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Number 152

## A time for crucial decisions



*Great Western Park at Didcot is a massive development of over 3,000 homes. New housing is urgently needed in the county to keep pace with the demand. But where should it be built? How can we ensure development does not simply add more congestion to the roads? How do we provide the schools, health services and even the water and power that new developments require? We need to get smarter at planning.*

*Photo courtesy of Roddy Maddox*

**District, City and County councillors will soon be making critical decisions on the scale, pace, distribution and sustainability of growth in Oxfordshire. We've set out to help them by pulling together all the relevant strategies and plans in one document.**

Whether there should be more growth in Oxfordshire and if so, how much and where, are highly contentious issues. If decision-makers get it right we stand to benefit from a thriving economy, more adequate housing, less road congestion, effective infrastructure, less pollution, thriving communities and wildlife. Get it wrong and we will pay a heavy price that we will regret for decades to come. All our futures are at stake.

As my previous articles have indicated, **there is no shortage of plans and strategies but to date no one document pulls them together to simplify decision making. So, we have done this as our contribution to the process.** The full document can be freely downloaded from our website\*.

This summary and the booklet are aimed at all elected councillors in Oxfordshire and at businesses, special interest groups, community organisations, our members, residents and those who may not live in Oxfordshire, but who work or play here and who have concerns about the future of the county.

**Several key plans and strategies**, and associated studies, are relevant to the decisions being made:

**The Oxfordshire Vision** was agreed by the constituent local authorities of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership after public consultation and it sets out the intended impacts of the following key plans and strategies;

**Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy** – the Strategy sets out an ambitious vision for the region to be one of the top three global innovation ecosystems by 2040;

**The Local Plans** of the District and City Councils;

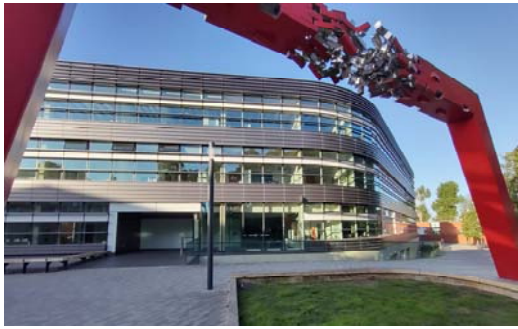
**Pathways to a zero carbon Oxfordshire** of the Environmental Change Institute and the Oxfordshire County Council Climate Action Framework;

**Draft Oxfordshire 2050 Plan** – this aims to set out the long-term, overarching and high-level spatial planning framework for Oxfordshire to 2050. The Plan is supported by the contentious Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA);

**Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy** – this aims to ensure adequate infrastructure and service provision, including to the new employment and housing locations;

**Draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan** – this aims to ensure adequate sustainable county-wide transport provision, including to the new employment and housing locations.

# Decisions, decisions ... (continued)



*The University's Old Road campus is the size of a village. Such developments need thoughtful planning.*

*Photo courtesy of Roger Grosvenor*

## The scale of growth

Decisions on the scale, pace and distribution of growth, climate change and funding need to lead to the achievement of the Vision. Some of the actions and decisions needed during the consultation period include:

The assumptions and data underpinning the current **Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA)** need to be reviewed as a variety of serious technical challenges have been made. Following agreed revisions, the three growth options need to be reviewed, in particular for consistency with the climate change / environmental and social / inclusivity priorities of the Oxfordshire Vision.

The longer-term growth implications of the **Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy** need to be aligned with the growth implications of climate change, environmental management, inclusivity, infrastructure capacity, public and private funding availability and institutional capacity.

**Funding for infrastructure and services** to support growth does not appear to be a topic of much concern. But what is needed is a breakthrough in innovative funding arrangements to address the very significant funding shortfall identified in the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy.

The OGNA provides three post-pandemic scenarios which look ahead to 2050 and cover a range of contrasting behavioural changes resulting from the pandemic. **A decision is needed on which version of our future seems most likely** to occur.

## Pace of growth

To a great extent the pace of growth is dictated by the fast pace of **growth of private sector investment**. But it will also need to be commensurate with the capacity (skills and funding) to undertake necessary public sector investments. **Capable management of growth will only happen with the right local government structures** and relevant skills.

## Distribution of growth

Spatial distribution options cannot be evaluated without knowing the scale of growth to be accommodated and **this cannot be achieved until the OGNA is reviewed**. Spatial distribution should be determined by giving **equal weight to economic, climate change / environmental and social considerations**.

The ratio of employment and housing provision needs to be considered with **reduction of car travel and housing affordability the main aims**. Analysis of recent trends has shown that, as a result of employment growth outpacing the supply of housing, commuting into Oxfordshire has more than doubled over the past decade.

The distribution of growth should also take detailed account of basic infrastructure and the scope for extending existing infrastructure. Cost may be a significant factor in determining the distribution of growth and gaps may need to be closed before further development is implemented.

