

# VISIONS

**No 135, November 2016**

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*New accommodation for St Cross on Pusey Street. For more on new building see pages 7 and 12*



## It's time to tackle deprivation

By Peter Thompson, Chairman

**Local government reorganisation is vital if we are to address serious deprivation in our county.**

'Reports' seem to come thick and fast and though some can make for sleep-inducing reading, recent publications are vitally important, not just for how we live now, but for how our descendants are likely to be living 20 or 50 years into the future.

In July I reported that we were bemused by the rift between the County, District and City Councils, over a strategy for winning Government consent to devolution of responsibilities, particularly for eliciting funding for public services. Four months

on, and despite my predictions previously, matters seem no nearer resolution. This is despite two expensive consultants' reports agreeing that there are huge savings to be made – over £20 million a year – from effective re-organisation.

The County, District and City Councils all agree that local governance should be unified, that is, all functions should be the responsibility of a single tier of authority. After this, there are entrenched opposing views.

There are certain key functions of public authorities which need to be addressed on a local-regional, or strategic basis, such as deciding where housing can best be accommodated, employment sites are actually wanted, transport connectivity can be provided,

## Hold the dates!

### Spring Clean 2017

**3, 4 and 5 March – register now on**  
[www.oxclean.org.uk](http://www.oxclean.org.uk)

### AGM

**Wednesday 29 March 2017**

**Speaker Carole Souter**

All welcome: read more details on  
pages 3 and 11



## The shocking truth about our county

But even the unlocking of economic potential is perhaps not the biggest issue. The Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) recently released a report *Oxfordshire Uncovered* \* which presents a quite shocking picture of facets of our county many are unaware of. The report focuses on just a few of the social problems afflicting the county's population of 672,000, with some dramatic statistics revealing the scale of the polarisation of our society.

**Oxfordshire includes some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK.** Defining homelessness as: '... lack of a place to live that is supportive, affordable, decent and secure', there are 800 households and 300 individuals in hostels and other supported accommodation with around 100 rough sleepers, increasing in number rapidly.

That is the bottom end of the housing affordability crisis. Statistics on children's welfare are more stark: 10,000 children were involved in domestic abuse incidents last year and over 600 were on Child Protection Plans; 2,600 teenagers were self-harming and 14,000 children had recognised mental health problems. 2,300 children are identified as carers; this number has increased by 63% in the last four years, but only about 200 of them get support. Nearly a quarter of the county's children struggle to reach a satisfactory level of reading, writing and maths. These children are part of this country's future. What kind of contribution to society are they going to make and how will their children fare?

At the other end of the age spectrum, by 2030 there will be around 32,000 over-85s living in Oxfordshire. Already well over 30% of pensioners live alone, with over half of these suffering chronic health problems or disability. All these statistics are rising and the implications for medical and social services, and access to them are clear.

The report observes:

*"Oxfordshire has some impressive headline wealth, education and health figures. By sharing this report, we hope to reveal that there are also some serious social problems and stark deprivation. This inequality is both a sign and a cause of the fragmentation of community, which has a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of everyone."*

I endorse this view and I believe it justifies our members' interest in the organisation of local government services, as well as in strategic planning issues. It is really important that we solve the housing crisis, not only in terms of where we build but, crucially, to create genuinely functional communities and to reverse the trends of deprivation, unhappiness and under-achievement implicit in the statistics reproduced above.

The *Oxfordshire Uncovered* report stresses the need for all of us – public institutions, private enterprise and the voluntary sector – to work together. But the local authorities play a big part in this, with their statutory responsibilities for most of the critical issues. Improvement of the way they operate, not just for planning and transport systems, but for all aspects of social care, education and public health, is thus crucial. The debate on local government re-organisation is not just about re-arranging the deck chairs, but about making a real difference.

**The issues are so important that there should be no more wasted time and money; no more jealousy over who wields power; no more slavish adherence to dogma and tribal prejudice. People are suffering and their distress undermines the stability of our civilised community. Action is needed now.**

In addressing the re-organisation debate our elected representatives should build on what is agreed, resolve disagreements with common sense, respect and honesty, and apply some pragmatism and their undoubted intellect. They must show the leadership necessary to help create and sustain a society of which we can be proud, not one with a disturbing underclass which is a disgrace to us all and a real threat to our future. We and they owe this, at least, to our successors.

