoy the city this way. We will say more about this in the next newsletter.

Street parties – breaking our record?



This is the third consecutive year the Society has promoted street parties, a simple, enjoyable and very effective way to bring communities together and very much con-

sistent with our civic aims. This year we hope to exceed the record number of parties held last year, which was 54. The year started well, of course, with around 10 parties to mark the Royal Wedding on 29 April.

Have you thought about having a party in your street this year? They are simple to organise – start by asking just a few neighbours and the ball will roll from there. Our website oxstreets.org.uk gives lots of ideas.

Street parties can lead to other community strengthening activities. For example, contacts made can result in neighbours supporting each other by swapping time, expertise or things. We are looking at ways in which this outcome can be encouraged.

Child's play

Many who have held street parties have enjoyed seeing children play in a traffic-free street. This year, we are putting special effort into supporting children's play. With Oxford City Council funding, we have purchased two 'street party kits'. These help organisers with some of the practical aspects of street closure and contain various items to encourage play. Working with a national charity called **Playing Out** we are also encouraging the idea of regular street closures, for example for one hour after the school day, for supervised play.

We are also working with a residents' association, endeavouring to persuade the County Council to improve its support to communities who wish to keep their pavements clear of **ice and snow** during winter months. More on this in the next newsletter when winter will be approaching!

Richard Bradley (Coordinator), Tony Joyce, Pauline Martin, Christine Thompson, Ros Weatherall

OxClean – bags of success!

Schools' Anti-Litter Campaign

Under the dynamic leadership of OxClean's campaigner **Rosanne Bostock**, this year's campaign has awarded graded certificates to 31 primary schools across the city for litter-management and awareness throughout the year: 21 of them are doing very well, maintaining a high or a very high standard.

In secondary schools, two of the five continue to maintain a very high standard. This year's winner of the secondary school shield will be announced in September, when the graded certificates will be sent out, at the same time as our programme for 2011-12 is decided. We very much hope to secure funding to retain **Creation Theatre** to do more interactive workshops in secondary schools – these have been extremely effective in the past.

Spring Clean 2011

OxClean's fourth annual event was a huge success with 118 community groups and nearly 2,000 individuals involved and, for the first time, every Oxford school signed up to participate. As in previous years, a huge amount of litter, scrap and fly tip was collected – encouragingly, this year's haul was significantly down on 2010 despite there being more individuals out litter picking. Reports from community groups and our own observations suggest that there are three good reasons for this:

- public awareness of the litter problem has led to an increase in responsible behaviour
- previous Spring Cleans have made major inroads into litter that had become embedded over the years
- the City Council has improved its litter bin provision and street cleaning services.

The OxClean team is now intent on maintaining the momentum by encouraging everyone to take care of



Sustrans took part in Spring Clean 2011 on wheels!

their patch throughout the year and we can lend litter pickers and hi-vis vests for this purpose, on request. We are now preparing to build on

our success in our fifth Spring Clean – **Friday 2 and Saturday 3 March 2012 – please save the date !!**

Public awareness

OxClean has been exploring some invaluable networking opportunities with local environmentalists and campaigners. As a result, we have a number of new strands to develop where we hope for some mutual benefit: OxClean can lend its name and support to some important work being done and, thus, can become even more effective. We will report on this in the next newsletter and on our website.

Lobbying and campaigning

We are delighted with the provision of additional bins across the city centre and in Summertown, some alongside a recycling facility; and with the installation of long-awaited signage on the ring road. **Carol Webster** has kindly agreed to work with

us in persuading city centre traders to share OxClean's commitment to a clean Oxford by displaying our roundels. Would anyone, reading this, care to do the same thing on their home ground? Our website lists other heartening [developments](#) but there is, as ever, much more to be done!



OxClean now has a strong profile, thanks to the widespread support of everyone who gets involved in Spring Cleans and our media partner *The Oxford Times*. **Oxford City Council** is in supportive partnership with us. And we have a well-established team, with some important initiatives to pursue.