We must recognise that **the Knowledge Spine is a magnet for private sector investment**. Further growth in the Spine area must be assessed from a climate change / environmental and social / inclusivity point of view.

## Public consultation

As there is no consensus on growth, **the proposed OGNA review needs to be in public**, with opportunities for discussion. It is a divisive topic and the plan will be better with public support behind it. To avoid confusion we suggest the next Oxfordshire 2050 Plan consultation includes inputs from the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy and other relevant strategies and plans in one succinct consultation document.

## Governance fit for purpose

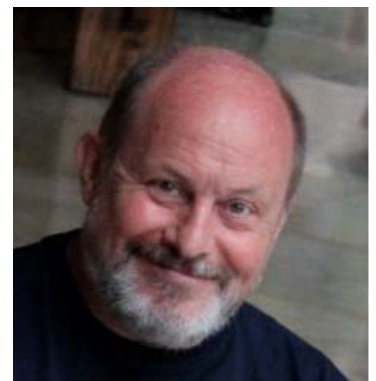
Consultation meetings need to include discussion of how the plans and strategies are relevant to national and local policy, including the Oxfordshire Vision, and how they complement each other. During implementation of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan, **a Citizens Assembly** could report to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Committee, supporting and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation process.

**A continuous strategic planning process is needed**. The Oxfordshire 2050 Plan will need to be rolled forward, with updates being synchronised with updates of other strategies. The continuous strategic planning process should use integrated economic, climate change / environmental / social / inclusivity teams. A team specialising in public sector funding innovation is needed – perhaps in association with other local authorities. This office could report to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, effectively being another of its sub-groups.

We look forward to being further involved in these issues, bringing the voice of our members into this critical decision-making process.

**Ian Green**  
Chairman

\* <https://bit.ly/ocs-devpol>





## Of leavers, joiners, accolades and railway enthusiasts

At the AGM in March we said farewell to a long-standing Executive Committee member, welcomed a newcomer and appointed a new Vice-President.



**Peter Thompson** was our Chair from 2010–2017 and since then has served as a member of the Executive Committee. We are delighted that Peter has now agreed to become one of our **Vice-Presidents**, joining a team of four others (Tony Joyce, Margaret Maden, Richard Venables and Monawar Hussain). Each Vice-President has a special area of expertise and Peter brings wide experience of planning. He has recently been supporting a local residents group on a major planning issue.



**Gillian Argyle** stepped down from the Executive Committee at the AGM having served on it since 2012. Gillian was our 'minister without portfolio' but supported and advised us on many issues. She has also been the friendly, welcoming face of the Society at most of our talks for many years and we hope she will continue for many more!



**Ian Salusbury** has joined the Executive Committee, representing the **Programme Group**, which he coordinates. Ian has a particular interest in the sciences and business and has already contributed much to widening our reach, for example the recent very successful talks on rewilding.

**Natasha Robinson** has stepped down as Coordinator of the **OxClean** team, having been at the helm since 2019. As an NHS doctor Natasha feels she must now concentrate on her professional role. We can't thank Natasha enough for taking on the role in such challenging times and are delighted she will stay on the group to support our work with young people. Rosanne Bostock and Ingrid Lunt have taken on the coordinating role but we hope others would enjoy joining this lively group. See the back page.



Natasha Robinson, left, with Liz Grosvenor, flying the flag for OxClean in 2021

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*OCS members enjoyed a visit to Didcot Railway Centre in June, arranged by the Programme Group*



*Photo courtesy of Laurence Waters*

# How to object to a planning application

## The Planning Group offers its advice

### When a planning application appears to affect your life, what can you do about it?

Ideally every development proposal should be acceptable to the community before it becomes a formal application. Local applicants should discuss their plans with their neighbours in advance; institutions and developers should carry out meaningful consultation with residents and local interest groups. This can reduce problems and lead to better outcomes.

### Finding out

The first you might know of a planning application is a yellow A4 notice posted near the site concerned. This states briefly the nature of the proposal, its reference number and the date by which comments should be submitted. All planning applications are also published in weekly lists and you can register to receive the details of any applications within a stated distance of a particular address. All residents associations and other local groups are strongly encouraged to do this.

### What's proposed exactly?

Using the application reference number or the address you should be able to find sufficient detail on your Council's website to understand exactly what is proposed\*. If anything is not clear, or if you have difficulty in accessing information online, a duty planning officer at your town hall should be able to help you. If you have a major anxiety about the impact of the proposed development, it is useful to inform your local councillor and a member of our Planning Group as soon as possible.

### Grounds for objection

Councils have to have defensible reasons for refusing an application so they won't consider objections simply because people 'don't like it'. But you can object if the development:

- affects your property eg blocks the light, overlooks you
- crams too much onto the site ('over-development') or proposes buildings too high in the context of the area
- negatively affects the character of the area, especially a conservation area, for example uses unsuitable building materials
- impacts local community facilities
- is inadequately described in the documentation so it's not clear what is proposed.

