

HRA Update, September 2023, our 66th edition

Oxford named England's greenest city: Based on an in-depth analysis of environmental data, the ENDS Report places Oxford as the greenest of the country's 55 largest urban centres, ranking high in several categories, including public realm and green behaviour. According to the data, its recycling rate is the fourth highest in the country, while the city has the fifth highest number of electric vehicle charging devices per 100,000 people in England. The city also stands out strongly for green commuting behaviour, ranking high in terms of the proportion of residents travelling to work by bicycle or on foot.

Layla Moran, Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, welcomed the city's position at the top of the index, saying: "This is a fantastic achievement, and a credit to all those in our community who champion the environment. Our city has some wonderful green spaces, and our parks, meadows and rivers are a key part of the city's identity."

Meanwhile, another recent survey, by national skip hire company, Reliable Skip, ranks Oxford as England's 8th greenest city, and, wait for the bad news...disgracefully, Oxford has been ranked as one of the worst offenders for fly-tipping in the south-east.

Changed parking charges now in operation at Oxford University Hospitals: This is the first time the Trust has increased parking charges since 2017. The changes mean a reduction in charges for those using the Trust's visitor car parks for a short duration, and increases for longer use of the visitor car parks at the John Radcliffe and Churchill Hospital, and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre to bring the all-day rate in line with local Headington car parks to prevent misuse of hospital facilities. Charges at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury remain unchanged, being similar already to those of nearby public car parks. NB concessionary arrangements remain in place for those patients and visitors who attend these hospitals very frequently.

Water Bottle Refill: Did you know that Oxford is a part of the Refill scheme, which encourages the promotion of places where people can fill their water bottle with tap water for free. The project is trying to reduce the 7.7 billion plastic water bottles bought in the UK each year. In Oxford, that is almost 300 bottles every 8 minutes! The Refill website <https://www.refill.org.uk/> shows all the locations across the city where you can fill up your water bottle.

Pet scams: With its slogan, '*Paws for thought before buying a pet online*', Action Fraud is encouraging animal lovers to take care when buying a pet online.

- Do your research
- Trust your instincts
- Choose your payment method wisely

To find out more about how to protect yourself from pet fraud, click here: actionfraud.police.uk/petfraud

Or call: 0300 123 2040



Road Closures: The Botley Interchange will be closed between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. from Monday 11th to Thursday 14th September (including the A420 from Cumnor) to install narrow lanes and create a safe area which will remain in place throughout the work. Details about the rest of the programme are on the South-east Maintenance page: <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/south-east-maintenance-schemes/>

Lime Walk closure: Due to Thames Water maintenance work, Lime Walk will remain closed at the junction with Old Rd. until September 15th.

Beware ULEZ Scams: The expansion of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone, with a daily charge of £12.50 for drivers entering the zone in a vehicle that does not meet the required emission standards, has led to identical unofficial websites targeting the unwary, and demanding payment of a higher fee (e.g. £17.50). Drivers should be paying only £12.50 for the ULEZ charge via the Transport for London (TfL) website.

Watch out for FAKE McAfee emails: These urge recipients to use the links given in the email for renewing their McAfee subscription, saying their anti-virus subscription is expiring. The links lead to phishing websites that are designed to steal personal and financial information.

Received a suspicious email? Report it by forwarding the email to: report@phishing.gov.uk. Reports from the public have led to the removal of over 242,000 malicious emails since the Suspicious Email Reporting Service was launched in 2020.

Zero Waste Week, September 7th-11th: Oxfordshire County Council writes: 'It's the perfect time to take your first steps on your own zero-waste journey... Follow our simple tips below to help you get started!'

