

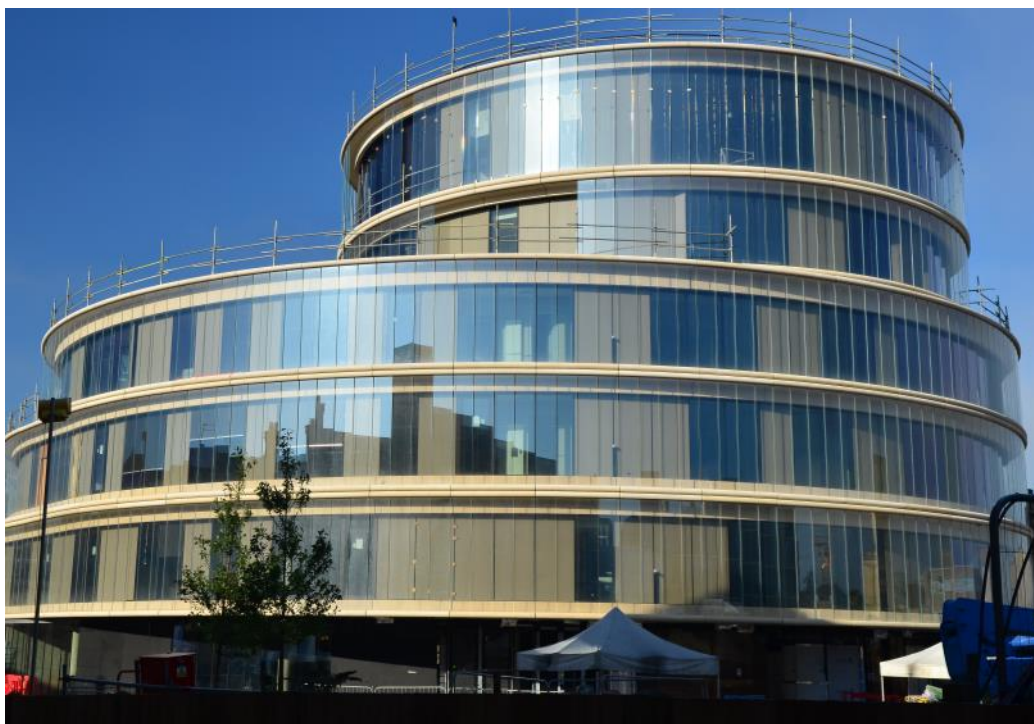
VISIONS

No 132, November 2015

Contents

- 1-3 Chairman's commentary
- 4 Planning
- 5 The Westgate dig
- 6 Transport update
- 7 Reclaiming St Giles
- 8 Constitutional change
- 9 Smart Oxford
- 10-11 Programme
- 12 People / Bookshelf / Contacts

The Blavatnik building seen from Walton Street as it nears completion – see page 4



What Cambridge can teach us

By Peter Thompson, Chairman

Cambridge has some important lessons for planners and politicians.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has recently updated its mapping of travel to work behaviour, and Jonathan Schifferes, Associate Director of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), has highlighted some key conclusions. The maps define areas by commuting patterns, ignoring administrative boundaries, and those for Oxford (shown on page 2) indicate how the city's travel to work area expanded between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. People are commuting to the city from well beyond the county boundary in some cases.

As Jonathan Schifferes points out, this is a reminder that neighbouring administrative districts are much more inter-dependent than many political leaders would care to admit – they are becoming economically inseparable. The case for working across council boundaries on housing policy and economic development is starker than ever. One could add transport infrastructure to Jonathan's list.

The map is particularly relevant in the context of the Government's ongoing devolution and decentralisation agenda and strengthens the case for new government structures like Combined Authorities. The Oxfordshire Councils have, of course, applied for consent to the formation of just such a body here,

Hold the dates!

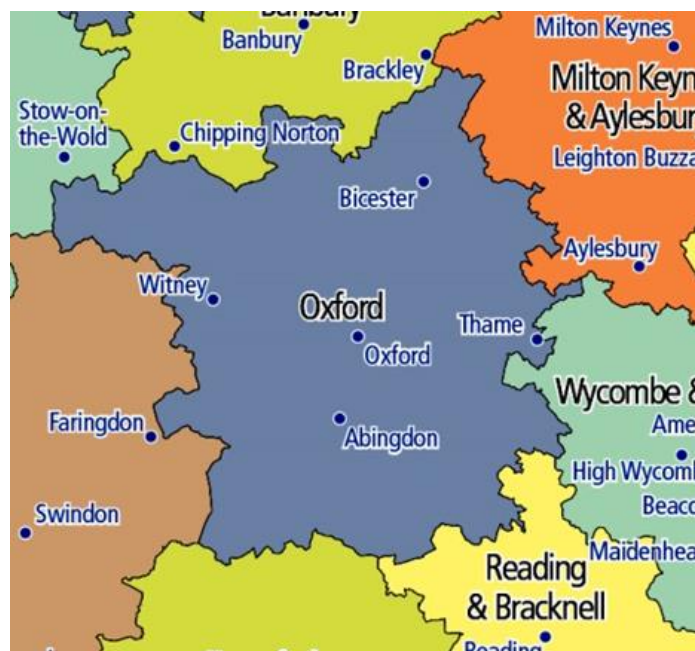
Spring Clean 2016

4, 5 and 6 March – register now on www.oxclean.org.uk

AGM

Wednesday 9 March 2016

All welcome – see page 11 for details and page 8 for information about nominations to the Executive Committee and a proposed change to the constitution