You can object to the effect on traffic and parking though it is the County, as highways authority, which is responsible for commenting. However local experience of problems is often very relevant. Contact the County Council \*\*.

Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) can be objected to on the grounds that there are too many in the area, though your Council should be alert to this. There are also other grounds for objection – more stringent restrictions apply in conservation areas and to historic buildings for example – read more on your Council's website\*.

### How decisions are reached

Only the larger or more contentious applications are automatically taken to Planning Committee. Most applications are decided by the Planning Officers as soon as possible after the closing date for comments. Such applications are shown by the letters DEL at the end of the application number; the responsible officer is also named.

In contentious cases, your councillor, if contacted in good time, may be able to bring the application to Planning Committee for full discussion – and you will be able to attend and make your own points. Planning committee members then vote on the proposals, based on the officer's full report and recommendation.



### How to submit your views

You can email your comments or write to the officer handling the case; photographs in support of your case can be helpful. Invite the officer to call and view the problem if it's a serious issue. Your comments will appear on your Council's website where you can also check what others are saying.

When objecting to a particular proposal, relate your objection directly to one of the Council's policies if possible. Most of the policies likely to be relevant will be in the Local Plan (the most recent for Oxford is 2036, published in 2019). For example, there are policies covering local shopping centres and even shop fronts in some areas.

If an application goes to Planning Committee and you wish to address them, be aware that only five minutes is allowed and this time may need to be shared with other objectors. Try to be succinct and restrict yourself firmly to the points at issue.

\* [www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20066/planning\\_applications](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20066/planning_applications)

\*\* [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/find-planning-application/comment-application](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/find-planning-application/comment-application)



# Building design – who decides?

## Gillian Coates reports on the Planning Group

**Design Review Panels are meant to enhance the quality of design but we know little about how they perform.**

Everyone has an opinion on what they view as good and bad design of new buildings and public spaces and there are bound to be disagreements – as we frequently demonstrate when we scrutinise applications during our fortnightly Planning Group meetings. The Society's influence on design is considerable but one body that has a major impact is the Design Review Panel.

### An important remit

Design Review Panels (DRP) comprise a group of independent, multi-disciplinary professionals working in the field of the built environment. The objective is to provide an independent, impartial evaluation process, the result of which is better design of new development schemes and proposals for important public spaces, including both significant minor applications, major planning applications and pre-application development proposals. As stated within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Panels' feedback is a material consideration for local authorities and the planning inspectorate when determining planning applications.

The Oxford Design Review Panel has its origins in 2014. At the same time the City Council was setting up a DRP, an Independent Review was taking place in connection with planning approval for the Castle Mill building on Roger Dudman Way. There was widespread concern, resulting in a public petition to the Council relating to the planning processes associated with the application and whether they complied with statutory and national policy requirements, and how they related to best practice. Recommendations in the Report endorsed the need for a DRP which would add supplementary measures to improve design considerations.

The existing Oxford Panel was reconstituted in December 2020 and assigned to work under the organisational umbrella of Design South East in partnership with Oxford City Council. Design South East is an independent not-for-profit organisation working across the wider South East, delivering

expert design advice, facilitation and training for local authorities, the development sector and communities. So, the process is overseen and operated by professionals.

### Who monitors the monitors?

All well and good, but who monitors the work of these Panels, to whom are they accountable, how do they demonstrate value for money, is there sufficient consistency and evaluation? For some time, we and other groups have been concerned at the lack of transparency in the process and execution of the work of the Oxford Panel.

It is worth noting that in the period 2014 to date, there has been no official report on the activity of the ODRP. Thus it is impossible to assess what added value its work has brought to design: does it make a difference or is it just another administrative layer in the planning process? Questions we have posed are – does its existence raise the quality of design, what are the trends, have stakeholders been adequately consulted? The short answer is we don't know.

Given our concerns, it is encouraging that a Report for the period January 2021 to March 2022 has been commissioned by Design South East and the City Council and will be released in this month. We hope the report will address all the issues we have raised and we have already received an undertaking from the Council that we will participate in a meeting to discuss the recommendations of the report.

We will also be lobbying for more participation in the process: this is essential to remove the perception that the decisions are made behind closed doors and are confidential to the developer and the planning authority. We have all noted that, in the White Paper *Levelling Up the UK*, the Government has called for more local consultation on planning. To remove the mystery of the function and influence of the ODRP can only improve public confidence that local authorities are listening and responding to local feelings.

*Student flats on Roger Dudman Way became one of the biggest design controversies of recent years and the main driver for the setting up of Oxford's DRP. The flats are shown here as they were originally built, before 'mitigation' work.*



# Food for thought at our AGM

## Ian Green reports on our open forum

The open forum at our AGM in March 2022 gave us the opportunity to hear what's on members' minds.