**Peter Thompson**

**Chairman**



\*download the OCF report at [oxfordshire.org/giving/oxfordshire-uncovered/](https://oxfordshire.org/giving/oxfordshire-uncovered/)

and, crucially, how adult and children's social care is delivered.

But there are many other functions which can best be addressed at a more parochial level. And, across Oxfordshire, there are very wide differences between the needs of a compact historic city, nevertheless at the heart of a dynamic, technological economy and those of rural communities and of other towns with different characteristics. Clearly, the current administrative boundaries do not best reflect these different needs.

Underlying all this is the desire to improve funding arrangements – if not to obtain more central government funding, then to improve predictability of the funding streams and greater autonomy in deciding where they are spent. And, of course, issues of power and politics often take precedence over effectiveness and efficiency.

Streamlined services and cost savings should not be the sole criteria for deciding these matters however. Re-organisation should not come at the expense of the proper provision and quality of services.

Furthermore, reports, such as that on the *Oxford Innovation Engine* (issued in 2013 but just updated) suggest that if affordable housing, communications and skills shortage constraints could be lifted, Oxfordshire could be contributing over £1 billion more every year to the national economy. Against this vision, administrative cost savings are less important.



# Preserving our war memorials

**Stephanie Jenkins explains why she is supporting a national initiative to preserve our war memorials.**

Throughout the centenary of the First World War, Historic England aims to add 2,500 free-standing war memorials to the National Heritage List for England. This is the statutory list of heritage assets of national historic and/or architectural importance. This will give them greater protection for the future by ensuring that any proposed changes that affect their appearance and/or historic character will require consent. For the first time volunteers were invited to play a part in this process.

Oxford has at least 13 free-standing outdoor First World War memorials. At the time the project started, only two were already listed: the Oxfordshire & Buckingham Light Infantry war memorial at Rose Hill by Sir Edwin Lutyens (who also designed the Cenotaph) and the Calvary war memorial outside St Margaret's Church in North Oxford.



By September 2016, two years after the project started, only one new submission for an Oxford memorial had been received by Historic England: for the Summertown war memorial at the parish hall on Banbury Road. So with the encouragement of the Society, I contacted

Civic Voice for help in submitting an application for the main Oxford war memorial, as it has a prominent position in St Giles as well as important significance to the whole city.

The process was so easy and enjoyable that I went on to submit applications for three more war memorials in my own area, those at Holy Trinity Church in Headington Quarry, at St Nicholas's Church in Old Marston and the one on Marston Road.

It will probably be 2017 before we hear whether any of these new Oxford applications have been successful.

## More to be done!

No application has yet been made for the following war memorials in Oxford:

- St Edward's School
- the Dragon School
- Oxford University Press
- St Clement's Church
- St Peter's Church in Wolvercote.

There are of course deserving memorials in other parts of Oxfordshire too.

If you feel like tackling one of these please contact me at [stephanie.jenkins@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.jenkins@gmail.com) and I can give advice. I am also happy to



*The richly carved memorial in St Giles is a good example of their contribution to our heritage and landscape*  
Photos courtesy of the author

email the application for the Oxford war memorial with supporting pictures.

Visit the Civic Voice website for more information about the campaign, which runs until July 2018:

[www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/war-memorials/](http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/war-memorials/)

## An invitation to make a difference ....

**With the AGM now in the diary, it's time to mention how you can help to run the Society and add to our influence, as our Secretary, Vernon Porter explains.**

Our Executive Committee (shown here) steers our internal affairs and ensures that the working groups are properly supported. We meet monthly on Tuesday evenings and you'll find our meetings purposeful and convivial occasions.



Our Planning, Transport, OxClean, Communications and Programme Groups are where the work gets done. Mental stimulation is guaranteed!

Join us to help shape the future of our communities. If you'd like to do so, please contact me for an informal chat.

Nominations for the Executive and notice of any items to go on the AGM agenda should reach me by **14 March**.

Vernon Porter,  
Hon Secretary, OCS,  
67 Cunliffe Close,  
Oxford OX2 7BJ, email  
[info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)





## What are Oxford's priorities?

**It's time for the planners to decide whether central Oxford is a retail park or a world-class historic city. Andrew Pritchard explains why the Transport Group is worried.**

The County's latest invitation to comment on the proposed pedestrianisation of Queen Street shows no evidence of a response to concerns we expressed earlier. The proposals appear to be designed to benefit the new Westgate development at the expense of existing shops in the centre of the city and in the High Street. They also take no account of the effect on our heritage assets.