We don't, however, currently have the OxClean Co-ordinator we urgently need to champion all that is, and could be, happening. We also need more people willing to campaign with us. If you know of anyone who might consider taking on these roles, please let us know at info@oxclean.org.uk or phone 07505 756 692.

Rosanne Bostock, Liz Grosvenor, Pauline Martin, Vernon Porter, Christine Thompson



Two special events for members – both at St Hilda’s College

Energy Seminar – Saturday 24 September, 2-5pm

We have brought together an impressive line-up of speakers on this vital topic. Oxford aspires to be a sustainable, low carbon city – learn more about how you (and your business) can play an effective part.



Dr Brenda Boardman MBE, FEI, Emeritus Fellow of the University of Oxford

Our keynote speaker will set the scene on the need for energy conservation and sustainability – focusing on the built environment from the perspective of the user and the building provider, rather than the utility



Martin Brook MBA, PMICS, Regional Director, Ecoliving

A review of the full range of micro-renewable energy options: ground source/air source heat pumps, biomass, micro wind turbines and the like



Dr Christian Jardine, Technical Director, Joju Solar

Photo-voltaic installations on commercial and domestic buildings and how they can change the behaviour and expectations of individuals and corporate institutions



Bruce Mullett, Architect, BSc, DipArch RIBA, Partner, ADP

Opportunities to reduce energy use and the environmental impact of new and existing buildings



Justin Rhodes, Managing Director, Lewis Building Technology

Simple steps to help you manage your energy consumption more efficiently and turn your home into a smart one

We'll finish with a **Question and Answer** session, chaired by Peter Thompson, Chairman, OCS

Transport Symposium – Saturday 12 November, 10am - 4.30pm

An opportunity to assess the achievements of transport planning in the last 40 years and to explore the challenges presented by the need for transition to a low carbon economy and continuing population and economic growth in the Oxford area. The speakers will include:

Peter Headicar, Former Reader in Transport Studies, Oxford Brookes University

A review of transport planning in Oxford in the last 40 years, leading to a discussion of the step-change needed for a transition to a low carbon economy in the next 40 years

Steve Howell, Deputy Director for Highways and Transport, Oxfordshire County Council

Road planning in Oxford, current financial constraints and what could be achieved in the next 10 years

Rosamund Weatherall, Walking and Cycling Campaigner

How our travel habits affect our health and the city's wellbeing: the importance of going on foot and by bike

Philip Kirk, Oxford Bus Company and Martin Sutton, Stagecoach

Recent changes and future developments in bus transport in the city and beyond

Ben Hamilton-Baillie, Director of Hamilton-Baillie Associates, Bristol

An introduction to the concept of shared space, showing the benefits of foregoing conventional traffic signals, road markings, etc in favour of low-speed interactions, social protocols and civility

Professor David Banister, Director of the Transport Studies Unit, Oxford University

A discussion of the need for action on transport in the context of climate change and the possibility of considering mobility as a service rather than as transport in the future

Again we'll finish with a **Question and Answer** session, chaired by Peter Thompson

Book now for tickets – see the programme pages 10–11 for details

Low Carbon Oxford

By Barbara Hammond, Director, Low Carbon Oxford and Jenny Carr, Sustainable Energy Officer, Oxford City Council

Low Carbon Oxford is a pioneering city-wide programme of collaboration between private, public and non-profit organisations with the aim of ensuring Oxford's future as a sustainable and low carbon city. Oxford resident and environmentalist Barbara Hammond is the city's Programme Director.

Led by the Oxford Strategic Partnership, the Low Carbon Oxford programme was launched in October 2010 when 15 Pathfinder organisations signed the Low Carbon Oxford Charter. A further nine have since joined up. The charter sets out a shared commitment to working together to create a low carbon, sustainable Oxford and to ensuring that Oxford's leadership in reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change is widely recognised.

