

Shaping the city centre for good



Broad Street encapsulates many of the issues that a new city centre strategy needs to encompass – preserving our heritage while accommodating students, tourists, shoppers and residents living in the centre. To what extent do we need to accommodate cars for instance?

Photo courtesy of Peter West

We are facilitating the City Council's consultation on its new strategy for the city centre. What are the issues we need to consider? What should we all be aiming for?

The city centre plays a role in the lives of all of us who live or work in Oxford. It is where we work, shop, eat, drink, enjoy ourselves and live. It is also the main destination for tourists and other visitors. Many of us care deeply about what happens here – and rightly so, for there is much that is beautiful that needs to be preserved or enhanced, as noted in the recent appraisal of the City Centre Conservation Area. City centres are always in flux and some of the changes have done nothing to enhance what some claim to be one of the finest cities in the country. No one can have failed to notice the impact of the new Westgate Centre and the growth in online shopping and other retail sector problems on the 'old' centre.

The 19th–20th centuries were not kind to the city centre

How did city centres come to be as they are? An interesting history of city centres and their high streets by Dr David Harrison shows

how the form and function of city centres have evolved in response to changing retail behaviour, architectural advances and developments in transport*. He notes that in the 18th century street markets were superseded by newly-possible roofed structures which housed multiple shops: our own covered market was opened in 1774. By 1850 department stores appeared and historic buildings were demolished to make way for the large buildings which hosted them. In Cornmarket Street, Woolworths demolished the Clarendon Hotel, including remaining parts of the Norman vault of its cellar, in 1954-5. From the mid-19th century W.H. Smith established shops in the streets leading to the new railway stations. Chain stores such as Lipton's grocers, Hepworth's tailors, Boots and Marks and Spencer followed this clever marketing ploy.

In the 20th and into the 21st century roads and parking for private vehicles had a calamitous effect from which city centres are still recovering. City centres increasingly ceased to be residential and whole quarters were demolished to make way for wide roads, multi-storey car parks and more shops. In Oxford the St Ebbe's area of 16th–19th century houses were obliterated and its residents

A city centre strategy...



The Clarendon Hotel in Cornmarket Street, demolished in 1954-5

Photo courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins

displaced to suburban housing estates. St Thomas's lost population through slum clearance and Paradise Street, Tidmarsh Lane, Park End Street and Hythe Bridge Street were transformed with offices, warehouses and garages.

The centre of gravity of the city centre has also changed. In the 20th century Cornmarket Street and Queen Street, dominated by chain stores, remained the centre of commercial activity. In the 1970s a shift to the west followed the development of the first Westgate Centre at the western end of Queen Street with shops, offices and a new central library. The recent rebuilding of the Westgate Centre has consolidated the westwards shift of retail and social activities. It has also given us bleak southern and eastern elevations and appalling traffic congestion during peak shopping hours. **We should make sure that this is the last hurrah of the era of large new buildings imposing on the built form of the city centre.**

But Oxford also led the way in showing that road building was not a good way to manage traffic in cities and especially not in the centre. The first sustained Park & Ride scheme in the UK was introduced in Oxford in 1973 (a development which owed much to our Society). The aim was to ease access to the city centre by reducing

the traffic. This was one of the opening salvos of the City Council's commendable 'balanced transport policy.'

New dimensions have been added to this policy over the last 50 years with pedestrianisation in the city centre and further adaptations to deal with air quality, the costs of continuing congestion, constraints to active travel and the poor quality of the public realm. As mentioned, internet shopping has contributed to the reduction in the number of shops, including major chain stores. Arguably we are now entering a period when 'going shopping' means enjoying an opportunity for social activity, as shown by the Westgate's increasing leisure activities and places to eat. We are also, perhaps, entering an era when the change of use of existing buildings is more common than replacement.

It's the economy ...

The Centre for Cities think-tank notes that the supply of city centre shops and services depends on demand which is driven by the disposable incomes of local people. Many local enterprises prefer to locate in city centres because of their good transport and digital infrastructure, strong business networks and pool of skilled workers within commuting distance. Over the centuries the University has been such an employer, at times the city totally relying on it for its prosperity. The evolution of Oxford's knowledge-based economy relies on attracting innovative companies, linked to but apart from the two universities. Space is needed for some of these in the city centre to support the city region's economic resilience and in turn, to ensure a vibrant city centre with a wide range of shops and services.

