

Oxford Waterside Residents' Association

August 2008: Issue 27

Welcome to the summer 2008 OWRA newsletter. Please note the change to the rubbish collection date at the end of the month. We hope you find the newsletter useful. Have a good summer.

Bank holiday rubbish changes

We have a revised rubbish collection for the week after the August bank holiday. As usual, the day switches from the Wednesday to the Thursday. **So instead of our collection on Wednesday 27th, it will be on Thursday 28th August.**

Should the dustmen fail to collect our rubbish on the expected day, as with the recent council workers' strike, please would you take boxes and bins back in rather than leave them outside in the street for a week or more. Thanks for your co-operation.

A couple of reminders and a suggestion: Cardboard should be put out with your blue box. And when you put glass jars in the green box, please ensure they are washed out first, especially if they have had something sticky like jam in them. It seems obvious, but we would suggest you put glass bottles on the top of your green box when you put it out; this will ensure that paper doesn't blow about.

Phil & Jim land triangle

It looks as though the County and City Councils will effect a land swap with the result that the triangle of scrub land between the school and the sloping footpath on Aristotle Lane up to the railway bridge will become part of the school. A footpath will be created along the border of this land (rather than across it as now) so that people may still get to the railway crossing. If this happens, our main concern will be to ensure that the large willows and other trees that screen the site from houses at the north end of Plater Drive are retained.

Merrivale Square issues

A couple of issues were raised at the AGM in June which, while largely about the Square itself, may be of interest to all residents. OWRA will be seeking the views of those living in the Square on the following over the next two months, but ideas from anywhere on Waterside will be welcome:

Traffic in the Square

The one-way system around the Square has been in place for some time. What has been its impact? Have cars speeded up? Is the Square safer or less safe? Are motorists and cyclists going round the Square the wrong way? (It is clear that some cyclists do this in order to cut through to the school. Some even cycle through the centre of the Square. What can/should we do about this?)

Use of the Square

The gardens in the centre of the Square are well-maintained and create a haven of peace in the centre of Waterside. They are used for the summer barbecue and other impromptu social events, while some residents sit there enjoying the view. But could more be made of the Square? Should facilities be provided for children? Would more seating be useful? Or should we leave well alone?

More bike racks

Would some bike racks at the western end of the Square be useful? Some people currently lock their bikes to the central railings as there are no racks available; would a couple of racks on the grass area by the railway be a better option? Views please on all these issues.

A Waterside bus?

Another issue raised at the AGM related to the Jericho Flyer – the local bus that goes from the centre of town north through Jericho. Someone suggested that we should approach the bus company to ask them to put a bus-stop at the entrance to Waterside or even further into the estate. Is this a good idea? Would it be used? Do we want a bus/bus stop on Waterside? Your views on this would be welcome – comments to Stuart Skyte on skytes@tiscali.co.uk.

OWRA summer party/BBQ

We had a surplus of income over expenditure at the summer party and barbecue in Merrivale Square in

June. As in previous years, we donated the money to a local charity. We sent the £231-60 “profit” to Helen and Douglas House Hospice for children and young people. Thanks to everyone who helped on the day.

Waterside 10 years on

It’s hard to believe that Waterside was completed 10 years ago. Some residents have been here for 12 years. Apart from the fact that the estate and grounds are maturing nicely, and that many people have built, or intend to build into the loft or add a conservatory, two less positive aspects of ageing are worth bearing in mind:

- Some trees in private gardens are getting quite large, thus blocking light from adjacent houses. Please consider your neighbour and, if necessary, pollard any large trees that overshadow their house.
- Most houses have had an external coat of paint and some have had two in the last 10 years. Those that haven’t been painted are looking a bit weary and don’t contribute positively to the overall look of Waterside. There are several recommended painters on the Waterside web-site (see below).
- (To avoid future painting and scaffolding costs, many residents are now getting the triangular soffit boards and the boards behind their gutters plasticized. This is highly recommended, not least because the scaffolding costs can be higher than the actual cost of the painting work.)

Skip management

With so many people having building work, Waterside hasn’t been skip-free for a long time. That normally presents no problem but please ensure that, if your builder is placing a skip in the road, it doesn’t block someone else’s garage or parking place, and isn’t generally a nuisance. And please chase them to get a full skip removed as soon as possible as material can fall into the road and be unsightly and/or a danger to motorists and cyclists.

Talking of building work....

This is a reminder that, if you are considering substantial building alterations to your house, such as a loft conversion and/or a conservatory, you will need to get two separate permissions. You will need both planning permission from the Oxford City Council and permission from the Oxford Waterside Management Company under the terms

of the restrictive covenants which all house-holders agree to under their purchase documentation. Neither represents a bureaucratic hold-up but it is suggested both are applied for well in advance of the start of any planned building work.

OWRA web site

Don’t forget we have an up-to-date list of recommended tradespeople, such as electricians, painters, plumbers, cleaners, bike maintenance, etc on our web site. Please let us know if you use a good person or company for anything. We can add them to the list. In particular, there is always demand for a good plumber or central heating engineer. Equally, if you use someone on the list and they are terrible, we can remove them from the list. The address: www.oxfordwaterside.co.uk.

Speeding to a 20mph limit

OWRA has long argued for some signage at the entrance to Rutherway reminding drivers that this is part of a 20mph zone. Many motorists ignore the fact that Waterside is part of this zone and speed down Rutherway. Leaving aside the fact that this probably saves no more than two seconds on their journey time, it is dangerous and selfish behaviour.

When, as appears likely, the whole of Oxford becomes a 20mph zone with the exception of the main arterial routes, we almost certainly won’t get a reminder sign as it will be deemed unnecessary by the County Council. So please respect the fact that the speed limit exists for a purpose, and that’s to save life.

Canalside Environment Group (CEG) dates

20 September: **Swap Shop**, 10am to noon in St Margaret’s Institute, Polstead Road
2 November: **Litter pick** on Waterside and Waterways, 2pm by the post box on Rutherway.

Your CEG contact is Saima Butt on 311511 or e-mail her at cegroup@hotmail.com.

OWRA Committee members

Stuart Skyte, 30 Plater Dr (559618) - chair
Alison Wood, 26 Plater Drive (516722) - treasurer
Richard Groves, 44 Merrivale Sq (512375) - tradespeople
Chris Leamy, 32 Balliol Ct (552261) - special projects
Michael Atkinson, 67 Merton Court (516077) - planning issues and special projects
Bob Adams, 63 Merton Court (556227)
Aprajita Verma, 19 Merrivale Sq (302922)