Since 2005 Oxford City Council has had a Climate Change Action Plan and in April 2008 agreed their carbon management plan called [Getting Our House in Order](#). The shared objectives of the Low Carbon Oxford programme are to:

- reduce the overall carbon emissions of the city by 3% year on year – achieving an 80% reduction by 2050
- create more 'green jobs' and a sustainable economy
- become a low carbon exemplar for the UK.

These common goals can only be achieved by close collaboration, drawing on the strengths of different sector organisations. Individuals and community groups can (and arguably should) do a great deal and the Society is exploring ways of working closely with Low Carbon Oxford, to establish a partnership and facilitate initiatives with our membership.

A free passport to our heritage

Thanks to our membership of **Civic Voice** you are entitled to a day pass giving access to a National Trust and /or an English Heritage property. If you have internet access, go to www.civicvoice.org.uk/nationaltrustcivicvoiceoffer and www.civicvoice.org.uk/englishheritagepassoffer, complete the form and print off the pass. The NT pass is transferable so if you are already a member, you can use it to take a guest. The English Heritage pass is NOT transferable and NOT valid during July and August. If you do not have internet access, you can apply in writing to:

How to go green

As an individual you can make a difference too: every action, however small, will help to address the overall problem. Some suggestions:

- add your voice by signing the [Oxford Climate Change Pledge on the Oxford is My World website](#)
- register for your free copy of *Oxford is My World: Your Guide to Saving the Planet* on the City Council's [Oxford is My World website](#)
- reduce your home energy use. See the city's [Energy Saving Advice pages](#) for more details or visit www.energysavingtrust.org
- invest in a sustainable energy project like ON-CORE – <http://oncore.org.uk/> (see page 2) .

Driving change at the grassroots

At a community level, the **Low Carbon Hub** will support and drive environmental change across Oxfordshire, helping to deliver a 40% cut in carbon emissions by 2020. The 'Hub' will give communities a trusted and credible source of essential information, strategic advice and support, both on- and off-line. The resources, training and services will be generated by Hub experts to help communities cut through the information overload and build the confidence to act.

Low Carbon Oxford would like communities across Oxfordshire to be involved with and use the Hub to start up and develop low carbon projects. Under the Hub umbrella, it is hoped to create a powerful network of active communities working on climate change with the potential to make a huge impact on reducing carbon emissions across the county.

The Low Carbon Hub will launch with a website and a full range of services and training programmes in November 2011. Watch this space!

Editor's note: See the Energy Seminar on page 5

Ian Harvey (National Trust / English heritage offer), Unit 101, 82 Wood Street, Liverpool L1 4DQ, giving your address and stating that you are a member of OCS. Please state if you are applying for an NT pass, an EH pass or both and enclose a stamped, addressed DL envelope.



Ightham Mote, an NT gem

Reclaiming the ring road

By Graham Paul Smith

Urban Design Consultant

The need for new housing is clear but what if the land available is separated from its city by a major road? A seminar on 9 June enabled traffic engineers, planners, academics and OCS officers to discuss some of the thorny issues relating to development that is potentially disconnected.

In Oxford, land at Barton offers an opportunity to build new homes but there are problems: the area is peripheral and separated by a thundering dual carriageway, the A40 stretch of the ring road.

The existing Barton estate has some of the most deprived areas of the city (and country) and this may be at the root of some of the planning 'problems', a fear of deprivation 'spreading'. Perhaps the most significant decision about the new development area was made three years ago before any planning consultations: that the **1,000 homes will have no direct access into the city by car**. The issues are:

- is this separation reasonable?
- does it have to be so?
- can regeneration be catalysed in Barton and Northway if the new area remains disconnected?

The reasonableness of separation

Opposite the site, within the ring-ring road, the existing areas of Old Headington with its Conservation Area, and the Northway Estate with its own issues, are positioned astride the routes residents would want to take from the new housing towards the city. Unsurprisingly they may feel 'threatened' by the additional traffic associated with the new development passing through their territory. The current quietness and freedom from extraneous traffic are delights to be fought for whereas uncontrolled and invasive traffic, as in Marsh Lane, is a nightmare to be avoided.