We started the discussion by briefly restating the Society's aims (see below). So it was pleasing that our first contributor, a member of TOES (Transforming Oxford's Economic Strategy) noted that our aims fit well with work by TOES which is looking at '**doughnut economics**' as a means of ensuring a **vibrant, inclusive society**. The Executive Committee is interested in this concept and has been following progress with this in Amsterdam so we welcome further discussion with TOES.

Another contributor observed that the emphasis on local decision-making tends to ignore the fact that local authorities are heavily dependent on **central government decisions and funding**. We agree but hope that government devolution policy, including levelling-up, will reduce this dependency.

However, we are concerned that although replacing the district, city and county councils with a **unitary county council** may bring benefits, there is a serious risk that the **development and management functions of the city will be diminished**. My recent research in English historic towns has revealed that this problem affects many cities, including, for example, Durham and Canterbury.

While over-centralisation is a problem, we are pleased to note that **civic societies are becoming more influential**. Civic Voice, representing civic societies around the country, is beginning to wield more influence through Select Committee appearances and similar. **We are campaigning** for planning reforms to enable a form of **Land Value Capture**, something which is hinted at in the Government's White Paper on *Leveling up the UK*.

Another member commented that the present City Council is also very centrist in its approach. There is **much talk about consultation but few people participate** – and the exercises often seem designed to confirm decisions already taken. At the same time, the Council seems to confuse inclusivity with equitability.

We are encouraged that the new County Council is starting to address the problem of poor communications, a notable example being the way in which **traffic filters and the zero-emission zone are being introduced without either sufficient explanation or adequate alternatives**: residents are unlikely to be won over by too much stick and too little carrot. Another contributor felt the main problem was simply **resistance to change**.

One member praised OxClean as a **great example of successful engagement with residents** and wondered whether we might use it as a springboard for **greater outreach**. Another observed that OxClean attracts younger and **more diverse sections of the community** than the Society's other events and wondered how they might be encouraged to



*Low traffic neighbourhood measures are seemingly loved and loathed in equal measure but consultation on them has been criticised.*

*Photo courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council*

participate in more activities. He also noted that discussion after the recent talk on river bathing had turned political in an interesting way and perhaps there might be greater scope for this. Gillian Coates, our Planning Group Co-ordinator, acknowledged that there is a certain disconnect between the programme of talks and walks and the working groups, but speakers on planning and transport issues are hard to find.

Our discussions continued happily into the night, in the Rewley House bar! It was a useful and convivial way to explore what most concerns our members.

*If you have issues you'd like us to consider, do get in touch with me or the Newsletter Editor – see the list of contacts on the back cover.*

### Our aims are to:

- influence developments in the city, largely through the work of the Futures, Planning, Transport and Community Impact Groups
- inform the membership of those developments, through the work of the Communications and Programme Groups
- enable members to better understand and enjoy the city and county through our programme of talks and visits
- cooperate with residents associations and other community groups – something we are trying to strengthen including through engagement with the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economic Partnership; and
- learn from other cities in the UK and abroad.

# Connecting Oxford – our version

## Peter Headicar, our Special Advisor on transport, reports

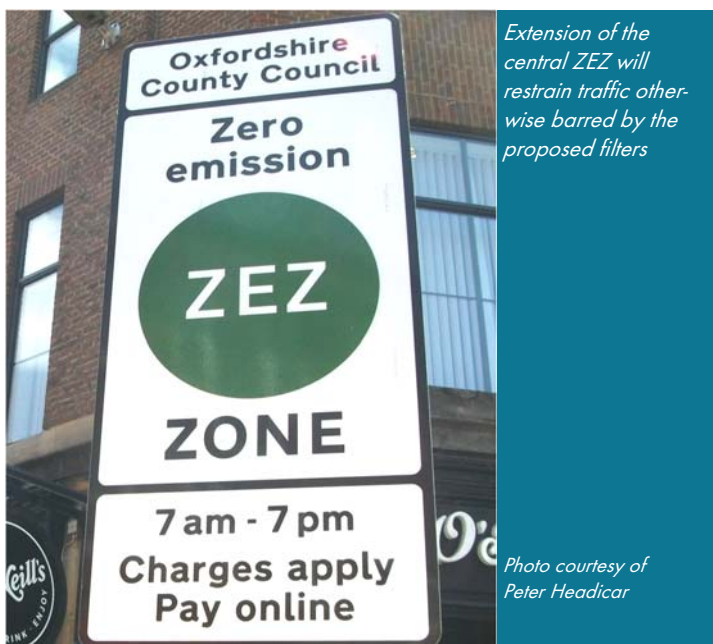
Our March *Visions* reported on recent initiatives aimed at reducing traffic in our city. During May members of the Transport Group and others took part in online briefing sessions provided by County and City Council officers for residents and community groups. As a result we have formulated our own version of the proposals.

