

Oxford Waterside Residents' Association

December 2008: Issue 28

Welcome to the winter 2008 OWRA newsletter. This contains lots of little snippets of information and a welcome surprise in the current economic climate from the Management Company. Happy Christmas, etc.

Christmas rubbish collection

Our rubbish collections between Christmas and the new year should be largely unchanged, so it's Tuesday mornings as usual. But please note that there will be no green waste collection on 30 December. And don't forget you can put all that used wrapping paper in the blue box.

Residents have reported that some people – possibly other residents – are putting their own rubbish in other people's wheelie bins when they are put out in the street for emptying. Not very neighbourly!

Water pressure problems?

Water used to fly out of our taps at one time but several Watersiders report a loss of pressure in recent months. It's thought this may be linked to the extra housing developments either side of us taking some of the pressure. Please let Stuart Skyte know if your water pressure has significantly diminished; if there are large numbers and/or this is confined to one area of Waterside, we may be able to take this up with Thames Water.

Smoke alarms on the blink

The smoke alarms on Waterside are now 10-12 years old and the lithium batteries are starting to fail. When this happens, they go "peep....peep...peep..." every few minutes. At this point, it is suggested that you change them in order to ensure you have an effective smoke alarm. However, it's not that simple; the batteries themselves are not replaceable separately as the unit contains a small radioactive source and cannot, therefore, be opened. So you need to buy a new smoke alarm. Assuming we were all fitted with the same systems, they are available as follows:

Supplier: TLC (Oxford), 9 Nuffield Industrial Estate, Ledgers Close, Oxford, OX4 6JS. (Tel: 01865 401234) They will deliver.

Type: TLSD 151 TL Mains Ionisation Smoke Alarm and lithium battery

Cost: £21-20 plus VAT.

Failing flashings

Also associated with the age of our properties, we have had reports of the roof flashings between properties failing and having to be replaced. You'll know when this is the case as there will be damp in evidence on top floors.

Know any general builders?

We have a wide range of builders and other useful tradespeople listed on the OWRA web site for your assistance – www.oxfordwaterside.co.uk. What we don't have is knowledge of general builders who are prepared to undertake small jobs, so if you've used someone who fits this category, please let us know so we can share the information.

Litter clean-ups

Thanks to everyone who helped on the communal litter pick on 2 November. The next such event will be as part of the OxClean initiative undertaken throughout the City. This is on the weekend of 6/7 March 2009. Please look out for further details and precise timings.

Community Christmas carols

There will be community Christmas carols on Waterside between 6 and 7pm on Saturday 13 December. Meeting outside 83 Plater Drive at 6pm, the singers – who will hopefully include you – will sing their way around Waterside, stopping off at various points for mulled wine and mince pies.



Management Company cuts fee

The Oxford Waterside Management Company (MC) is cutting the annual fee next year. This will be reduced from £300 to £280. The MC is able to do this because of effective budget management in recent years. Even with the reduction, the amount being spent on the communal grounds will be sufficient to allow for improvements and new planting where required.

Interested in the communal grounds?

Are you interested in acting as a liaison person between the garden contractors and the Managing Agents (Cluttons)? This task is currently being undertaken by Gillian Skyte and Katherine Phillips. If you would like to be involved, please contact Stuart Skyte. The work involves general monitoring of the contractors' work and occasional walk-rounds with the contractor and Cluttons to see which areas (if any) need replanting or improving. A good knowledge of plants and gardening is essential.

Bicycle thefts

A number of bicycle thefts on Waterside have been reported in recent weeks. These have occurred at night and despite the fact that the bikes were locked. Be warned.

Merrivale Square issues

A number of issues were raised at the AGM in June and reported in the last newsletter (August 2008). Your views were sought on these. While feedback was not huge, it was consistent on all issues.

Traffic in the Square: There was no support for seeking to have the one-way traffic system in Merrivale Square removed and to have traffic in both directions. This was considered to be dangerous. There have been reports of cyclists going round the Square the wrong way – especially when travelling north from Rutherway to the east side of Plater Drive. If you do this, you risk not only your own life but those of other people.

Use of the Square: There was virtually no support for making changes to the centre of the Square in order to provide additional facilities, notably for children. “Leave well alone” was the overwhelming view as there are plenty of safe places in the immediate vicinity for children to play.

An additional gate into the Square: There was clear opposition to the idea of having an extra entrance into the Square from the east side. This was thought to be unnecessary and potentially dangerous.

More bike racks: There were no strong views either way for additional bike racks to be placed at the west end of the Square.

A Waterside bus: There was overwhelming opposition to the idea of seeking to get the Jericho flyer bus to come onto Waterside to pick up/set down passengers.

In light of the feedback on these issues, the Residents' Association and Management Company agreed to take no action on any of them.

Skips on Waterside

As reported in the last newsletter, there are frequent skips on Waterside associated with building work. Most builders don't mind other people taking waste items from the skip, but please ask them first. Equally, if you have something to dispose of, it's suggested you ask the builder first before dumping it in their skip. If the answer is negative, the Redbridge Council tip is not far away...and if you have only a few items to throw away, why not ask your neighbours if they have something you could take?

Canalside Environment Group (CEG) dates

5 January: CEG meeting at 8pm at 61 Frenchay Road

10 January: Christmas tree shredding by the Phil & Jim school – afternoon but not known exactly when

18 January: “Kids swap shop” at St Margaret's Institute – from 1.30 to 3.30pm for clothes, toys and other equipment

Your CEG contacts: call 311511 or e-mail the group at cegroup@hotmail.co.uk.

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)