But is separation reasonable?

It seems to me axiomatic that any new housing development must be well connected to the city, by right. **Surely planned segregation is socially offensive?** Separation affects choice regarding sustainable modes of travel. There needs to be an inviting and straightforward availability of routes. We should define 'sustainable travel' as the ability, rather than obligation, to choose non-car travel with any car journeys being 'short' rather than as lengthy as possible. Journeys through existing areas must be made as amenably as possible and severely

managed when necessary. **Areas which currently enjoy having no extraneous travel, subject others to their own travel needs without sharing any load.**

How might you feel, as a resident of the new development, about getting to Oxford? There is an unsatisfactory pedestrian underpass at Barton Lane and a possible bridge to walk and cycle over the ring road. One junction is proposed, probably traffic light controlled, to access the new housing area from the A40 but only buses, pedestrians and bikes can travel into Oxford through a rising-bollard protected route. **Can these few links remove any feeling of segregation?**



Headington roundabout illustrates the barriers between Barton (top) and the city. Courtesy of Google maps

Can regeneration be catalysed if the new area remains disconnected?

The City Area Action Plan for Barton hopes that regeneration of neighbouring estates, like Northway, will follow from the new development; it also 'hopes' for a new approach to travel. It is doubtful that the effectively segregated area, as proposed, can be a catalyst. What is needed is what the City originally sought, for the new area to be well connected. It needs to become a more or less dynamic centre for its wider neighbourhood.

Only if the ring road can be changed from a segregating barrier to a connecting main street can the new development play a regenerative role. A model is the **boulevard**, found notably in Paris, with appropriate 'permeability' (to access the streets beyond) and a mix of uses and opportunities to match. In this case the adjacent areas will be more likely to want to join to the new 'centre' rather than recoil from it. There is an added enticement for connectivity, because recent research by Savills indicates that permeability adds value to homes as a result of their being more accessible. The debate continues.

Travel and transport matters

By the Travel Behaviour Group

Co-ordinating the city buses



It's good news that the long-awaited 'quality bus partnership' to reduce the number of buses using the High will start on 24 July. Under this scheme, the Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach

will coordinate their timetables on the four corridors which they share (Banbury, London, Cowley and Iffley Roads) and will accept each other's tickets on all routes in the city. Buses from each company will automate on each route and the combined frequency will be as good as or better than before. Thames Travel will also be included in the transferable ticket scheme. Also, good news for Iffley Road passengers: both the 3 and 3A will continue to the railway station when the road works are completed.

Our congratulations are due to these three companies and the County Council for giving us a joined-up public transport system.

Train services

In the 1960s the train service was so sparse between Oxford and Worcester on the 'Cotswold line' that a single track was considered to be sufficient and the second track was removed in 1971 except for a section in the middle. Now, 40 years on, an hourly train in each direction is needed to cater for the demand so double track and improved signalling is being re-installed on 20 miles of the route. The first phase, between Charlbury and Ascott-under-Wychwood, has now been opened, together with second platforms at both stations and a footbridge at Charlbury. The second phase, between Moreton-in-Marsh and Evesham, will be completed in August and the improved train service will start in September.

The Museum of Oxford

By Sadie Paige, Museum Development Officer
The Museum is very pleased to announce the launch of its **Supporters programme** and is inviting members of the Oxford Civic Society to be the first to join. With your support we will be able to forge ahead with our plans: for longer opening hours and better access; a programme of community exhibitions through to 2015; and improving the quality of life for hard to reach and older audiences through award-winning projects. The Supporters programme costs **£15 a year** and offers:

Still to come are:

- a new service to London via Bicester and High Wycombe
- electric trains to London via a rebuilt, enlarged Reading station
- fewer lorries on the A34 now that the line from Southampton to the north has been cleared to take the biggest shipping containers.