The briefing sessions provided the opportunity to hear about the latest proposals, to ask questions and to register concerns in advance of formal consultation due to take place in July and August. The current proposed 'core package' consists of three elements:\*

- a workplace parking levy (WPL) on commuter parking spaces provided by employers within the ring road
- an extension of the current pilot Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) – a charging scheme with exemptions for zero emission vehicles – to cover the wider city centre
- two sets of traffic filters – barring vehicles except for buses and taxis – one set around the city centre, another on main roads to/from East Oxford.

If approved in the autumn following consultation, implementation of the 'full' ZEZ and traffic filters is planned for 2023. The WPL requires an additional stage of approval from the Secretary of State for Transport and would not be implemented until 2024. Revenue from both ZEZ and WPL schemes may be used to support improved bus services and fund infrastructure for sustainable modes.

The measures will act in combination to constrain vehicle use with some suppression of trips altogether and some re-routing to avoid the ZEZ or traffic filters. Conditions are expected to improve for those who walk, cycle or travel by bus and a shift to these modes is another potential source of overall traffic reduction.



### Understanding the knock-on effects

The situation is complex and evidence from traffic modelling is required to show expected changes in accessibility (opportunities), resulting patterns of movement and their implications for traffic and environmental conditions. Unfortunately this technical evidence will **not** be available before the formal consultation period. Officers at the briefing sessions were also unable to provide details of categories of discounts (from charges) or exemptions (from traffic restrictions) which are clearly relevant to the mobility of particular individuals. Dismay was also expressed at the absence of planned bus improvements which ideally would be introduced *before* implementation of the traffic restraint measures.

Although attendees were generally supportive of the aims of the proposed measures, the absence of detail and supporting information inevitably clouded their responses. The bulk of concerns were registered in relation to the traffic filters. These would displace outward current movements across the city centre and between suburban sectors, adding to vehicle mileage and worsening congestion on the ring road and A34. One attendee described the proposed operation of the Marston Ferry Road filter 12 hours a day 7 days a week as 'draconian' claiming that traffic conditions only warranted it in weekday peak hours.

### Our proposed solution: a phased approach

It may of course be that, as the result of such comments, the proposals will be amended before formal consultation takes place. Nevertheless the evident strength of feeling highlights the potential difficulty faced by Cabinet members in identifying a package which has public support.

**We believe that such support is more likely to be forthcoming if the Councils adopt a phased approach based on deferral of (at least) the central traffic filters.** This takes advantage of the fact that in its early years when zero-emission vehicles are few the ZEZ operates in practice as a congestion charging zone deterring vehicles moving around or across the city centre otherwise barred by the filters. Traffic restraint by the ZEZ alone would be less than combined with the filters but so too would be the adverse effects of vehicle displacement leading arguably to a more balanced package overall. The ZEZ tariff is already planned to be increased in 2025 and the overall situation would be monitored and reviewed then and subsequently. **We urge the Councils to consider this option.**

\* See [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/core-transport-proposals](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/core-transport-proposals)



# Addressing inequality – where are we now?

## Gillian Coates reports on the work of the Communities Group

With government funding available to address inequality, our Community Impact Group urges community groups and residents associations to engage with our new initiative.

In the March edition of *Visions*, we reported on our involvement with the Oxford Inclusive Economy Partnership and the establishment of our own group (Oxford Community Impact Group, OCIG) to address inequality across the city. In the interim period considerable work has been undertaken by the Partnership's four working groups focusing on perceived problems and identifying solutions. The Society has representation on three of the groups – Education, Place-Based Solutions and Inclusive Employers.

Each group is working towards submitting a funding proposal that can be taken forward under the auspices of the **Shared Prosperity Fund**, a successor to some EU Structural Funds. Launched in April 2022, this Government-allocated fund is intended to reduce inequalities between communities, as part of the Government's wider 'levelling up' agenda. We understand a total of £5.25 million is available for the county, a possible £1 million available for Oxford, with funds to be spent between April 2022 and March 2025.

### Ensuring benefits for all

While the proposed allocation is a significant sum it will clearly not cover all the proposals under consideration. It will thus be important that proposals put forward by OIEP represent benefit for all by going down to the grass roots and not used to supplement existing funding for the research and communications work of the local authorities. Recent world events and the rise in the cost of living have created further inequalities that must be addressed appropriately.

At the most recent meeting of the OIEP Steering Group, we received reports on the status of the various proposals and it was agreed that the earlier deadlines for submission would be put back to December. While the working groups get down to fine-tuning their proposals, OIEP will undertake extensive stakeholder engagement including public - and business-focused events to identify potential economies of scale across the county and potential match funding from signatories to the Charter Scheme.

### Still time to do our survey

The work of our new OCI Group has been limited. Aside from our participation in the OIEP groups, we have produced our own survey for community groups, the response to which has been extremely disappointing, we suspect due to a similar activity undertaken by the Council which rather stole our thunder. But we have persevered: the survey remains on our website and has been advertised in the newsletters of the

Community Volunteers Association and the Community Action Group. If you represent a residents association or a community group, then do consider completing our survey [www.oxcivicsoc.org.uk/communities-survey/](http://www.oxcivicsoc.org.uk/communities-survey/)

Most recently we have discussed collaborative activities with other organisations with a view to hosting joint events at local community centres. This is very much a work in progress but we hope it will lead to a greater exposure of the work of the Society. How we can contribute to the lives of all those who live and work here and how we can ensure the continuation of our work depends on our recruiting new volunteers and members from the diverse and multicultural population of this wonderful city.