The Oxford travel to work area in 2001 (left) and 2011 (right) shows how the city pulls in commuters from further and further afield
Adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0

but just what this may mean in the development of some long-overdue properly-coordinated planning across the city region remains unknown. Can we hope that this may be the precursor to development of a real vision for the city and the county?

Somewhere that does seem to have such a vision is Cambridge. In September 2014 a select group of councillors, academics and business representatives from our region made a day trip there to compare matters. Top of the list of the group's conclusions was that there is real evidence of the benefits for everyone of coherent, long-term efforts to make the area attractive for employers, with a focus on balancing employment, infrastructure and quality of life.

At Cambridge, like Oxford, the role of the University is crucial to the life of the region. There, the University has evidently played a critical role in providing leadership, influencing planning and establishing productive relationships with other players. The collective commitment of the local authorities (admittedly only three of them, as opposed to our six) has also been crucial.

Already some large companies have recognised the opportunities offered by the concentration of knowledge, the links between academia and local busi-

ness and the housing and transport infrastructure. The result is what has been described as a 'virtuous circle', with the potential to enhance academic standards, attract investment and hence improve the infrastructure and the well-being of local communities.

Cambridge University and its colleges also seem to be capable of developing and implementing a consistent and coordinated strategy prioritised on the future success of the University, rather than simply exploiting immediate opportunities for short-term financial gain. At its West Cambridge site, the University has been instrumental in defining its vision, creating a business plan and launching a bond issue to raise £350 million in funding for the development on which it is now embarking.

In Cambridge the University has played a critical role in providing leadership, influencing planning and establishing productive relationships with other players. The collective commitment of the local authorities has also been crucial.

With interesting relevance to the projected Oxford developments at Oxpens and at the railway station, after Microsoft established operations on the fringes of Cambridge, it soon decided

that a location close to the city centre and rail links to London better suited its requirements. Selecting business space in close proximity to strategic transport infrastructure chimes with observations we have been making on the masterplanning of the Oxford sites.

A co-ordinated approach to housing need

Though lessons may be learned from Cambridge, it has clearly not resolved all its problems. Cambridge City Council's recent *Housing Strategy 2016-2031: Consultation Draft* reveals that housing remains as unaffordable as here, the median house price having risen 49% in the last seven years. Cambridge thus faces many of the same challenges as Oxford, although housing need in the sub-region over the next 16 years is assessed at 33,000 – only one-third of Oxfordshire's needs. Our problems are thus more intractable, but more significantly, our organisational structures remain shamefully uncoordinated.

In contrast, the Cambridge draft housing strategy document explains: "We have been working particularly closely with South Cambridgeshire District Council for a number of years in relation to housing supply, especially in taking forward cross-boundary



developments on the fringes of the City, and we will continue to do so. ... We have closely co-ordinated work on our emerging Local Plans ... we work closely with the other districts in the housing sub-region ... We have agreed a memorandum of co-operation with these districts ... confirming where housing needs across the wider area will be met". Perhaps our own authorities' bid for a Combined Authority represents a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel, but there is little evidence for this from the emerging or adopted Local Plans covering our region.

Designing for quality of life

One of Cambridge's more interesting recent housing developments is the Accordia site in Brooklands Avenue, winner of the Stirling Prize in 2008. This has also been the subject of mental health studies by academics from Cambridge University. As reported in *Frontiers in Public Health*, the urban design, and specifically the provision of communal amenity space at Accordia was found to promote healthy behaviour comparable with traditional neighbourhoods of far lower development density: *"The positive role of home zone streets, hard-standing and semi-civic space highlights the principle of quality as well as quantity"*.

In other words, good urban design, even for high densities of development, translates into measurable improvements in perceptions of well-being. The findings



The prize-winning Accordia development in Cambridge – high-density living built to high standards
Photo courtesy of Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios

of this research should be essential reading for designers of our future suburbs or garden cities.

The failure of green belts

Meanwhile, Jonathan Schifferes of the RSA also suggests that the latest ONS commuting maps reveal some of the failures of past policies: *"When green belts were introduced, just one in seven households had access to a car: today it's 80 per cent. By constraining housing growth immediately around Oxford and Cambridge in particular, green belts explain the large travel-to-work areas for these cities, as thousands of commuters drive across each city's green belt to get to work each day. This somewhat defeats the original rationale: green belts simply displace, rather than prevent sprawl"*.