A question for us is how well this process is working. There is evidence that although we currently enjoy a strong city economy, there are growing challenges and declining competitiveness. Business growth is slow in the city centre and there is a low rate of creative business activity, start-ups and businesses independent of national chains, compared to other city centres. Does this, perhaps, pose the greatest risk to the city centre?

And connectivity matters

As we all know, transport into and from our city centre is poor and digital infrastructure is not much better. This does not encourage the businesses that are required to transform our city economy, nor does it facilitate investment in shops and services. Poor transport precludes some people from using the centre at all.

The recent commitment of both the City and County Councils to develop demand-management proposals is very welcome. The proposals aim to make buses, walking and cycling more attractive choices than driving and to enhance the public realm in the city centre. Not all the proposals are immediately popular – but it is evident that many other cities are also grasping this nettle in the interests of strengthened economies, improved health and greater enjoyment of the city centre by a greater number of people.

The complexity of the problem should not be underestimated – there are no easy solutions. Improving city centre movement will require a transport plan for Oxford as a whole, with an integrated approach to bus and rail travel, cycling, walking, the Park & Rides, parking, goods deliveries and facilitating electric vehicles. The public realm will be the biggest beneficiary of this kind of integrated approach.

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... the need for a new vision



Much of our public realm is in need of investment, such as road surfaces at Carfax and elsewhere, not to mention more sensitivity to visual appeal. Do we really need so many notices stuck on poles?

Restoring residents

City centres provide housing. For centuries town centres were characterised by high-density mixed development with people often living above the shop. Over years and without an explicit policy to do so, the population of our city centre has declined. One of the ways in which city centres can add vibrancy and dynamism is to have a larger, mixed resident population. This could be encouraged by bringing upper floors into use and by ensuring appropriate affordable housing development, including in the West End of the city centre area. There is of course tension between the need to provide both workspaces and housing in the city centre.

Westward expansion towards the station

Major developments in the city centre are now being implemented and planned by the private sector, colleges, the University and the City Council. Proposals are being formulated for the area between the existing city centre and the station – an area that is rightly seen as a city centre extension. We have argued strongly for a comprehensive approach to the development of the West End of the city centre – the area including Westgate, Oxpens, the ‘island site’ between Hythe Bridge Street and Park End Street, Frideswide Square, the station and Osney Mead. We have also argued that development of the West End must be integrated with city centre development on the basis of an integrated transport plan.

Opportunities and challenges

A major transformation will be needed to tackle the climate emergency, not an easy task given the high number of old buildings. Similarly, the acknowledgment that Oxford is ranked as the second-most unequal city in the UK calls for an innovative response ensuring that everything possible will be done in the city centre to make Oxford a more inclusive city.

With these kinds of considerations in mind, the City Council is currently developing a new vision and action plan for the city centre. The aim is to enhance and diversify the centre, focusing on

economy, experience, environment and equality, and expanding redevelopment opportunities in the West End.

The Society’s aim now is to ensure that this study and its action plans recognise the unique qualities of the city centre and its importance not only to the city, but to the UK as a whole. **The big question is, what would we want the city centre to be like in 10 - 20 years from now?**

We support the Council’s aim and are pleased to facilitate its work by arranging public talks on the preparation of the new vision and action plan. One meeting has been held and another will take place towards the end of May: details will be made available as soon as possible.

We welcome your views. Please send them to:

chairman@oxcivicsoc.com

Ian Green

Chairman



**David Harrison’s article will appear in the April issue of Urban Design*

Don’t forget ...

A vision for tourism in Oxford: a panel discussion

7.30pm on Tuesday 17 March at Rewley House

There might still be tickets for this event – see page 7 for details.

AGM – see back page

7pm talk, AGM at 8pm on Tuesday 24 March at Rewley House

Please look out for...

... a **members’ survey** coming to you by email in spring (or by post for those not on email). Please help us by taking part in it. Your answers will help us to plan our activities.

Alan Hobbs: an appreciation

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Alan Hobbs who, for well over a decade, was a key member of the Programme Group. Terry Bremble, who co-ordinates the group, says: “Alan not only helped to plan and organise the programme, he also ran our ‘box office’ very effectively. He was one of those unassuming, delightful people who will be truly missed.”