*Nowhere shows the stark inequalities in Oxford more than its up-market restaurant scene and the food banks which support growing numbers of families who struggle to put food on the table. We are considering our role in helping to 'level-up'.*

*Photo courtesy of Oxford Food Hub*

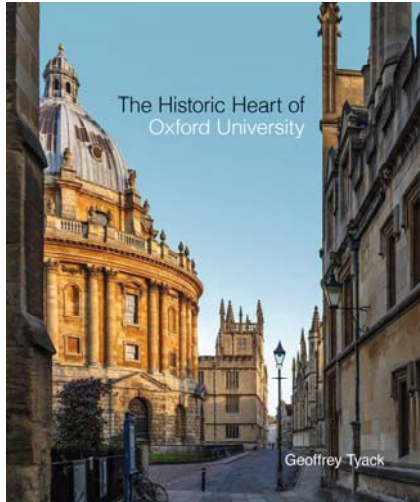




# Bookshelf: understanding Oxford's story

## A welcome trio of new books

Three stunning books have just been published, offering very different perspectives on the city's historic development, heritage buildings and the life of its people.



**Geoffrey Tyack** is one of our most distinguished architectural historians and expert on our matchless heritage buildings. His exquisite new book, *The historic heart of Oxford University*, brings together recent research findings and generations of scholarship to describe key buildings, relating them to the developments in the

university's intellectual and institutional life and to broader themes in urban and architectural history. Here are the legacies of the likes of Christopher Wren, James Gibbs, Nicholas Hawksmoor and Giles Gilbert Scott.

In this lavishly illustrated, large-format book we get a deeper understanding of the University Church, the Schools Quadrangle, the Sheldonian Theatre, the Radcliffe Camera and Square, the new Weston Library and much more.

Written for the lay reader as well as the specialist, the book is published by Bodleian Library Publishing, price £35.

Have you ever wondered how Oxford grew from an insignificant Saxon town to the city we know today? The *British Historic Towns Atlas Volume VII: Oxford* edited by Alan Crossley (former editor of the Victoria County Histories of Oxfordshire) enlists the cartographers' skills to help us understand the story.

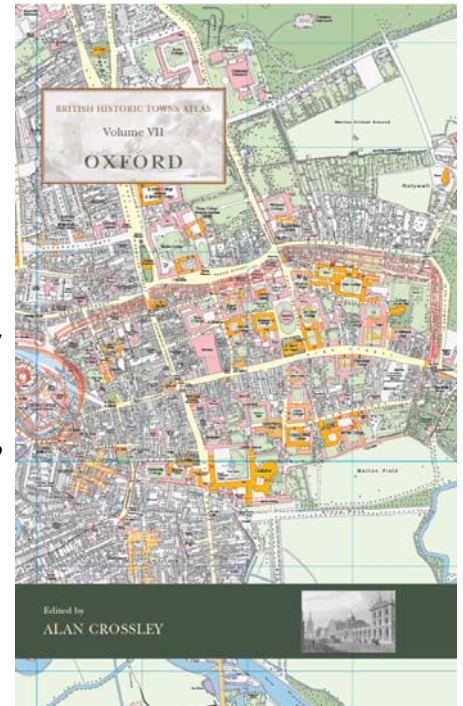
The atlas depicts Oxford in maps from its Saxon origins round Carfax to the medieval establishment of its university and its sporadic growth after that. The atlas charts how, by the 19th century, Oxford was dominated by colleges, churches, university buildings and the associated publishing industry.

Presented as a large-format portfolio, the atlas contains fold-out maps showing the city at key points in its history, many illustrations of its buildings and streets, maps to show its setting, and reproduction early maps of the city. The text introduces and explains the maps, giving the reader a thorough grounding in how and why Oxford developed, and an explanation of its changing fortunes. A supplementary chapter brings the situation up to date.

A gazetteer lists every building and street shown on the maps, with a short history and references for further reading.

The atlas is published by Oxbow Books for the Historic Towns Trust, price £70.