St Aldate's, one of the city's most historic and striking streets, will continue to look like a bus station. More buses will be stopping at the western end of the High Street by the entrances to the covered market, where pavements are narrowest and pedestrian traffic is highest. New stopping patterns will confuse residents and visitors alike.

The proposed bus turning circle at the intersection of Tidmarsh Lane and New Road will impede traffic from Worcester Street and New Road. Access to the Westgate from the south and the new Oxpens/Osney Mead development will be poor, particularly for cyclists, with very narrow cycle lanes along Thames Street/Oxpens Road.

**We consider that the time has come for the City Council to decide where its priorities lie: surely the main character of Oxford is its historic environment, not a retail experience. A complete re-think of transport in central Oxford is needed,** to free up

more of the historic centre from buses and bus layover spaces (such as at Magdalen Street East). A member recently counted no less than 26 tourist buses in St Giles. This, together with the concentration of tourists in the centre of Oxford, also suggests that new tourism policies are needed to spread the increasing numbers more widely around the centre.

### Could it be different?

Two recent events have pointed possible ways forward. The first of these was a symposium 'Growing Historic Cities', sponsored by Grosvenor Estates and held in conjunction with URBED Trust and Oxford City Council. Particular attention was paid to continental experience in Grenoble and Freiburg, where tram systems have been used to provide attractive alternatives to cars for rapid transit from relatively high-density developments outside historic town centres, as well as good and safe facilities for urban cyclists. Cambridge, with its guided busway, was another example. Speakers stressed that it's essential that increases in land values associated with such developments are captured to pay for better infrastructure.

The second event, entitled 'Oxford Central West', was run by the Society and the Academy of Urbanism. It was attended by a number of professionals who put forward some ideas for the coordinated development of Osney Mead, the Oxpens and the station area. We were pleased to see that this included at least one new bridge



*Frideswide Square repairs  
Photo courtesy of Oxford Times*

across the river and the railway between Osney Mead and the Oxpens. This could also carry the first stage of a Rapid Transit system from the west to the Westgate. It would fit in well with the location of a new transport hub at the Oxpens, recommended by an earlier workshop on Oxford Central West.

### Other transport news

Work on the **Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts** has finished. Traffic lights have been installed; we must hope that they will ease traffic flow. Updating the indicator system at bus stops has also been completed. Damage to **Frideswide Square** by long vehicles overrunning the pavement in front of the Oxford Hotel has been repaired and adjusted to allow more road space.

On the **rail** front, Chiltern Rail intends to start services to Oxford Central on 12 December. GWR recently held a Station Travel Plan meeting with stakeholders, at which a number of improvements to signage and provision for cycles at the station were suggested, though no funds appeared to be available for them. GWR also appeared unaware that Network Rail had decided to have two extra tracks, rather than one, across the Botley Road.

*St Aldate's, at the historic heart of Oxford, functions as a bus station*





# The greening of Oxford

**How well is Oxford playing its part in managing the environment and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels? John Tanner reports on a revealing new study.**

The City Council likes to think that Oxford is good at caring for the environment and tackling climate change. But is it true? Well now it's official. Compared to other UK cities we are doing well, though not yet well enough, at cutting carbon emissions, improving air quality, managing water efficiently and using land sustainably.

A new report\* by environment experts, Aether, commissioned by the City Council, has evaluated Oxford's environmental performance in ten different categories. The Oxford-based consultants say Oxford performs better than average in most categories but not all.

Aether say we perform particularly well on land quality, carbon dioxide emissions and land use. But the city falls down on renewable energy and transport. Solar panels on schools and hybrid buses are not quite enough.

I am particularly pleased at the kind things the report says about Low Carbon Oxford, which the Council set up six years ago. Over 40 organisations, accounting for half the city's economy, are committed to cutting their carbon footprint by at least 3% every year.

The latest Government figures show that Oxford's carbon emissions fell by more than a quarter (27%) between 2005 and 2014. But the Low Carbon Oxford target is a 40% drop in damaging climate-change gases by 2020. So there is still a lot to do.

Aether praises Oxford for doing well on environmental sustainability compared to 172 other cities. This is largely because we have extensive green space in the city and also substantial urban tree cover. Oxford does comparatively well on land quality, sustainable land use and air quality. The Civic Society can take some credit for that.

The city is about average for energy efficiency, flood risk and water use. Where Oxford needs to pull its socks up is with renewable energy and transport. While Nottingham generates a fifth of its energy from renewable sources, Oxford manages only 0.6%.