Truly, the tide has turned from the road-dominated thinking of the past.

Relocating Oxford railway station?

Some members of the Group believe that relocation of the railway station to the Oxpens could help to relieve a number of the city's transport problems, especially if it were combined with good interchange facilities for bus passengers and cyclists. These include changes to Frideswide Square and increased access that will be needed for the Westgate redevelopment.

We were pleased to welcome Richard Mann (formerly a senior manager at Virgin and CrossCountry Trains) to a meeting to provide useful input about Network Rail's likely views. Richard suggested that Network Rail could benefit from such a project, but that it was unlikely to be considered essential at the moment. It was not clear where the money would come from, as the way forward for the Westgate redevelopment was uncertain. However, the range of potential benefits meant that measures should be considered to prevent the sale of the land that would be needed to make such a project a reality.

We hope to be able to talk to other stakeholders, including First Great Western, who operate the existing station and have already expressed interest in a bigger station with two island platforms.

Juliet Blackburn, Richard Bradley, Tony Joyce, Andrew Pritchard (Convenor), Graham Smith, David Townsend

- 10% discount in the new museum shop
- 20% discount on Town Hall tours
- free newsletters
- invitations to exhibition previews
- the chance to shape the museum's future.

The survival of the Museum has been due in large part to OCS support – Tony Joyce has played a key role and OCS has provided many volunteers. We would like to build on this friendship. To join the Supporters group please contact Vanessa Lea on 01865 252 086 or email vlea@oxford.gov.uk to enrol.

Planning matters

By the Planning Sub-Committee

Our Group continues to meet fortnightly in Ramsay House but in September this will close, in the current economy drive, and the Planning Office will move to St Aldates, where plans will be available only on computer screen, therefore perhaps more difficult to assess. The Group has recently increased to seven, a strong willing team to scrutinise about 40 planning applications, roughly half of those registered in that fortnight. We commented on 73 applications lodged between March and June, and a few are summarised here.

Radcliffe Infirmary site and Jericho

Land at the Infirmary site has now been completely cleared for Oxford University's huge new Maths and Humanities buildings. Plans for the **Jericho Health Centre** on the site were *approved* but with 27 conditions! Its position is challenging, between the dignified Tower of the Winds and the small houses and shops in Walton Street. It will also be a feature of the entrance gateway to the new campus. Its design is unconventional: walls broken by gentle vertical angles into 'crinkles', with small irregular windows and a flat roof. Internally, rooms have diverse shapes and corridors are irregular, perhaps to avoid a cheerless claustrophobic atmosphere.

Decisions on plans for a prominent corner of Jericho, where **Little Clarendon Street** meets **Walton Street** are still *pending*. The current proposal is to demolish much of the corner buildings but to retain their frontages. In the space created, a large new building on three and four floors would be erected, with 41 student rooms on the upper floors and retail units below them. Details need more sensitive treatment: for instance the line of the eaves and new windows should match those of retained buildings and the proposed rebuilt six-storey 126 Walton Street would be out of place and should match its neighbours in height and window style.

Oxford University Old Road campus, Headington

This proposal involves demolition of four buildings and their replacement by two enormous medical research buildings on four storeys (three floors with basement), whose height and bulk would contrast harshly with the scale of the houses in Old Road, would hugely raise traffic and parking pressure and would increase risk of polluted water running-off into the Boundary Brook. *A decision is pending.*

St Clements car park

Another contentious application still *pending decision*, this involves building three blocks of 141 student rooms above 74 car-parking spaces. This overdevelopment of a small space in the Conservation Area will obscure views of the listed Queen's College student block and would reduce by nearly half the number of car-parking spaces here, threatening the businesses in St Clements and the High Street.

Residential development

The proposal to demolish **184 Woodstock Road**, on the corner of Moreton Road, to make way for a block of five flats was *refused*. Designed by Frank Mountain with many 'Arts and Crafts style' features, the house deserves to be restored.