*The Society was pleased to contribute to the development of this fascinating work of scholarship commissioned by the Historic Towns Trust.*



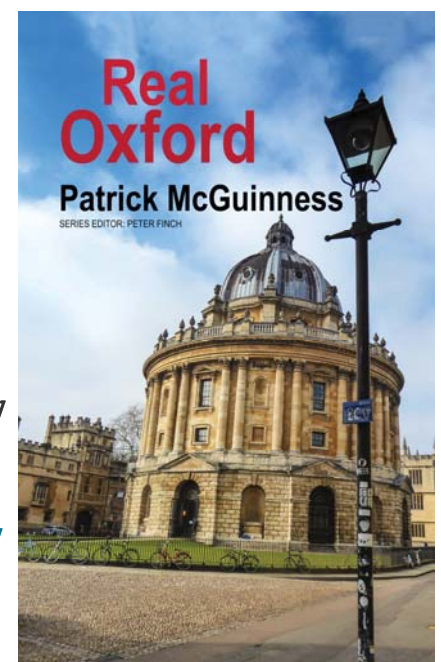
*Real Oxford* by Patrick McGuinness brings the insights of a poet, academic and long-standing Oxford resident into our diverse, modern city. This is not just about heritage and high-table but also about industrial Oxford, football, the Oxford of breweries, wharves and stations and unexpectedly radical politics. There's the Oxford that broadcasts its achievements and the Oxford that covers its tracks.

The author guides us through the past and present of all of these interlinked Oxfords. He walks the city's streets from the station to the ringroad, tracks its canals and towpaths, its footbridges and tunnels, to evoke the continued presence of the city behind the classic views. The 80 black and white photographs of Oxford's unnoticed corners are a counterpoint to the usual images we see.

Published by Seren Books, *Real Oxford* costs £9.99

*We will be welcoming Patrick McGuinness as one of our autumn speakers – see page 11 for details.*

*All the books listed here may be purchased in the city's bookshops or online.*



# OCS Calendar

'Cut out and keep'

July – November 2022

\*ticketed events

*All the talks are at Magdalen College  
Auditorium, Longwall Street*

Thursday 28 July\* 2pm

Wadham College, a visit

Saturday 20 August\* 2pm

St Hilda's College, a visit



Wednesday 14 September 8pm

Frewin Hall, a lost college, a talk by  
Ben Ford

Sunday 25 September\* 2pm

Civil War Oxford: a guided tour led  
by Stephen Barker

Saturday 8 October\* 11am

Oxford's boundaries: a guided walk  
led by Mark Davies

Tuesday 11 October 8pm

'Real Oxford', a talk by Patrick  
McGuinness

Sunday 23 October\* 2pm

Trees in North Oxford: a guided  
walk led by Ian Gourlay

Wednesday 26 October 8pm

The new humanities building, a talk  
by William Whyte

Wednesday 9 November\* 2pm

Trinity College, a visit

*Do bring a friend to our talks. If they  
wish they can join the Society at our  
welcome desk.*

## Booking details

### Booking made easier

We are now using Eventbrite to take bookings for all our tours and visits.

Please go to the web links given below to book your place on these visits and pay for them. If you find we have reached our maximum capacity for a particular event, please make use of the waitlist function in Eventbrite.

Bookings are taken on a first come – first served basis but the lists will stay open until seven days before the event. If you are offered a ticket via the waitlist you have 72 hours to claim it. A joint member may book two tickets.

You can cancel your booking up to 30 days before the event and get a partial refund – Eventbrite takes a small percentage of the fee. After that no refunds can be offered.

*If you book and cannot attend the event, we urge you to cancel as soon as you can so that someone else can take your place. Our events are popular and we almost always have a waiting list.*

If you can't access a computer or smartphone to book via Eventbrite, please contact the Society so that we can arrange an alternative booking route for you. Note we no longer have an 'office' phone but you can contact us by email [events@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:events@oxcivicsoc.org.uk) or by post (see the back page). Please tell us which event/s you are booking for, how many tickets you need, and enclose a cheque payable to Oxford Civic Society (one cheque for each event).

**Please note:** our guided tours and visits are open to MEMBERS ONLY. If you book a ticket and are NOT a fully-paid-up member you will be required to join.

Event	Price	Link
St Hilda's College: a visit Saturday 20 August, 2pm	£8	<a href="https://bit.ly/ocs-sthildas">bit.ly/ocs-sthildas</a>
Civil War Oxford: a guided walk Sunday 25 September, 2pm	£9	<a href="https://bit.ly/ocs-civilwar">bit.ly/ocs-civilwar</a>
Oxford's boundaries: a guided walk Saturday 8 October, 11am	£9	<a href="https://bit.ly/ocs-boundaries">bit.ly/ocs-boundaries</a>
Trees in North Oxford: a guided walk Sunday 23 October, 2pm	£9	<a href="https://bit.ly/ocs-trees">bit.ly/ocs-trees</a>
Trinity College: a visit Wednesday 9 November, 2pm	£8	<a href="https://bit.ly/ocs-trinity">bit.ly/ocs-trinity</a>





# Programme August – November 2022

## Talks – all welcome

Talks are free and don't need to be booked ahead, just turn up.

All this term's talks will be held at Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

### Frewin Hall, Oxford - a lost college and much more

**Wednesday 14 September, 8pm**

**Ben Ford** from Oxford Archaeology updates us on some of the highlights from excavations undertaken early in 2022.

The site of Frewin Hall (formerly St Mary's College) has thrown up significant new evidence. Hear how a large Bronze Age burial mound influenced the occupation of the site 3,000 years later in the first century of Oxford's development as a defended Saxon border town.