*Flood plain, as here at Port Meadow, contributes significantly to green space within the city. Oxford also has the fourth highest urban tree cover of 12 cities assessed*

In the best urban areas more than half the workforce cycles, walks or uses public transport to get to work. In our city only 31% of commuters use these methods. Growing traffic jams make things worse as bus passengers are delayed by private motorists.

## What's to be done?

First the City Council will continue measuring our performance against others. If Nottingham, Leeds and Cambridge can do it so can Oxford. There is no excuse. We must apply the successes of others in this city.

Second we will focus more on renewable energy and transport. That is why the City Council is supporting the work of the enterprising Low Carbon Hub. Its new water turbine at Osney will make a difference but we need much more green energy to power the city.

The City Council will work more closely with the County Council to create extra bus lanes and cycle paths. We can only get more people out of their cars if we give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and buses.

The time has come for a workplace parking levy in Oxford to discourage car journeys. Such a levy in Nottingham keeps out cars, provides cash for

transport improvements and persuades employers not to use valuable land for car parks.

Oxford has taken huge strides to improve the environment. At the same time we are striving to grow the economy and tackle the housing crisis. Our beloved city is one of the fastest growing places in the UK.

The car factory, the hospitals, the bus companies and others are doing their bit to save energy and cut costs. The public in Oxford is leading the way with recycling, solar panels and bicycles. Oxford citizens really are making a difference and creating a more sustainable and greener city.

*\*Oxford sustainability index report 2016 can be downloaded from the City Council website [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)*

*Councillor John Tanner is the Board Member for a Cleaner, Greener Oxford*





# Towards a plan for Headington

**Neighbourhood plans give ordinary citizens a voice in how their area will develop. Mike Ratcliffe, chair of the Headington Neighbourhood Forum, reports on the challenges and rewards of preparing a plan.**

Neighbourhood planning is part of the government's localism agenda. It enables communities to prepare a plan that must be taken account of in planning decisions. Government has recently re-committed to the process by bringing in further legislation to make the process simpler and quicker to come into effect.

The process has some core features: neighbourhood plans must be positive in terms of development and they must be in broad compliance with local and national planning policies. Once the plan is approved, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with it.

This means that the process of preparing a plan is controlled: it can only be done by a recognised body (either a town or parish council or a neighbourhood forum) and must go through a set of regulated procedures, particularly relating to consultation and evidence. The plan must be voted on in a referendum before the planning authority can finally approve it.

Three plans are in preparation in Oxford: Headington, Summertown & St Margaret's and Wolvercote, but there are more in the wider county, including

*Bury Knowle Park, one of Headington's cherished green spaces*

*Photo courtesy of Freeparks [www.freeparks.co.uk](http://www.freeparks.co.uk)*



Thame, one of the first plans to be approved.

Our group's earliest motivation was to try to make sense of the various City and County Council strategies that impact on our corner of Oxford; in effect to create a strategy for Headington. Those involved wanted to join up the issues that we thought were important, such as the way that lack of affordable housing, growth in employment (particularly in the hospitals and universities) and increased commuter traffic are all interconnected. Put simply, jobs are moving to Headington, but the people can't, so they drive. This is where the process helps: it forces you to address the creation of a plan in a structured way.

## Defining your patch

First, you have to decide who you are. The plan is for a defined area; we had to work out what we meant by 'Headington' for this purpose. That makes you think: as part of the city where do we begin, who's in and who's out? It also meant engaging with some of the regulatory structures.

The 'who' also relates to who wants to do the work. A key issue for neighbourhood planning is the people needed to do the work, which is sustained and occasionally complex.

## Defining the issues

Second, you have to understand the issues as local people see them. This

has to be done rigorously. We went through several stages of listening to the community before we drew up a list of issues and options. A formal consultation on these really helped as responses validated some notions and rejected others. We learnt that preserving and enhancing green spaces mattered most to people. We also learnt how diverse we are: we mapped the different characters of our area, from the medieval village of Old Headington to new buildings at Oxford Brookes.

## Putting a plan on paper

Third, you have to write a plan. This means writing policies that can be used to determine planning applications. It means capturing all the enthusiasm and shaping that into a form that can sit on the page and be understood and, undoubtedly, be contested by others.

To keep up the enthusiasm we have shaped a series of community policies – things that people have said would make Headington a better place. Our draft plan argues for a wide range of policies including:

- measures to reduce traffic, such as promoting alternatives to cars and controlling car parking
- better protection for green spaces and management of bio-diversity
- protecting and enhancing community assets
- better coordinating the businesses in our central area.