An architect by profession, Alan also left his mark on many housing developments in the city and elsewhere.

Our thoughts are with Maureen and his family.



Oxford's canal: an asset to cherish

Tony Joyce looks back

As Tony Joyce hands over the Chairmanship of the Oxford City Canal Partnership to Ian Green, he looks back on the first eleven years of its existence.

The Oxford Canal is one of the most attractive, and possibly least known, of the city's assets. Yet from its opening in 1790 as the only direct and reliable link for heavy goods to and from the industrial Midlands, it made possible, for better or worse, the huge industrial expansion of the city during the 19th century. Lucy's Eagle Iron Works was established beside it, steam power was installed at the Wolvercote Paper Mill, Oxford University Press moved into what became the newly-designated suburban parish of Jericho, served by the iconic St Barnabas Church. The canal basin and wharves extended right across what is now the Worcester Street Car Park and Nuffield College.

As the character of the city evolved, the industrial uses of the canal began to change, partly due to competition from the railways from 1844, though it continued some of its original functions until after WW2. At the same time, other uses started to grow – for residential moorings and recreational boating, with housing spreading steadily northwards, merging into the playing fields of St Edward's School.

By 1954 however the long-existent national regulations controlling the use of waterways were clearly in need of revision and part of the responsibility for control was transferred to a free-standing charitable organisation, the Waterways Trust. The aim was to develop the recreational and residential aspects of the waterways and the contribution they might make to their surroundings.

Planning in partnership

In Oxford, the Waterways Trust called an inaugural meeting of a proposed Oxford City Canal Partnership in January 2009. Founding members included the Oxford City and County Councils, British Waterways, Environment Agency, Inland Waterways Association, Jericho Community Association, Jericho Community Boatyard, Jericho Living Heritage Trust, Worcester College, Oxford Preservation Trust and the Civic Society. They agreed a Memorandum of Understanding for members and the commissioning of a **Strategic Plan for the canal**, north to the city boundary.

Subsequent meetings explored the feasibility of various aspects of



The 2017 plan for Jericho Boatyard has since been slightly modified. We hope work will start soon on this imaginative regeneration project.

Image courtesy of the Oxford Times

the plan, particularly the improvement of the towpath as a route for cyclists as well as pedestrians, the development of a new Jericho Boatyard and Community Centre, the future of the Worcester Street Car Park and access to it under Hythe Bridge for boats.

In 2012 the Waterways Trust was reorganised, becoming the Canal and River Trust, and I subsequently took over the Chair of the Partnership. Major steps forward included the establishment of a

biennial **Canal Festival** and the development of the **Canal Heritage Trail**, with its numerous stopping points along the towpath where one can listen to the history of that particular section.

As the importance of residential boats has increased, representatives of the boaters have joined the Partnership and the aim has been to improve services (rubbish removal etc) for them.



The kingfisher mural is one of several at Frenchay Road Bridge

Photo courtesy of the Oxford Canal Mural Project

What next for the canal?

Progress on a new **Jericho Boatyard and Community Centre** has been very slow and although a planning application for the site has been approved, the developer has not yet made a start. Similarly the **Worcester Street Car Park**, owned by Nuffield College, awaits their plans for the site.

There can be little doubt that the canal will come to play a more significant part in Oxford's development and hopefully one which enhances the whole area through which it passes. A section of the canal falls within the city centre and we hope that the city centre strategy will take account of this delightful asset.

I wish Ian Green success as, among his many other commitments, he chairs the group which is best placed to promote this.

Councillor Susanna Pressel adds:

"As someone who has been a member of the Canal Partnership since its start, I'd like to thank Tony very much indeed for all he has done over the years. Reconciling competing interests has not always been easy, but his diplomacy has smoothed the waters. The Oxford Canal is one of the great glories of our city, to be celebrated and treasured – all the more so now that we watch many wildlife species threatened with extinction."

The unequal struggle for affordable homes

Peter Thompson writes

The Housing Group believes that the regulations covering affordable housing are too easy to circumvent. But there is hope that things are changing.