- Say no to single-use plastics! Add your reusable water bottle, coffee cup, shopping bags, and cutlery to your essentials when leaving the house. Visit refill shops: they are a great way to shop without the packaging.
- Save pounds and the planet. Only buy what you need and don't get sucked in by those BOGOF deals. Get creative and turn leftovers into new meals, for example, by adding them to an omelette or making a Miso soup. Store fruits and vegetables properly to extend their freshness. It's a win-win for both your wallet and the planet!
- Shop smartly and sustainably! Opt for package-free or bulk-buy whenever possible. Invest in slightly more expensive goods which should last longer. Buy local to support your local community and reduce your carbon footprint; go equipped with your own containers and bags.
- Give your clothes a second chance. Don't just toss them out, donate them to local charities, or host a clothing swap with friends. Why not reorganize, rethink, repair and re-wear? It's a fun way to refresh your wardrobe while reducing textile waste.
- Get creative with upcycling! Turn old jars into storage containers, transform worn-out furniture with a fresh coat of paint, or repurpose glass bottles as stylish vases. Let your imagination run wild! Remember, every small step counts!

Marston cycle path closure: It is expected to remain closed for another six weeks for essential repairs to the Lemond and Fignon bridges. However, following extensive liaison between the authorities involved, a new measure is in place. For the duration of the work, exclusively between 7 a.m. – 9 a.m., and 3 p.m. – 5 p.m., Monday to Friday, cyclists are now allowed to dismount and walk their bikes through University Parks via High Bridge (*aka* Rainbow Bridge) and Cox's Corner, in the south-east corner.

Free electric blanket checks by the Fire and Rescue Service: These checks are normally very popular, so places are limited. Therefore, they must be pre-booked by phoning 01865 895 999 or via the website. See:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/fire-and-rescue-service/fire-safety-advice/safety-advice/free-electric-blanket-testing>

Who Called Me?: This is one of the most useful websites. If an unknown number is on the caller display then you can check the number by going to <https://who-called.co.uk/> Tel. 0207 946 0364 and seeing if it has been reported as a scam. You can also report a number to help others.

Dog Tags for free: Quite apart from it being a legal requirement for dogs to wear a collar and tag, if dogs go missing and are wearing a dog tag with their owner's contact details, there is a much better chance of dog and owner being reunited quickly. Dog owners can ask a vet or the Oxford dog warden to check that the microchip details are up-to-date; this is a free service. NB Dog owners living in Oxford can order a free dog tag from Oxford City Council at: <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/xfp/form/4>

Railway News re Weekend Track Work: See below for the weekend dates when no trains will pass through Oxford station due to planned follow-up work after upgrade this summer. This includes work on the track, as well as further work on the new signalling system and the walkway on Osney Lane footbridge.

While trains are not entering the station, rail replacement buses will be running again between Didcot Parkway, Oxford and Hanborough/Banbury. Passengers should follow the yellow signs outside the station to Becket Street car park where the buses pick up/drop off. It is essential to allow plenty of time if using these replacement buses.

Station closure dates: Saturdays and Sundays from September 10th up to and including Sunday October 1st.

Have you tried what3words? The app divides the globe into three-metre squares and gives each square a unique combination of three words, creating accurate locations for anywhere in the world. Providing a **what3words** reference can make a big difference to identifying a location, being much more accurate than a post code, especially in rural areas.

Th Police Force, emergency response units, automotive, ride-hailing and travel businesses and organisations use **what3words** to improve efficiencies, enhance customer experience, offer smoother journeys and save lives. See:

<https://what3words.com/>

Keep this information to hand...just in case

A suspicious email? Forward it to: report@phishing.gov.uk

A suspicious text? Forward it to 7726, or SPAM

A call supposedly from your bank? Phone 159 <https://stopscamsuk.org.uk/159>

If you think someone is trying to trick you into handing over money or personal details – stop, hang up and call 159 to speak directly to your bank.

Headington News website: <https://www.headington.org.uk/news/today.htm>

HRA Addresses:

HRA Admin: hracttee@gmail.com

HRA Chair: hrachair@gmail.com

HRA Planning: hra.oxford.planning@gmail.com

HRA Webmaster: hra.website@gmail.com

HRA Website: <https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com>

Disclaimer: The information we give in each edition is, as far as we can tell, correct at the time of circulation but please be aware that it can change. HRA's Update is now being circulated on an occasional basis, according to the information thought to be of relevance to members.