We wanted to extend the City's housing policies to prioritise key worker housing but accept that this is outside our powers and subject to much debate.

Our plan will shortly be examined by a planning inspector and if it passes that hurdle, we will hold a local referendum. The outcome of these things is less certain than before, but we remain hopeful. Hope is an important part of the process of neighbourhood planning.

So too is recognising that it is a process. I think we have gained much from the process, even before we get the plan. In working on a plan for Headington we have tapped into the passion and skills of those who live, work and study in our community, and that has kept us hopeful too.





# Emerging from the chrysalis: butterfly or moth?

Some of the city’s largest building projects have been commissioned by the colleges. Clive Booth focuses on the former Ruskin College.

Modern buildings are often constructed behind plastic shrouds. Then, one day, the plastic is stripped away and the new building emerges in all its glory, like an insect emerging from a chrysalis. Is it a beautiful butterfly or a modest moth? Some large new buildings have recently been emerging from their chrysalises. This is a personal reaction to one case, Exeter College’s Cohen Quadrangle into which the former Ruskin College building has been transformed.

Except for the Walton Street façade and a short section of frontage facing Worcester Place, this is an entirely new building, not yet open to the public. It includes 90 student study rooms, a 110-seat auditorium, teaching facilities and social spaces.

It is a project which was developed in the course of a series of well-managed public consultations during which the Society, local residents and the public had plenty of opportunities to comment, much to Exeter’s credit. Although those groups had some influence on the design, the Planning Committee at which planning permission was granted heard critical representations, mainly to do with the large scale of the new buildings and the controversial addition of an extra top floor encased within a curved roof covered in shiny diamond-shaped metallic tiles.

Now that the plastic shroud has largely been removed, we can begin to assess the exterior of the building. It is pleasing that the Walton Street frontage, built in 1913, has emerged recognisably the same, although some small changes have been made to the entrance area. From street level, the new raised roof, with its metal tiles, obtrudes less than the Society had feared, and the subdued grey tones of the tiles blend with the surrounding roofs, but it is a pity that the dormer windows sit so uncomfortably above those of a much more traditional design in the main façade.

This clash of styles is even more evident in Worcester Place, where the tiled roof sweeps down from the fourth storey to first floor level, forming the façade beyond the retained Ruskin frontage.



*The former Ruskin College is still recognisable from Walton Street*

Overall, however, although the Cohen Quadrangle’s exterior will have its critics, the mass of the public who will see the building as they pass along Walton

Street, should be pleased with the result. More new buildings are shown on the front and back pages.

*The rebuilt college as seen from Worcester Place where the bold metallic tiles cascade from the roof to first-floor level*







## The museum with ambition

**The Museum of Oxford is about to take another leap forward as Tony Joyce explains.**

There has recently been some exciting progress in the redevelopment of the Museum of Oxford, based in the Town Hall. A successful bid for Heritage Lottery Fund support has gained a Round 1 grant enabling the start of detailed planning of the 'Oxford's Hidden Histories' project. This aims to open up and share the heritage of the city's communities through presentations which radiate out from the Town Hall, the historic building at the city's centre.

To achieve this, a major rearrangement of those parts of the museum which have remained closed since 2011 is envisaged. This will involve significant structural modifications including some restoration of the historic integrity of the original town hall design, and the reallocation of other spaces within it.

The museum's collections, many of which have remained unseen in recent years, will provide the material for flexible displays and new interpretation with state-of-the-art presentation.

Additional facilities will include a Museum Makers' area for visitors and community groups to engage with the museum's collections, develop fresh projects and take part in open workshops. There will also be a new learning space for school visits.

This will all support a wider programme of family-friendly events, similar to those which have been developed over the years. When complete, the revitalised museum, the only one to display the historic growth of the university, will be a significant partner in the local museums' consortium and contribute to an improved cultural service for residents and visitors alike.

The recently appointed consultancy team includes award-winning architects Purcell, who have worked on Tower Bridge and the National Maritime Museum, and Simon Leach Design, whose past projects have included the Old Prison at Northleach and the London Transport Museum. Detailed plans are due for the Round 2 Heritage Lottery Fund application later in 2017.

The cost of this ambitious programme is clearly going to be high – some £2.4 million – and this will require more than can be expected from HLF. The city council has pledged £315,000 in addition to what it has already spent, but it is clear that further funds will need to be raised locally if we are to enjoy a museum truly worthy of this historic city.