That Oxford suffers from a chronic problem of excessive house prices is indisputable; it is a major cause of difficulties in recruitment and staff retention and of serious traffic congestion by commuters from the more-affordable hinterland.

Until recently, virtually the only means by which Local Authorities could procure 'affordable' housing was by stipulating a percentage of homes required to be 'affordable' in new developments; in Oxford's case the proportion is 50%. But even this weak mechanism is compromised by the proviso that financial viability takes precedence over provision of affordable housing. Thus, many developments deliver much less 'affordable' housing, citing a lack of viability as grounds for non-compliance with the policy. But the key to viability is the value of the site – the higher the price paid, the less 'headroom' there is for providing cheaper housing.

In assessing viability, site value has been determined by comparators – prices paid for comparable sites. But in something of a landmark High Court case in 2018 (*Parkhurst Road Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor*), the judge ruled that the Local Plan policy stipulating the required proportion of affordable housing should prevail. The price paid by the developer for the site should have reflected planning policy, rather than policy being allowed to be compromised by over-payment for the site.

This issue of compliance with planning policy has recently become a very hot topic in relation to the development of **Oxford North** (the site formerly known as Northern Gateway). The developer (a wholly-owned subsidiary of St John's College), originally asserted that it was not viable to provide **any** affordable element to the housing. Multiple viability assessments were carried out, using land values ranging from £628,000 to £12.4 million, demonstrating the arbitrary and hypothetical basis of such exercises!

The Housing Policy Group contributed to an objection made jointly by the Neighbourhood Forums of both Wolvercote and Summer-town St Margaret's. However, consent to the planning application was finally granted by the City Council West Area Planning Committee in November on the basis of providing a minimum of 35% affordable housing.

Clearly, Oxford's crisis in affordable housing is not going to be solved by protracted negotiation of compliance with planning policies, but, hopefully, mechanisms are evolving on this and with other initiatives, to at least alleviate matters.

New homes at Wolvercote Mill. Prices start at £350,000 for a two-bed apartment.



Transport: could more research help?

Andrew Pritchard reports

The Group has recently been looking at how the University's Transport Studies Unit could support our work.

We are looking at possible topics that could be studied by Oxford University's Transport Studies Unit on the transport issues raised by the climate change emergency. We were surprised at the lack of reference to the role rail can play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the first draft of the **Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study**, commissioned in 2017. It does not consider the benefits of further electrification, the possible uses of light rail (tramways) in improving connections both within and outside the city boundaries, or the impact of Crossrail for London commuters.

We discussed with the City Centre Manager visitor accommodation, facilities for **tourists** and the need to continue funding Experience Oxfordshire. We also support further consideration of a cable car service between Redbridge Park & Ride and the city centre for tourists and others.

We continue to follow the proposed **Botley Road** improvements. We suggest

that the monies available be spent on major improvements that make significant differences, such as a roundabout at the Eynsham Road/West Way junction and better provision for cyclists at side road junctions, rather than minor changes to cycle and footway widths.

We learned at one of our regular meetings with Phil Southall (CEO, **Oxford Bus Company**) that increasing road congestion at both ends of the **X90** service and the large increase in use of Chiltern Railways trains to London from Oxford Parkway had made it unviable. We have no doubt this service will be missed.

The Oxford Bus Company also provides the **Pick-me-Up service**, which is now threatened unless more financial support can be found. The problems seem to be in part the app that is used to define the route between the requested origins and destinations, and demand variations throughout the day.



Booking form

Summer 2020 ticketed events

Closing date for applications: **30 March**. 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	Rank 😊
Science Oxford: a visit to Stansfeld Park Thursday 7 May at 7.30pm@£8		
Osney Island: a walking tour Saturday 6 June at 10.30am@£5		
Dorchester: a walking tour Wednesday 10 June at 2pm@£8		
Rousham House and garden Wednesday 17 June at 10.30am Wednesday 15 July at 2pm@£15		
Please indicate if you need /can offer a lift (circle as appropriate)			
Community Garden, Banbury Saturday 4 July at 10.30am@£5		
Historic Banbury: a walking tour Saturday 4 July at 1.30pm@£5		
Cotteslowe ponds: a walking tour Tuesday 28 July at 1.30pm@£8		

😊 Events are sometimes oversubscribed. If you rank your choices in order of preference we'll try to ensure you get a place on your favourite.