Coincidentally the ONS also reported last year on commuting and personal well-being. The conclusions are depressing: compared to those spending less than 15 minutes travelling to work, commuters have lower life satisfaction, a lower sense that their activities are worthwhile, less happiness and higher anxiety levels, especially when journey times are between 60 and 90 minutes. We probably underestimate the negative impact of long-

range commuting on our well-being. We certainly take no account of the impact of commuting on our carbon footprint.

The time for action is now

Cambridge evidently started to recognise its difficulties 50 years ago, but it took 40 years to make a breakthrough in joining up the interests of all parties and developing a consensus on the balance to be struck on social, environmental and economic issues.

The Oxford delegates to the Cambridge fact-finding mission concluded that we cannot now afford that timescale – **the need to grasp opportunities is urgent**. The group mooted that Oxford has as least as many opportunities as Cambridge – perhaps more. But the absolute fundamental appears to be the need for reasonable consensus across the major institutions, business, and the local authorities, and for all parties to speak with one voice.

Peter Thompson
Chairman



Commuter misery as work starts on the Cutteslowe and Wolvercote roundabouts
Photo courtesy of the Oxford Mail





The changing face of Oxford

Will we learn to love some of the new buildings in the city? Clive Booth reflects on changing tastes.

The fascinating remains of the 13th century Greyfriars friary and the Civil War relics in the building site of the new Westgate Centre prompted a chain of thought. It goes without saying that Oxford has seen huge changes over the years. But can the current pace of change have been equalled in any period of the city's history? Is the face of Oxford becoming more or less beautiful? Should we be optimistic or pessimistic about the future?

These are difficult questions to answer, not least because tastes change and even the most disliked buildings win friends over time. Take for example the

sorry tale is the publication of a long addendum to the original environmental impact statement. This only confirms one's perception that the original scheme was a disaster that should never have happened. Mitigation will be minimal and largely ineffective.

Opinion about the **Blavatnik School of Government** building immediately opposite the Oxford University Press on Walton Street, now nearing completion, has been divided. Unkindly named by critics as 'the glass gas-holder', it may be true that the best views of Oxford will be from the top floor (allowed to violate the city's normal planning limit on building height) if only because that is the place where the Blavatnik building cannot be seen!

place a few egg boxes on their side. The great missed opportunity at St Cross was not to build more of the structure underground and thus reduce the overbearing height. Colleges across Oxford have been digging down. Lecture theatres and libraries need controlled lighting and ventilation and are ideally suited to being placed underground: not at St Cross, unfortunately.

Up the hill at Headington, the new **John Henry Brookes** building has won plaudits from the RIBA and the architectural press. Brookes, unlike St Cross, responded to public pressure and sank more of the building into the ground. Although the rusty steel columns that flank the new plaza facing London Road are not to everyone's taste, the public have been welcomed into the building and they like what they see.

And in town ...

Inevitably perhaps, many of the striking new buildings are university projects. Apart from the huge new Westgate Centre (about which the Society has expressed its concerns), there are of course other projects that have the potential to change the face of Oxford. The proposal to replace the dreadful building on the corner of **Paradise Street and St Thomas Street**, formerly occupied by Cooper Callas, is one important example. The proposal for a new hotel and microbrewery, together with opening public access alongside the Wareham Stream, has the potential to generate attractive new public spaces. However, we have expressed concerns over the design of the hotel and the proposal to demolish the former Brewery Gate pub and 'horse hospital'. We will continue to work for a more beautiful Oxford.

Correction

In our last edition we inadvertently suggested that the CPRE advocates building houses on Southfield Golf Course. This is not actually the case, though it does believe that there are numerous sites within the city which could be developed for housing. We apologise for misrepresenting the views of CPRE in this way.



The Cooper Callas site in Paradise Street, a sensitive area due to be redeveloped

Photo courtesy of the Oxford Mail

fuss over William Butterfield's design for Keble College in the 1860s. There were some who thought that the buildings were so ugly that they should be torn down. Sir Kenneth Clark recalled that during his Oxford years it was generally believed that Keble College was "the ugliest building in the world". Now people are concerned that the new physics laboratory being built in Parks Road will obliterate the view of Keble Chapel from the University Parks!

Mention of buildings being torn down (or not) brings one inevitably to the University's **Castle Mill** development at Port Meadow. The latest episode in this

More from academia ...

On the positive side, in Walton Street, **Exeter's Cohen Quadrangle** has preserved some of the façade of the former Ruskin College, although it will be topped by an extraordinary metallic hat that may turn out to look inspired or ridiculous. We shall soon know. Demolition is sometimes the right answer: the interior of Ruskin College was in a dreadful state: the decision to gut it was undoubtedly right.