I continue to represent OCS on the newly formed Project Advisory Group, which makes recommendations on the main concepts and contents of the galleries and programmes. **If any member would like to assist me in this fascinating task, I should be very pleased to hear from them.** Email me at [info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)



## Your letters

**Could we encourage more cycling by creating one-way arterial routes? Professor Danny Dorling made such a case in the July newsletter.**

**Hugh Jaeger writes:**

In 1999 the Oxford Transport Scheme removed all buses from Cornmarket and sent them on a circuitous, uneconomic detour. Through services between Magdalen Street and High Street lost thousands of passengers, and within a few years both bus companies ended these previously popular links. Thereafter many passengers arriving on one side of the city centre had to walk at least 400 metres if their destination was the other side of the city centre or they wanted another bus.

A decade later Queen Street was deprived of all its bus stops and half of its routes. This increased many passengers' walking distances from about 400 metres to at least 600. To the able-bodied this deters bus travel and

encourages car use. For many people with disabilities it effectively makes many journeys impossible by bus.

Professor Dorling extols mobility scooters. But most people with impaired mobility don't have one and many have nowhere to keep one. And people who have a sensory impairment don't have a scooter unless they have a serious mobility impairment too. Scooters help only a minority of people with disabilities.

Professor Dorling resurrects the idea of making Woodstock and Banbury



roads one-way. But at Summertown the shops are at least 300 metres' walk from Woodstock Road's nearest bus stops. And he extends the same idea to Iffley and Cowley roads, although Iffley Road's nearest bus stops are up to 600 metres from Cowley Road shops. Many people with disabilities cannot walk that far.

Half of all travel into and out of Oxford city centre is by bus. In a 1,200-word article Professor Dorling mentions buses only twice and proposes nothing to restore their former connectivity in the city centre.

Conditions for cycling and buses must be improved together. Otherwise the modal shift will be from bus to car, increasing congestion and the deterrent to cycling.

*Hugh Jaeger is the Chairman of Bus Users Oxford and Director of Bus Users UK*

*Photo courtesy of [Cycling Uphill](http://CyclingUphill)*





# More of your letters

**Charles Young's article in the July newsletter made the case for building more high-rise accommodation.**

**Ian Green writes:**

Charles Young's article should be required reading for all concerned with development planning in Oxford. As we are on the cusp of a City Local Plan updating process, it is not only welcome, but timely.

Oxford could indeed accept higher densities in the city centre and around sub-centres. Currently the assumed highest density for developments of over two hectares in the city centre is only 80 dwellings per hectare (dph). This is far too low.

Cambridge, for example, is 'growing up', with densities in city centre developments of 200+ dph. These developments, in similar heritage settings to Oxford, are designed to counter the same context of severe traffic congestion and unmet demand for affordable housing.

There are opportunities to provide specialised accommodation at higher densities for students not accommodated by their colleges (just under half of the student population) and the increasing numbers of elderly people.

Oxpens, Osney Mead and much of the Central West area could be developed at higher density as easy examples. Elsewhere in the city approvals for medium-rise blocks will be very difficult and it may be easier to consider higher density development around transport hubs and commercial centres and gradually increase densities outwards. As Charles Young also says, we are not talking about tower blocks.

Higher densities will demand more intensive infrastructure provision as the author points out but that infrastructure will be more efficient, serving greater numbers in small networks. Transport efficiencies could open the way to more ambitious public transport innovations than we have been used to.

## Have your say

Letters and can be sent to:

[newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

We'd also welcome your photos!

**David Dent writes:**

The photo of the Observatory Street flats shows housing which is both high density and aesthetically attractive. However, the quality of brick and the stone mullions indicate that this was not a cheap building to put up. How much flat-dwellers have to listen to other people's sounds depends not only on who the neighbours are but how the flats are built, and sometimes that comes down to cost. Before moving to Oxford I had a lovely flat in The Grafton Centre in Cambridge. This building had retail units on the ground floor and unfortunately shop-fitting in the middle of the night transmitted the sound of power tools throughout this steel-frame building.

Other things being equal, multi-floor houses are quieter to live in than flats because one has others living only to the sides, not above and below as well. High-density houses could be a floor, or perhaps even two, higher since compact lifts are now on the domestic market that can make multi-floor houses usable for most people.

