

HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Update: Friday 18 December 2020, our twenty-seventh Update

HRA Doorstep Carols and Visit from Santa: The rain stopped just in time on Wednesday 16th to allow many residents to join in the Doorstep Carols session with help from Radio Oxford to keep in time and tune. Around the same time, in response to a huge postbag from children in Highfield, Santa and his trusty helpers visited the houses of no fewer than 50 children to deliver pre-Christmas presents. Using his special distancing measuring staff, Santa greeted each household while his helpers provided backing music on hand bells and lit up the scene with fiery torches. Meanwhile the reindeer relaxed on Shotover preparing for their big night next week. Many thanks to Santa for finding time from his busy schedule for this extra visit and to his helpers for managing the logistics so well.



Animals and fireworks: nearly half (43%) of people consulted noticed an increase in garden fireworks on Bonfire Night and the surrounding days this year, particularly the extreme loudness of them. With no public displays this year, there will be many more people letting off fireworks at home during the festive season. Blue Cross is campaigning to encourage people to exercise restraint and bear in mind that loud noises can be very distressing to cats and dogs.

Covid vaccination programme: A number of GP-led primary care networks (PCN) in Oxfordshire have begun delivering vaccinations to those people who are most at risk, among them those over the age of 80 and those living and working in care homes, or who need to be vaccinated because of the work they do. More GP-led PCNs will be joining the vaccination programme on a phased basis from 21 December. The invitation will be extended to other age bands and at-risk medical groups as vaccine stocks become available. People are currently asked not to contact their GP surgery or any other NHS service about vaccination.

Thames Valley Police Warning to all vehicle owners: The theft of catalytic converters is increasing, and police are investigating the offences, many of which appear to be linked. The cars most commonly targeted are parked Toyota Prius, Toyota Auris, Honda Jazz, Honda Civic, Honda CRVs and Lexus RX400 vehicles. Between the start of the year and November, 1,210 such offences were reported to the force, with an increasing number of reports since August. Offenders frequently use car jacks to lift the vehicle and in minutes are able to remove the catalytic converter. These contain precious metals, from which the criminals are profiting.

Steps you can take to try to protect your vehicle's catalytic converter include:

- Marking your catalytic converter with a forensic marker
 - Checking with the car's manufacturer on the locks and guards available
 - If your catalytic converter is 'bolt on,' ask a mechanic to weld the bolts shut
 - When leaving your vehicle unattended in a car park, park with the front of the car against a wall and avoid parking at the end of a row, thereby making it harder for offenders to gain access
 - At home, park in a locked garage; if not possible, park in a well-lit area, close to your property
 - Consider installing a Thatcham-approved alarm that activates when the vehicle is lifted or tilted
- Det Supt Weems adds: "You may see what appears to be people carrying out work on a car, but look closely and report any suspicious activity immediately, calling 999. Within moments, the catalytic converter could be gone.

Anyone with any non-urgent information about catalytic converter thefts should call the non-emergency number 101 or [make a report on our website](#).

Library arrangements: Headington Library will close by 4 p.m. on Thursday 24 December and will re-open from Monday 4 January. Please note that library loans will then be due for return/renewal. We can safely return items in the red boxes at the doors of any Oxfordshire Library during opening hours.

Dog fouling of pavements: This has become a serious problem in parts of Highfield. Please report any dog fouling of pavements to Street.scene@oxford.gov.uk who will usually clear the mess within 24 hours if reported during the week. If the problem continues, and there are a number of reports from one particular area, surveillance and possibly another bin might be considered.

Reminder about Christmas change to Bin Collection Days: For example, Blue Zone bins normally collected on a Wednesday will be collected on Tuesday 22 December. For full details, and to see when Christmas trees will be collected, go to the following link and click on *Download now*:
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4510/blue_zone_recycling_calendar_may_2020_-_march_2021

Update on Barton Leisure Centre: There has been talk of Barton Leisure Centre closing permanently. Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks states: 'We hope to partially* re-open Barton in the New Year and are working hard with Fusion on getting proposals costed in order to achieve this. In the meantime, the Ferry Centre is open for exercise including swimming.'
*In a follow-up exchange I gleaned the following: 'It is likely to be the gym and classes in the first instance'.

The Oxford Christmas Lunch: Instead of the usual community lunch, a traditional Christmas lunch will be taken to people on 25 December. It's all free and cooked with food from Oxford Food Bank. Families, individuals, households and small groups (if allowed by Covid restrictions) are all very welcome. Email sara@oxfordchristmaslunch.org or leave a message or text on 07535 314716. Hollie Tuckwell, local community organiser for Oxford Together, welcomes volunteers as well as referrals.

Arrangements for students' return: In line with Government guidance published in early December, both universities have arranged a phased return of students in the New Year, with testing facilities in place for when they are back here. The plans build on the extensive arrangements made by both universities to test thousands of students before they travelled home for Christmas.

Both universities will stagger the arrival of students from 4th January, thereby reducing the number of students arriving on any given day. Further details are available on the HRA website (address below).

Change to self-isolation period: If you have any coronavirus symptoms, you must self-isolate immediately and call 119 to book a test, or register online. The self-isolation period has reduced **from 14 days to 10 days**. This change also applies to people returning from a country that is not on the exemption list. Further information is on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

COVID Testing sites: We are urged not to hesitate to get a test if displaying any of the symptoms of COVID-19. Testing capacity in the county has increased, and mobile testing units are often deployed in various locations for a few days at a time, in addition to the local and regional testing facilities. Booking is required for all testing sites. Anyone with symptoms should book at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119. Testing is available even on Christmas Day.

COVID Restrictions: Bucks and Berks move into tier three from 00:01 on Saturday 19th. Oxfordshire remains at tier two. For what you can/cannot do in each tier see the [government website](https://www.gov.uk). During the Christmas period (23 to 27 December) [different rules on social contact will apply](#).

For latest information on COVID-19 from each university: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/alerts/coronavirus/> and <https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus>

Headington News website: <http://www.headington.org.uk/news/items/coronavirus.html>

HRA Addresses:

HRA Admin: hractee@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>

Useful contacts for people seeking information or help outside the HRA area:

Local data on Covid-19: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/coronavirus-covid-19/controlling-local-coronavirus-outbreaks/stopping-spread>

Oxford Hub: <https://www.oxfordhub.org/>

The City Council provides a single point of contact for people to ask for the extra help they may need as a result of Covid-19: [oxford.gov.uk/CommunityAssistance](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/CommunityAssistance) or 01865 249 811

Disclaimer: The information we give each week is, as far as we can tell, correct at the time of circulation but be aware that it can change. NB As previously mentioned, Update is being circulated less frequently, until it ceases all together.