The new **St Cross** building in Pusey Street is well underway. To get a good idea of the general design approach,



Digging up the past at the Westgate Centre

One of the biggest archaeological projects in the city's history is taking place prior to the construction of the new Westgate Shopping Centre and its underground car parks. The City Council's Archaeologist, David Radford, reports.

Over the summer the southern precinct of the town's Franciscan friary and *Studium Generale* (Franciscan college), founded in the 13th century, have been investigated by Oxford Archaeology (OA) on the site of the former multi-storey car park. The dig has revealed extensive but largely robbed-out stone walls, channels, rubbish pits and isolated floor surfaces. Notable discoveries include the well-preserved friary kitchen and the stone conduit system that provided the site with running water. We are expecting further significant discoveries as the dig progresses southwards towards the Trill Mill Stream where we have identified a possible mill structure.

The project has also involved recording work prior to the construction of a double basement in the southern part of the site. This has included the excavation of four 1820s tenements in the former St Ebbe's suburb, sections across the Royalist Civil War defences and a section across the Trill Mill Stream. Discoveries from the latter include an ox skeleton embedded in a medieval channel and an enigmatic compacted gravel surface of Bronze Age date or earlier. We have also run an extensive outreach programme involving projects with local schools, public talks, a pop-up museum, viewing platform and public open days.

Archaeology and the NPPF

That this is happening at all, and at no cost to Oxford citizens, is thanks to the National Planning Policy Framework. This requires developers to establish the significance of any archaeological assets that will be impacted by a development and if necessary justify any impact in terms of public benefit. In this case, trial trenching showed that the friary site was nationally significant. The developer made the case that the Westgate development would result in public benefit that was 'exceptional', outweighing the 'substantial harm' to archaeological remains. Subsequently the developer, the Oxford Westgate Alliance, and its main contractor, Laing O'Rourke, have been working closely with OA to meet the requirements of the archaeological planning condition, encompassing recording, public outreach, post-excavation assessment, storage of artefacts in the County Museum and on-site interpretation.

Challenges and opportunities

The site has presented numerous challenges, for example amending the working methodology in order to keep buses running through the archaeological site! Having ruled out the possibility of re-using the foundation piles of the old multi-storey car park, a recording methodology was developed that focuses on understanding the friary rather than simply recording the construction impact. This was because there was a concern that the multiple pile arrays might leave behind remains

that were too fragmented for future archaeologists to understand. However now that the site is open it is clear there will be more opportunity for meaningful preservation below floor level than we previously thought. Sadly for the public however, no trace of the friary will be visible once the new centre is built.

This dig began in January 2015 and will continue into early 2016. The pace and scale of archaeological investigations in Oxford over the last ten years mirrors the dynamism of the modern city. Such pressure on the city's archaeological resource presents both challenges and opportunities in terms of achieving sustainable development, driving new research and increasing public engagement. The 2013-2018 *Oxford Archaeological Action Plan* gives further information and you can read more about the Westgate excavation on Oxford Archaeology's website:

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/OxfordArchaeologicalPlan.htm>

<http://oxfordarchaeology.com/community/westgate-excavations>

Photos courtesy of the author (above) and Oxford Archaeology (below)





A big leap ahead for transport

We are on the brink of two major transport advances in Oxford. Andrew Pritchard reports on the Transport Group's activities.

Chiltern Railways' Evergreen 3 trains to London Marylebone are due to depart from **Oxford Parkway station** at Water Eaton on 26 October. This gives passengers a real choice and it will be interesting to see how many choose to travel to London this way.

The railway parts of this all seem to be in place, but there are still questions about how people will get to the new station, in particular from the Northern Gateway. Can we hope that it is not too late for measurements of the patronage to influence and improve the access proposed from the Northern Triangle?

From 2016 passengers from the existing railway station will have a choice of train company to get to London, as planning permission for the extensions to the bay platforms at the north end of Oxford Station have been approved for Chiltern Railways' use.

First Great Western's (now re-branded Great Western Railway) plans for **electric trains** from Oxford to Paddington do not seem to have moved forward. There is even talk of more of the new trains from Hitachi being equipped with diesel engines as well.

Frideswide Square

The second advance is the new Frideswide Square, rapidly taking shape outside the station – will the station be called Oxford Central, or even Oxford Cowshed, as a FGW director referred to it recently? Some small engraved medallions have now appeared in the pavement in the square, presumably indicating preferred routes for cyclists and pedestrians.

However, the single traffic lanes in the centre are only just wide enough for a bus, and it will be interesting to see how far buses using the stops in lay-bys at the sides will disrupt the traffic flow. A casual conversation with a young bus driver suggested that buses will regularly need to overrun the central reservation to get past those at the stops.