The 'box dormer' is a feature of too many planning applications. It is a dormer window across the full width and height of a roof. From the outside it is ugly, as if a chicken-shed has landed on the roof, and gives neighbours an unpleasant sense of being overlooked. We consistently object to these and the Council usually refuses them, but not always. Three appeared in plans at **46 Wilkins Road** and at **471 and 473 Cowley Road**, which all met with *refusal*.

Proposals at **Colthorn Farm, Old Marston**, have now been *approved*. We opposed the demolition of the old barn and outbuildings, suggesting that they could be restored and converted without loss of their rural character which contributes much to this historic part of the Conservation Area. Now most of these buildings will be demolished and replaced by two family houses and a six-space car park.

At **15 Farndon Road** large extensions to the ground and first floors would have adversely affected the neighbours at number 14, preventing daylight from reaching the only window in their sitting-room and compromising the privacy of both houses. The application was *refused*. At **2 Warnborough Road** it was proposed to build a new side-extension, more intrusive than the existing one, and filling the space between this house and its neighbour. Spaces between buildings are important design features in this attractive Conservation Area, separating the semi-detached pairs of tall Victorian houses. They should be preserved because they prevent the houses forming walls or terraces, which would be overbearing, and they allow views of trees and shrubs in rear gardens.

Gillian Argyle, Clive Booth, Kate Joyce (Convenor), Neil MacLennan, Chris Rayson, Peter Thompson, Tim Treacher

Programme September - December 2011

Digital photos of OCS events (max 4, preferably captioned) can be sent to webmaster@oxfordcivicsociety.org.uk

Special events

See page 5 for details of topics and speakers

Saturday 24 September, 2-5pm Energy Seminar

At the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, St Hilda's College – bookings by 19 August

Tickets cost £10 per person and include tea/coffee at the beginning and the interval

Saturday 12 November, 10am-4.30pm Transport Symposium

At the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, St Hilda's College – bookings by 19 September

Tickets cost £18 per person and include tea/coffee at the beginning of the symposium and in the afternoon.

A buffet lunch may be booked for those who want it, for £12 per person.

Open talk – all welcome

no pre-booking, members free, non-members £4 at the door

Thursday 3 November, 8pm: Oxford Roads and Milestones

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street Coffee/tea 7.30 pm, talk 8pm

Derek Turner of the local group The Milestone Society will discuss the history and development of main roads in and out of Oxford and Oxfordshire, focusing mainly on the 17th to 20th centuries. He will describe visible remains, in particular the milemarkers, and consider how these historic monuments can be preserved as part of our road heritage. The work of the Milestone Society and its local group will be described and consideration given to ways it and the Civic Society might interact.

Members only visits and walks

tickets are required for all these events: bookings by 19 August

Tuesday 4 October, 10am: Visit to the Oxford Union Tickets: £7

The Oxford Union must surely be the most famous student debating society in the world. Founded in the 19th century, it has often been seen as a training ground for national politics. Prime Ministers, politicians and statesmen figure among its former officers, from Harold Macmillan to Roy Jenkins, from Viscount Curzon to William Hague. Members will have the chance to see the Victorian debating chamber, scene of Westminster-style debates, the Union library with its pre-Raphaelite murals, as well as other libraries and rooms. The visit will finish with coffee and tea.

Thursday 13 October, 2pm: Visit to the Oxfordshire Recycling Centre at Milton Keynes Tickets: £7

As we all become more aware of the importance of recycling here's a chance to find out what happens to everything you put in your recycling bins. The council of Milton Keynes has a recycling facility where the plastics and much else from Oxford are finally separated after preliminary sorting at Enstone. This is an opportunity to see a state of the art facility in an area that impinges increasingly on our daily life.