### 'Real Oxford'

**Tuesday 11 October, 8pm**

Poet, novelist and academic **Patrick McGuinness** has published a new book about an old city, a deeply personal exploration of the Oxford of breweries and factories, car plants, stations and wharves. He delves into the city's

unexpectedly radical politics, high-rise as well as high table Oxford. There's European Oxford, Windrush Oxford, Cavalier and Roundhead Oxford and Oxford's own population – the artisans, tradespeople and urban working-class whose city-centre homes were demolished.

### The University of Oxford's new humanities building

**Wednesday 26 October, 8pm**

The University will begin construction of the Stephen A Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities in October with completion due in 2025. Located in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, the building will provide facilities for the city as well as the University, most notably a 500-seat concert hall and a 250-seat theatre. **William Whyte**, Professor of Architectural History at the University, will provide insights into all aspects of this exciting development.



## Members-only visits and guided tours

Tickets are needed for these events: tickets on a first come - first served basis. See page 10 for details.

### St Hilda's College, University of Oxford: a visit

**Saturday 20 August, 2pm**

Set in grounds next to the River Cherwell, St Hilda's College has beautiful views over the Botanic Gardens, Christ Church Meadows and Oxford's dreaming spires. This visit will include the recently opened Anniversary Building and Pavilion.

### Oxford during the Civil War, 1642-46: a guided walk

**Sunday 25 September, 2pm**

This two-hour tour led by military historian **Stephen Barker** examines Oxford's role as Royalist capital. It assesses the impact on the city and surrounding area and highlights what remains to this day, such as the fortifications.

### Oxford's boundaries: a guided walk

**Saturday 8 October, 11am**

This two-mile walk with local historian **Mark Davies**, traces the old south-western municipal and county boundaries, on a route followed by Oxford's mayors for centuries as part of the ceremonial 'riding of the franchise' (or liberty). It includes some steps and potentially muddy footpaths. It complements two previous walks of the north-western boundary in 2019.

### Trees in North Oxford: a guided walk

**Sunday 23 October, 2pm**

The walk will focus on St Giles and the Norham Gardens area, looking at some interesting trees in the largely Victorian suburb. It will be led by **Ian Gourlay**, former wood anatomist at the University of Oxford's Department of Forestry (now Plant Sciences).

### Trinity College, University of Oxford: a visit

**Wednesday 9 November, 2pm**

This visit, led by the college staff, will include a tour of the Levine Building, completed in late December 2021. The building includes study bedrooms, an auditorium for lectures and performance, teaching rooms and many other facilities. The tour will also include the grounds and chapel.



# Another great OxClean Spring Clean!

Natasha Robinson reports

This year's Spring Clean took place over two weekends in March and brought out hundreds of volunteers.

Despite the ongoing challenge of mounting events during a pandemic, we had a good turn-out for our 15th annual Spring Clean. 70 groups registered along with some individuals and we estimate they recruited 880 helpers. As ever we had great support from community groups, faith groups, school children and students, and some businesses and **we thank them all.**



*The Marston Wombles at Croft Road Park*

Our wonderful volunteers collected **1.3 tonnes of recyclables** and almost **two tonnes of litter** – less than usual. Does that reflect the effects of previous litter picks or are we getting the message through that litter is simply unacceptable? We were however sad to see so many discarded face-masks. As ever, Oxford Direct Services was brilliant at supplying us with refuse sacks and collecting the waste.

This year we have been supporting some young people doing their **Duke of Edinburgh Award**. Litter picking has been recognised as a volunteering activity for the programme as part of 'working with the environment'. We are very keen to encourage this, right through the year. We can offer advice and supervision so do get in touch if your young ones are interested.

My thanks go to all the team: Gillian Coates and Tony Turton for running the registration process, Liz Grosvenor and Ingrid Lunt for running the depots.

*The big hose-down in our Headington depot!*  
Image courtesy of Liz Grosvenor



**Dates for your diary:** next year our Spring Clean will be over 3-5 and 10-12 March.

**We're looking for a helper** – a householder or a group – who can offer to run a depot in North Oxford for the duration of the event. Our helper needs something like a spacious garage or shed with good access for people to collect their kit.

You can contact us at [info@oxclean.org.uk](mailto:info@oxclean.org.uk)

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

**Membership costs £15 (£25 for two people at the same address) with concessions for students and residents' associations. Corporate rates on application. You can join online or contact Liz Grosvenor at [membership@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:membership@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)**

**Oxford Civic Society**

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[oxfordfutures.org.uk](http://oxfordfutures.org.uk) | [oxfordwalks.org.uk](http://oxfordwalks.org.uk)

**Letters to the Editor** and photos can be sent to Hilary Bradley [newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk) or by post to the above address.

 Follow @oxcivicsoc

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