Seacourt Park & Ride

Further west, the City is planning to expand the Seacourt Park & Ride, with 800 new spaces proposed behind the houses and the offices to the east of the entrance. Like many of the existing spaces, these will flood in bad weather. Access will be through the existing entrance on the Botley Road, already one of its worst pinch points. A direct connection to the A420/A34 interchange would remove a lot of traffic from the Botley Road, and make access to the expanding Seacourt Retail Park easier for those on foot or bicycle. It could also enable provision of a badly needed eastbound cycle lane between the junctions outside McDonalds and the P&R entry. The County's proposed 'outer ring' of P&R sites is considered to be much longer term.

Consulting on Botley Road

The recent consultation about the Botley Road between Atkins (for the City) and key stakeholders, including ourselves, provided another opportunity for us to put forward our proposal for a **relief road** from Osney Mead to Oxpens. The consultation, covering the length from the top of Cumnor Hill, running to, but not including, the junctions at Mill Street, appeared to be a process for gathering stakeholders' concerns about a number of features and pinch points as they affect cyclists, pedestrians and buses.

No new plans were presented and a more inclusive consultation is planned in November.

The entrances to the new Waitrose supermarket introduce a further potential pinch point, and the line chosen for the cycle lane has sharp corners, which seem likely to discourage its use. In addition pedestrians are likely to find riders in their path and vice versa.

Developing Oxpens

We also attended a presentation on new student accommodation proposed on the small industrial estate bordering the railway at the Oxpens. The developers were clearly unhappy about the limitations of this narrow site, and the need for continued access to Unit 16 at the southern end, which has not been sold. They could see the advantages of a land swap to allow better integration with the Oxpens, as proposed in the Masterplan. They were interested in our suggestions for a new station and transport hub on the Oxpens and took notes on the proposal, which could of course include student accommodation.

And in North Oxford ...

Work at the **Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts** has started, causing long tailbacks. There have been public complaints about the slow pace of work which is estimated to take over a year.

Will cyclists want to use this sharp-cornered track on Botley Road?

Photo courtesy of Graham P Smith





Reclaiming St Giles

St Giles is one of the most magnificent streets in Oxford. Now a campaign has been launched to make more of this asset. Corinne Grimley Evans of OxPA reports.

The Reclaim St Giles campaign was launched on 1 October at the St Giles Quaker Meeting House, where a wide range of individuals and representatives from many interest groups gathered to express their views on the future of the road. Three campaign groups, Oxford Civic Society, Oxford Pedestrians Association and Cyclox, presented the results of surveys they had carried out earlier in the year.

The background to the campaign, presented by OxPA's Chair, Sushila Dhall, and supported by Peter Thompson of the Civic Society and Simon Hunt of Cyclox, covered the many reasons both aesthetic and practical that have led to this call to make St Giles what it should be, one of the finest public spaces in the country.

A road for all users

Keith Frayn's presentation of survey data revealed that pedestrians are the dominant users of St Giles, but are allocated a minute proportion of the wide space available. Injury data presented by Simon Hunt demonstrated current dangers for pedestrians and cyclists.

All the participants agreed that the present layout represents a huge wasted opportunity for all, denied enjoyment of the magnificent architecture and proportions of one of Oxford finest spaces.



Pedestrians on the narrow strip of pavement on the east side of St Giles – vehicles are allocated most of the space but are the minority of users

Photo courtesy of Cameraman, licensed for reuse. See www.geograph.org.uk

The ensuing discussion covered car parking, including danger to pedestrians and cyclists of current access patterns, the need for safer east-west crossings, the issue of insufficient space for walkers especially on the west side of the street, coach parking and the need for maintenance of tree-planting programmes for the future.

Despite an untimely curtailment of the meeting, it was clear there was broad agreement on experimenting with narrowing the roadway to allow more

and safer space for walkers and cyclists. A copy of a petition will be sent to the Highway Authority requesting implementation of an Experimental Order to assess feasibility of reducing roadway space without compromising traffic flow.

If you are interested in supporting this campaign, please send your contact details to oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com so that we can keep you informed of further action.



The gift of membership

What do you buy someone for Christmas when they've got everything? Why not give a friend or neighbour **Gift Membership** of the Society? They can then enjoy a year of newsletters, walks, talks and visits (the photo shows members on the Abingdon visit in September).

We will send the recipient a card with a note that their membership has come from you. Just send us your cheque for £10 for single membership, or £14 for two members at the same address.

Cheques should go to our Membership Secretary, Liz Grosvenor at 15 Lime Walk, Headington, Oxford OX3 7AB

Don't forget you can also bring **one guest for free** to any of our talks.



A constitutional catch-up

At the next AGM we will be proposing some changes to the Constitution. Vernon Porter explains the rationale for change.

The current Constitution was approved in 2006 and our activities have evolved over these last 10 years. Aside from a technical change to the Dissolution Clause, the main changes proposed are to the Society's purposes and simply reflect what we have been doing over recent years. The changes will formally 'allow' us to look at infrastructure and the natural environment alongside the built environment. They also put more emphasis on civic pride and community building.