However, the City Council has recently allowed some really unsympathetic buildings to be thrown up on the north side of Thames Street in St Ebbes, shown in the photo below. Apart from density, the criterion here appears to be cheapness. They are even worse than the Castle Mill flats on the west side of Port Meadow. This city should not have to put up with this.

*Housing in Thames Street – high density, unsympathetic design?*





# Booking form: spring 2017 ticketed events

Closing date for applications: **Friday 25 November**. 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 at more than one time, please cross out any dates you cannot do or indicate your preference		
<b>Ardley Energy Recovery Facility – a visit</b> Friday 10 February at 10am Saturday 25 February at 10am  <i>Please indicate whether you: need a lift or can offer a lift (circle as appropriate)</i>	.....@£8	
<b>Lady Margaret Hall – a visit</b> Monday 13 March 10.30am Tuesday 14 March 10.30am	.....@£8	
<b>Nuffield College's island site – a walk</b> Tuesday 28 March at 2pm Thursday 30 March at 2pm	.....@£5	
<b>Harwell Campus Rutherford Lab – a visit</b> Thursday 6 April 10am  <i>Please indicate whether you: need a lift or can offer a lift (circle as appropriate)</i>	.....@£8	

**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'

**November 2016 - April 2017**

*\*ticketed events*

**Tues 8 November\* 10am & 10.30am**  
**The Queen's College**, a visit  
*This event is sold out*

**Tuesday 10 January 7.30pm**  
**A fuel for the future: biomethane**, a talk by Thomas Bradshaw at Ship Street Centre

**Thurs 19 January 7.30pm for 8pm**  
**'King of all Balloons': James Sadler**, a talk by Mark Davies at St Edmund Hall

**Friday 10 February\* 10am**  
**Saturday 25 February\* 10am**  
**Ardley Energy Recovery Facility**, a visit

**Tuesday 28 February 7.30pm**  
**Lessons from the model 'green city' of Freiburg**, a talk by Paul Lincoln at Magdalen College Auditorium

**Monday 13 March\* 10.30am**  
**Tuesday 14 March\* 10.30am**  
**Lady Margaret Hall**, a visit

**Tuesday 28 March\* 2pm**  
**Thursday 30 March\* 2pm**  
**Nuffield College's island site**, a walk

**Weds 29 March 6.30pm for 7pm**  
**Heritage at the heart of growth**, a talk by Carole Souter, followed by the **AGM** at Magdalen College Auditorium

**Thursday 6 April 10am**  
**Harwell Campus Rutherford Lab**, a visit

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

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

*If you have booked but can't attend, please phone Alan Hobbs. We always have a waiting list*







# Programme spring 2017

## Open talks – all welcome

No pre-booking, free of charge  
Help us to recruit new members by bringing a guest

### A fuel for the future: biomethane

**Tuesday 10 January**

**Ship Street Centre (The Bastion) †**

**Talk 7.30pm**

The challenges of climate change have produced a revolution in how we produce energy. **Dr Thomas Bradshaw** from Harwell explains how space-industry technology is enabling gas produced from mown grass and farm waste to be stored and transported for use as domestic and vehicle fuel.

**'King of all Balloons': James Sadler, Oxford pastry cook and first English aeronaut**

**Thursday 19 January**

**St Edmund Hall, Queen's Lane †**

**Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm**

James Sadler (1753-1828) is noted in Oxford as the pioneer of hot-air ballooning. But he also spent 25 years as a designer of engines and armaments and as Chemist to the Royal Navy. Local historian **Mark Davies** will explore Sadler's remarkable life and achievements.

**Lessons from the model 'green city' of Freiburg**

**Tuesday 28 February**

**Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street †**

**Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm**

Freiburg in South-West Germany, an ancient university city in a beautiful setting, has won many accolades for sustainable urban development. **Paul Lincoln** from the Landscape Institute talks about the lessons it might hold for Oxford.

**Heritage at the heart of growth**

**Wednesday 29 March**

**Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street †**

**Coffee/tea 6.30pm, talk 7pm followed by AGM**



Until her recent election as Master of St Cross College, **Carole Souter** was the Chief Executive of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund. Sir Peter Luff, Chair of the NHMF and HLF, says: "It is impossible to overstate the contribution that Carole has made to the heritage of our nation". In this talk she will explain her vision of how heritage and growth can both be accommodated in cities such as Oxford.