Tickets are allocated soon after the closing date but if you miss it, it's always worth asking if there are places left.

Send this completed form to:

Terry Bremble, Chapel House, 11 Cothill, Oxon OX13 6JN

If you have booked but can't attend, please contact Terry Bremble, tel: 01865 390 489. We always have a waiting list.

OCS Calendar

'Cut out and keep'

March – July 2020

**ticketed events*

Venues for talks:

RH Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square
MCA Magdalen College Auditorium,
Longwall St

Tuesday 17 March* 7.30pm

A vision for tourism: a panel discussion

NB tickets from Eventbrite – see opposite

Saturday 21 March* 3pm

Tap Social Brewery, Botley: a visit

Tues 24 March at RH 7pm, AGM 8pm

Oxford: onwards and upwards?, a talk by Gordon Mitchell followed by the AGM

Tuesday 31 March at RH 7.30pm

Architecture is plural: combining old and new, a talk by Alan Powers

Wednesday 22 April* 2pm

The regeneration of Blackbird Leys, a visit led by Catalyst Housing Ltd

Monday 4 May at RH 6pm

Future development at Oxford University, a talk by David Prout

Thursday 7 May* 7.30pm

Science Oxford: a visit to Stansfeld Park

Wednesday 20 May at RH 8pm

Zero carbon homes and the future of housebuilding, a talk by Ian Pritchett

Wednesday 3 June at MCA 8pm

Inequality in Oxford, a talk by Sara Fernandez

Saturday 6 June* 10.30am

Osney Island, a walking tour

Wednesday 10 June* 2pm

Dorchester, a walking tour

Wednesday 17 June* 10.30am

Rousham House and garden, a visit

Saturday 4 July* 10.30am

Community garden, Banbury, a visit

Saturday 4 July* 1.30pm

Historic Banbury, a walking tour

Wednesday 15 July* 2pm

Rousham House and garden, a visit

Tuesday 28 July* 1.30pm

Cotteslowe ponds, a walking tour



Programme March – July 2020

Open talks – all welcome

Talks are free, just turn up – and please help us to recruit new members by bringing a guest

See the Calendar opposite for talks in March.

Future development at Oxford University

Monday 4 May 6pm

Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square

Pro-Vice Chancellor **David Prout** talks about the University's ambitious development plans. Covering homes for key workers and post-grads, new academic institutes and more, the plans will have far-reaching effects on the city.

Zero carbon homes and the future of housebuilding

Wednesday 20 May 8pm

Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square

The Managing Director of Greencore Housing, **Ian Pritchett**, talks about the company's innovative work and about how housebuilding can and must change to help tackle the climate crisis.

Inequality in Oxford

Wednesday 3 June 8pm

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

Sara Fernandez, Director of Oxford Hub, will talk about Oxford through the lens of social action, relationships and community cohesion. It will be an opportunity to explore what it means to live in Oxford from a different perspective.

A vision for tourism in Oxford: a panel discussion

Tuesday 17 March 7.30pm

Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square

Many of Oxford's 8 million visitors a year are disappointed by their experiences while residents are frustrated by the crowds and parking chaos. What should we aspire to; what needs to change? Seven panellists give different views on managing demand and supply, including speakers from Experience Oxfordshire, York Civic Trust, Conference Oxford, Tourism Alliance and others.

This is a ticketed event, price £7. Tickets can be bought online from Eventbrite www.eventbrite.co.uk (search by the title or use the link on our website). *This is a public discussion, all welcome.*

Members only: if you can't use the Internet please order tickets by phone from Terry Bremble – 01865 390 489

City centre strategy: a discussion

Date to be announced

We hope to hold another talk on the emerging city centre strategy in late May, following on from the presentation given in February. Watch out for an e-bulletin or, if not online, please phone in early May for details (see back page).

Members-only walks and visits

Tickets are needed for these events: bookings by Monday 30 March

Science Oxford: a visit to Stansfeld Park

Thursday 7 May 7.30pm

A visit to Oxford Trust's new award-winning building in Headington. Our visit will include a short talk, a chance to experience 'hands on' science and a walk in the park's 17 acres of woodland.

Osney Island: a walking tour

Saturday 6 June 10.30am

Vernon Orr will lead a walk through the island's Conservation Area, including its once-great abbey and recent developments.