Following discussions with the Charity Commission, we propose that the new Objects clause should read:

In recent years we have put much effort into building stronger communities, for example by persuading the City Council to simplify road closures for street parties. This was Pitts Road party in September

"The Society is established for the public benefit for the following purposes in the area comprising the City of Oxford and its surroundings:

- to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the built and natural environment and infrastructure, public or private;
- to encourage high standards in the management and development of the built and natural environment and infrastructure, in particular by promoting sustainable development and the prudent use of resources;
- to foster civic pride and stimulate and educate the public, in particular, but not exclusively, by promoting understanding and appreciation of the beauty, history, geography and character of different localities;

- to encourage individuals and communities to understand, appreciate, conserve, protect and improve the quality, beauty, history, geography and character of their locality;
- to support and promote actions and initiatives which encourage the growth and development of a strong and active community within the City of Oxford and its surroundings, and encourage individuals to play an active part;
- In furtherance of the said purposes but not otherwise..." No change is proposed to the existing powers.

The current text can be found on our website – see [Constitution](#) on the About Us page (under 'How we work').

Of course what we actually do will, as ever, depend on what our volunteers have the enthusiasm to tackle. If you'd like to support one of our initiatives or take up a new cause, do get in touch.



Join the leaders!

If you'd like to help shape Oxford's future, why not join our Executive Committee? Our convivial meetings are held monthly and we welcome new members to join in discussion.

Nominations for Officers and membership of the Committee and notice of any business to be put on the agenda of the AGM should be sent by Tuesday 23 February to: Vernon Porter, Hon Secretary, Oxford Civic Society, 67 Cunliffe Close, Oxford, OX2 7BJ, or e-mail info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Nominations should have the consent of the nominee and require seconding. Potential candidates are invited to contact Vernon for an informal discussion.

The agenda, reports and accounts will be published in the March newsletter and will be available from the Hon Secretary after 23 February.

The AGM will be held on 9 March – see page 11 for details.



The 'Smart Oxford' initiative

Smart Oxford is a new initiative of the Oxford Strategic Partnership. It aims to harness digital technologies to enhance our quality of life. Llewelyn Morgan, Chair of the Smart Oxford working group, explains.

By 'smart' we mean an Oxford that actively engages city-wide with advances in digital technology to: create prosperity; enhance performance, well-being and quality of life; reduce costs and resource consumption; and engage more actively with its citizens.

It means having well-informed, joined-up thinking across the entire city. It means making information more richly available – both by freeing up the flow of existing information across the city, and through richer data collection, to underpin effective analysis and modelling. And it means reaping the benefits through better decision making, more efficient as well as innovative services, and through better-informed and more actively engaged citizens.

What could be achieved?

This initiative is about much more than ensuring that the city and county benefit from high-speed broadband, critical though that is. We are working on, for example:

- monitoring flood risk through smart sensors and the 'Internet of Things'
- integrating transport more fully and enhancing people's experience of travel
- monitoring and managing energy use in buildings to improve efficiency
- local renewable energy sources to drive down our carbon emissions – funding has already been secured for this vital work.

Smart City challenges?

Existing services such as transport, water supply, retail and energy have evolved organically to collect, store and use their own data sets. Only occasionally do other service providers benefit from agreements to share data with limited numbers of collaborators.

Not only have services tended to develop as 'data silos' but systems and

Why Oxford?

- 1 Expanding city: 155,000 now, 165,000 by 2023
- 2 Densely populated city
- 3 Demographic diversity – wide range of service needs
- 4 Global intellectual leader: two universities, health and bioscience expertise
- 5 High population turnover, 26% per year, driven by high adult student population
- 6 Housing issues – high cost relative to wages, shortage
- 7 Areas of deprivation: one is in lowest 10% in country
- 8 Transport congestion: 46,000 inward commuters
- 9 State education below national average attainment
- 10 Environment: high flood risk, poor air quality

Why Oxford?



processes often inadvertently create barriers rather than opportunities for data sharing and co-ordinated services. An associated problem is that legacy systems and processes have impeded the take up of new technologies – such as the ability to monitor and manage via connected devices and sensors.

Oxford isn't alone in this – it's the norm across the UK and an issue that all cities need to address, especially with dwindling resources.

But the cities that take the lead in this now will not only reap the benefits of earlier adoption, but will most likely attract the lion's share of inward investment in smart cities.

Our vision and long-term goal

Our vision is of a city where innovative ideas, active citizens and stakeholders come together and collaborate openly and inclusively. We want:

- the city to evolve so it develops, evaluates and deploys new technologies and processes that enhance understanding of itself
- to accelerate the city's development

as a living community

- to support continued, sustainable economic growth and social prosperity, while improving resilience to change.

Developing an open and inclusive information infrastructure and data exchange across the range of Oxford's services to support citizens' interactions will underpin this vision.

How to achieve Smart Oxford?

The Smart Oxford working group will promote the initiative and work in collaboration with all relevant parties – citizens; local and national government; businesses; universities and colleges; entrepreneurs and researchers; inward investors and funding bodies.