† wheelchair accessible venue

## Members-only walks and visits

Tickets needed for these events:  
bookings by **25 November**

### Ardley Energy Recovery Facility – a visit

**Friday 10 February at 10am**

**Saturday 25 February at 10am**

If you have ever wondered what happens to the contents of your rubbish bin, this is your chance to find out. Viridor's ERF at Ardley treats the county's residual waste, keeping 95% of it out of landfill and generating enough electricity to power around 38,000 homes.

### Lady Margaret Hall – a visit

**Monday 13 March 10.30am**

**Tuesday 14 March 10.30am**

Founded in 1878 as the first Oxford college for women, LMH is noted for its Giles Gilbert Scott chapel, elegant early 20th century buildings and its extensive gardens. The college archivist, **Oliver Mahony**, will talk about the history of a college that set out to change the University and the world. This will be followed by a tour of the gardens and main buildings.



### Nuffield College's island site – a walk

**Tuesday 28 March at 2pm**

**Thursday 30 March at 2pm**

Local historian **Liz Woolley** will lead a 1.5-hour circular walk around the site bordered by Hythe Bridge Street, Park End Street, the Worcester Street car park and Frideswide Square. The site was acquired last year by Nuffield College and is due for major redevelopment. The area is full of social, industrial and commercial history and the tour will highlight this rich heritage.

### Harwell Campus Rutherford Lab – a visit

**Thursday 6 April 10am**

Harwell is a world-leading science, innovation and technology campus. Around 225 organisations and companies are based there, employing over 5,500 people and investing over £1.5 billion annually in research and innovation.

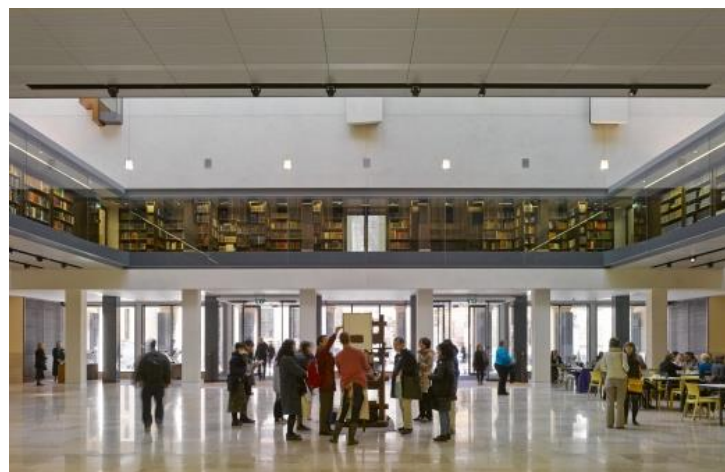
**Angus Horner**, who is a Director of the Campus, will lead a visit to the famous Rutherford Lab and Diamond Light Source, the national synchrotron facility. Tea/coffee will be served before the 1.5 hour tour.



## More new buildings



*Worcester College's Nazrin Shah building is emerging in its grounds. This is only visible to the public when the college grounds are open*



*The award-winning Weston Library, one of two Oxford buildings short-listed for the prestigious Stirling Prize*



*The south side of the new Westgate Centre. External work on this development should be completed by the year end*

## Contact us/who's who

### **Oxford Civic Society**

67 Cunliffe Close, OX2 7BJ

075 05 756 692

[info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

[oxcivicsoc.org.uk](http://oxcivicsoc.org.uk) | [oxclean.org.uk](http://oxclean.org.uk) | [oxstreets.org.uk](http://oxstreets.org.uk)

**President:** *Sir Hugo Brunner*

**Vice-President:** *Tony Joyce*

**Chairman:** *Peter Thompson*

[chairman@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:chairman@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

**Vice-Chairman:** *Sir Clive Booth*

[vicechairman@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:vicechairman@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

**Hon Secretary:** *Vernon Porter*

[info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

**Hon Treasurer:** *Richard Dodd*

[treasurer@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

**Membership Secretary:** *Liz Grosvenor*

[membership@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:membership@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

**Newsletter Editor:** *Hilary Bradley*

[newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

**Programme Group Convenor:**

*Terry Bremble*

[programme@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:programme@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

**Transport Group Convenor:**

*Andrew Pritchard*

[transport@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:transport@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

OCS is a society for people who care about Oxford, want to enjoy it more fully and help shape its future.

Membership costs £10 (£9 by standing order) or £14 for two people at the same address (£12 by standing order). See the website for how to join, or contact Liz Grosvenor (email above) or join at one of our talks.



**Visions is published in March, July and November**  
**ISSN 2051-137X**