Dorchester: a walking tour

Wednesday 10 June 2pm

Dorchester is a jewel of a town with its fine medieval abbey and 16th - 18th century houses. **Malcolm Airs** will lead the tour.

Rousham House and gardens

Wednesday 17 June 10.30am

Wednesday 15 July 2pm

Rousham House and its landscape garden are mainly the work of William Kent. The house, built in 1635, still has some original

features while the exquisite garden has altered little since the 18th century. Enjoy its walled garden, ponds, cascades and more.

Bridge Street Community Garden, Banbury: a visit

Saturday 4 July 10.30am

See how an unloved, abandoned area can be transformed into a functional community space where local residents enjoy sharing skills and hosting events. **Harry Wragg** leads the visit.

Historic Banbury: a walking tour

Saturday 4 July 1.30pm

Rob Kinchin-Smith from Banbury Civic Society leads a walk through the town known for its 'cheese, cakes and zeal' to explore how buildings, spaces and planners affect our townscapes.

Cotteslowe ponds: a walking tour

Tuesday 28 July 1.30–3.30pm

Ellie Mayhew of the Freshwater Habitats Trust leads a walk round this area of water meadow, home to a profusion of wildlife. Learn about the practical steps being taken to restore such habitat, including the translocation of rare plant life.



Please join us for the AGM!

An invitation from Vernon Porter

Our 51st AGM will conclude a year of celebration of our first 50 years and look forward to the next. Read on for all the details ...

Date: Tuesday 24 March at 7pm (talk) followed by AGM at 8pm

Venue: Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, OX1 2JA

Join us for drinks in the pay bar after the AGM.

Our pre-AGM speaker is the Chief Executive of Oxford City Council **Gordon Mitchell** who will talk about the Council's challenges and progress.

Please bring this agenda with you along with the Annual Review of 2019 which was mailed with this newsletter. The Review is our report to members.

Copies of the minutes of the 2019 AGM and the full accounts for 2019 are available on the website or from me:

Vernon Porter, Hon Secretary, email: info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk
67 Cunliffe Close, Oxford OX2 7BJ

Agenda

- 1 President's welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of AGM held on 2 April 2019
- 4 Matters arising from the minutes:
 - Subscription increase
- 5 Chairman's report
- 6 Treasurer's report and accounts for 2019
- 7 Vote of thanks to retiring Officers and Trustees
- 8 Election of additional Vice-President
- 9 Election of Officers for 2020-21
- 10 Election of Committee Members for 2020-21
- 11 Any other business of which notice has been given.

A very special Blue Plaque

In November, as part of the celebration of our 50th anniversary, we sponsored a Blue Plaque at the Redbridge Park & Ride. It marks one of the Society's enduring successes.

The Park & Ride at Redbridge is significant locally, nationally and even internationally as the first such enduring service anywhere. There had been experiments before, some of them here, but Oxford was the place where the idea was finally made real, in 1973. From humble beginnings – 250 parking spaces on an un-made-up site and a few extra buses along the Abingdon Road – the five P & R services now have over 5,300 parking spaces and move three million passengers a year.

Our Society played a very influential part in bringing the P & R about. In the early 1970s, when Oxford was threatened with a huge road building programme, we argued that there had to be a better way to manage traffic in towns. The idea of 'demand management' became key to the City's 'Balanced transport strategy' which was introduced in 1972 and still underpins policy today.

In his address, Peter Headicar, our special Transport Adviser, said that "Using a combination of 'sticks' and 'carrots' to influence motorists' travel behaviour has come to assume the status of conventional wisdom". In his view P&R has not yet run its course as an

idea for controlling both congestion and CO₂ emissions: "Given the development of a network of interchange hubs within central Oxfordshire ... P&R should become more widespread as a travel norm."

See oxcivicsoc.org.uk/blue-plaque-for-redbridge-pr/ for an interview with Peter Headicar.



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

Membership costs £10 a year (£9 by direct debit) or £14 for two people at the same address (£12 by direct debit). Students and local groups may join for £5; corporate members' rates on application.

You can join online, at our talks, or contact Liz Grosvenor at membership@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

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Letters to the Editor and photos can be sent to Hilary Bradley newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk or by post to the above address.



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