There will be three main strands to the work: marketing to potential investors, including government; seeking investment; and working strategically with partners to identify and foster projects that further our goals.

More information and key contacts can be found at www.oxfordsmartcity.uk
Follow us on Twitter
@OxfordSmartCity



Booking form: Jan – April ticketed events

Closing date for applications: **Thursday 3 December**. Please enclose:

- 1 cheque/s payable to Oxford Civic Society, one for each event
- 2 one stamped, addressed envelope for all tickets

Member's name

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

2nd member's name (if applicable).....

Address

.....

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Event	No. of tickets	Amount enclosed
For events on more than one date, please delete any dates you <u>can't</u> do and indicate your preferred date/s		
Christ Church Cathedral Tuesday 12 January 10.30am Wednesday 13 January 10.30am@£8	
St Antony's College Investcorp Building Tuesday 16 February 11.00am Wednesday 24 February 11.00am@£8	
Rycote Park and Chapel Thursday 17 March 10.30am Note, there is no public transport. Please indicate whether you: need a lift <input type="checkbox"/> can offer a lift <input type="checkbox"/>@£8	
Wallingford: the museum and a walking tour Tuesday 12 April 10am Tuesday 19 April 10am Note: the fee for this tour includes a pass for the museum valid for several months@£10	

Note: Tickets are allocated soon after the closing date but if you miss it, it's always worth asking if there are places left. Cheques are banked three weeks after ticket issue; after that no refunds can be given.

Send this completed form to:

Alan Hobbs

66 Southfield Road, Oxford OX4 1PA



Programme calendar 'cut out and keep'

January – April 2016

**ticketed events*

Tuesday 12 January * 10.30am
Wednesday 13 January * 10.30am
George Gilbert Scott's cathedral, a tour with Jim Godfrey

Tuesday 26 January 7.30 for 8pm
Robert Hooke: 351 years on, a talk by Allan Chapman

Thursday 11 February 7.30 for 8pm
Restoring Oxford as the UK's cycling capital, a talk by Danny Dorling

Tuesday 16 February * 11.00am
Wednesday 24 February * 11.00am
St Antony's College Investcorp Building, a visit

Wednesday 9 March 6.30 for 7pm
The Oxford innovation eco-system, a talk by Alistair Fitt
 Followed by the **AGM at 8pm**

Thursday 17 March * 10.30am
Rycote Park and Chapel, a tour with owner, Sarah Taylor

Tuesday 12 April 10am *
Tuesday 19 April 10am *
Wallingford: museum and a walking tour led by Judy Dewey

***Contact for booking/tickets only:**

Alan Hobbs, 66 Southfield Road
 Oxford OX4 1PA
 Tel: 01865 248 105

If, at the last moment, you can't attend, please phone Alan Hobbs – someone will be pleased to take your place





Programme January – April 2016

Open talks – all welcome

No pre-booking, free to members. Help us to recruit new members by bringing a guest to one lecture free £4 for other non-members

Robert Hooke: 351 years on

Tuesday 26 January

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street †

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

Dr Robert Hooke was one of the leading scientists of the 17th century and active in the early Royal Society. His *Micrographia* was more than just a book on microscopes, it was a new agenda for experimental science, embracing everything from botany to engineering, astronomy and even aeronautics. The noted historian **Dr Allan Chapman** of Wadham College will talk about Hooke and his influence.

Restoring Oxford as the UK's cycling capital

Thursday 11 February

Ship Street Centre (The Bastion), Ship Street †

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

By 2011 Oxford had dropped to third place in terms of the proportion of its population travelling by cycle each day. So what would it take to restore Oxford to its rightful place as the capital of everyday cycling in the UK? This talk by **Danny Dorling**, Professor of Geography at Oxford University, takes a somewhat irreverent look at the recent history of planning in the city and at ways to counter the jams.



The Oxford innovation eco-system

Wednesday 9 March

Rewley House, Wellington Square, OX1 2JA †

Coffee/tea 6.30pm, talk 7pm, AGM 8pm

Professor Alistair Fitt is the new Vice Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University. A mathematician by background, he specialises in the application of maths to industrial processes. He is also a member of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board. Tonight he talks about why innovation in our region needs to be seen as an eco-system.

This talk will be followed by the AGM

† *Wheelchair - accessible venue*

Members-only walks and visits

Tickets needed for these events
Bookings by 3 December

George Gilbert Scott's cathedral

Tuesday 12 January 10.30am

Wednesday 13 January 10.30am

This tour of **Christ Church Cathedral**, taking in the architecture, stained glass and church furnishings, will look at the way in which the extensive restoration work by George Gilbert Scott in the 1870s affected the character and use of the building. **Jim Godfrey**, the Cathedral Visitors Officer and author of the Cathedral guidebook, will lead the tour.