Wednesday 19 October, 7pm: Visit to Blackwell's Bookshop Tickets: £7

Blackwell's has been selling books in Broad Street since 1879 and is now one of the largest and best known bookshops in the world. The most famous figure in the company has been Sir Basil Blackwell (The Gaffer), who developed the successful publishing side of the business. Tony Cooper will discuss the history of the firm and Zool Vergee will talk about life for a bookseller in the digital age. Finally, there will be an opportunity to see Sir Basil's private room on the first floor.

Saturday 22 October, Sunday 23 October and Sunday 6 November, 2pm: Holywell walk Tickets: £4

Join local historian Malcolm Graham for a two-hour circular walk round this historic area, taking in Holywell Street, the Manor, the Music Room and St Cross Church – soon to open as the Balliol College archive centre. The area has been intimately connected with the churches and colleges of central Oxford, from St Peter-in-the-East to Merton and Balliol, as well as housing Holywell cemetery, the resting place of generations of Town and Gown.

OCS people

Sir Clive Booth joins Executive

We are delighted to welcome Sir Clive to the Executive Committee, following his election at the AGM. He brings a wealth of expertise to our affairs. Sir Clive says: "If someone had predicted that during my time as



Director of Oxford Polytechnic it would become independent of the local authority, become a university and take over the wonderful Headington Hill Hall site, I would have accused them of living in cloud cuckoo land, but I was very lucky to be there when it all happened".

A scientist with a Double First from Cambridge, his early career was spent in the civil service, including acting as Principal Private Secretary to two Secretaries of State for Education. He gained his doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley, on a Harkness Fellowship. He left Brookes in 1997 to become an international educational consultant and chair a range of national bodies involved in education, health, policing and lottery grant making. He was knighted for services to higher education in 2003.

He cares deeply about Oxford. As a former Vice Chancellor of Brookes, he is all too aware of the pressures affecting both the quality of life of its residents and the city's priceless heritage. He is keen to see the right balance struck between their interests and the need for the city to prosper. "This is why I am such a keen supporter of the Oxford Civic Society," he says.

City honours Pauline Martin

In May of this year, 15 people who have given exceptional service to the city received Certificates of Honour during a special ceremony at the Town Hall. The Lord Mayor of Oxford, Councillor John Goddard, handed out the certificates in recognition of the outstanding voluntary work carried out by the recipients. Pauline was honoured for her work as Chair of the Osney Island Residents Association as well as her contribution to OxClean and the Oxford Civic Society. She heads the Society's Communications Group which deals with press, publicity, the website and publications.



Contact us/Who's who

Oxford Civic Society
67 Cunliffe Close, OX2 7BJ
075 05 756 692

info@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk

oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk

oxclean.org.uk / oxstreets.org.uk

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President: *Sir Hugo Brunner*

Vice President: *Tony Joyce*

Chairman: *Peter Thompson*

85 Lonsdale Road, OX2 7ET (558 616)

chairman@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk

Hon Secretary: *Vernon Porter*

67 Cunliffe Close, OX2 7BJ (557 660)

info@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk

Treasurer: *Gordon Balme*

336 Woodstock Road, OX2 7NS (511 387)

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**(Environment Secretary and
OxClean Chair:** *vacant*)

Membership Secretary: *Liz Grosvenor*

15 Lime Walk, Headington, OX3 7AB (765 453)

membership@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: *Hilary Bradley*

24 Beaumont Road, OX3 8JN (762 418)

newsletter@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk

Oxford Streets for People

Project Co-ordinator: *Richard Bradley*

24 Beaumont Road, OX3 8JN (762 418)

info@oxstreets.org.uk

Planning Sub-Committee Convenor: *Kate Joyce*

68 Blenheim Drive, OX2 8DQ (556 050)

Programme Group Convenor: *Alastair Lack*

83 Frenchay Road, OX2 6TF (511 326)

programme@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk

Travel Behaviour Group

Convenor: *Andrew Pritchard*

33 Laburnum Road, North Hinksey OX2 9EL
(240 014)

University Liaison: *Stuart White*

'Yarnells', Yarnells Hill, OX2 9BG (247 669)