St Antony's College Investcorp Building

Tuesday 16 February 11.00am

Wednesday 24 February 11.00am

The Investcorp Building and the Library reading room, also known as 'the ear trumpet', by the celebrated architect Zaha Hadid, was bound to attract controversy. This tour will be conducted by the **Middle East Centre Administrator and Mastan Ebtehaj**, the Centre's Librarian.



Rycote Park and Chapel

Thursday 17 March 10.30am

Rycote, near Thame, once had a Tudor mansion, since demolished, but its unique 15th century chapel survives. The current house has been magnificently restored by the owners, Sarah Taylor and her husband. Mrs Taylor will lead this visit to Rycote Park, beginning with refreshments in the 18th century barn and a talk on its history. We will then tour the chapel, historic grounds and gardens, taking in the research done by Time Team and others.

Wallingford: the museum and a walking tour

Tuesday 12 April 10am

Tuesday 19 April 10am

The charming market town of Wallingford is rich in history. The best surviving example of a fortified Saxon town, it is also noted for its Norman castle, royal connections and role in the Civil War. Local historian and Museum Manager, **Judy Dewey**, will lead this tour, taking in the museum followed by an hour's walk round the town. Refreshments will be provided. Members will be given a pass for the museum valid for the year till the end of November.



OCS people – and more...

Pamela Schiele

With the passage of time, it is sad though inevitable that we should lose those who played a leading role in the earliest days of the Society. Pamela Schiele, who died earlier this year, was, alongside her own distinguished career in relief work, conservation and organic farming, an early editor of the Society's newsletter.

At the time the newsletter was very much a DIY production of a few sheets of duplicated paper, stapled together by hand. But its contents set the tone of reasoned and hopefully constructive criticism and information which we aim to maintain today.

We must be very grateful to her and her contemporaries for all their efforts in the early days to establish the Society's reputation and standing as a contributor to the welfare of our delightful, if at times disconcerting, city.

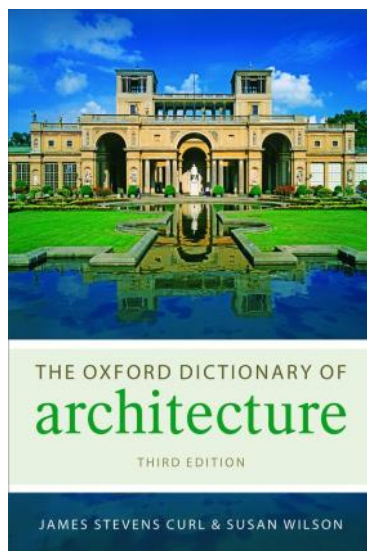
Tony Joyce and Sheila Glazebrook

Walks in Oxford – send us your comments

We'd welcome comments on the Walks in Oxford website which has now been running for over a year. It aims to encourage people to enjoy the city on foot by offering links to a selection of the 'best' walks in all parts of the city. Send your views to Richard Bradley info@oxstreets.org.uk

Bookshelf

Our first Chairman and founder member, **Professor James Stevens Curl**, along with colleague Susan Wilson, has recently brought out a third edition of the **Oxford Dictionary of Architecture**.



The dictionary contains more than 6,000 entries, over 900 of them new, including many on landscape architecture. Illustrated with 270 drawings, the dictionary was praised by one reviewer as "by far the best in the field ... a magnificent achievement, indispensable, and never dull".

The book costs £45 from all good booksellers.

Contact us/who's who

Oxford Civic Society

67 Cunliffe Close, OX2 7BJ

075 05 756 692

info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

oxcivicsoc.org.uk | oxclean.org.uk | oxstreets.org.uk

President: *Sir Hugo Brunner*

Vice-President: *Tony Joyce*

Chairman: *Peter Thompson*

85 Lonsdale Road, OX2 7ET (558 616)

chairman@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Vice-Chairman: *Sir Clive Booth*

43 St John Street, OX1 2LH (557 762)

vicechairman@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Hon Secretary: *Vernon Porter*

67 Cunliffe Close, OX2 7BJ (557 660)

info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Hon Treasurer: *Richard Dodd*

81B Five Mile Drive, OX2 8HN (512 607)

treasurer@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Membership Secretary: *Liz Grosvenor*

15 Lime Walk, OX3 7AB (765 453)

membership@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: *Hilary Bradley*

24 Beaumont Road, OX3 8JN (762 418)

newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Oxford Streets for People Co-ordinator: *Richard Bradley*

24 Beaumont Road, OX3 8JN (762 418)

info@oxstreets.org.uk

Programme Group Convenor:

Terry Bremble

Chapel House, 11 Cothill, Oxon OX13 6JN (390 489)

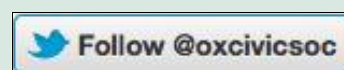
programme@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Transport Group Convenor:

Andrew Pritchard

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

transport@oxcivicsoc.org.uk



OCS newsletter is published in March, July and November

ISSN 2051-137X