

HRA Update March 2024, our 70th edition

Reminder: Friday 22nd March 7.30 p.m. (doors from 7.00). **Screening of 'The Old Oak'.**

Nominated for Best Film Award Cannes 2023, "Ken Loach's final film is a warm and compassionate call for community solidarity" (*Guardian*). "As fired up and human as any film you'll see this year" (*Mark Kermode*).

All Saints' Church House, New High Street, Headington (upstairs hall, stair lift available).

Admission £5 (includes a free drink). Bar and refreshments. Information from 07941 210429.

Crown Court Open Day, Saturday 23rd March, 10.00 a.m.-2.00 p.m. An opportunity to see the cells, police dogs, drones, mock trials. Admission free. All ages welcome.

And looking further ahead, HRA's AGM: Thursday 25th April, 7.30-9.00 p.m. in All Saints' Church. After the business part of the AGM our guest speaker, Mattia Troiano, Project Leader, Oxford University School of Geography and Environment, will give a presentation on: 'The Future of Green Spaces in Oxford and Headington'. Refreshments will be served. Come, meet your neighbours, hear what is being lined up, make suggestions for future activities.

Newly on the HRA website: HRA All-Age Mini Wildlife Quiz.

Go to: <https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com> then on the home page select Environment, Nature and Wildlife, Wildlife Quiz.



Energy Recovery Facility Tour:

Discover the journey of your general waste first hand.

The Ardley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF), offers an eye-opening experience on what happens to our general waste, and how it is turned into a resource. For more information, and to book your free tour, click on this link:

<https://www.viridor.co.uk/energy/visiting-our-facilities/ardley-visitor-centre/> or email enquiries@viridor.co.uk

Photo ID is required to vote in the May 2024 elections: Elections for Oxford City Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner are taking place on 2nd May.

The government now requires all voters to show photo ID. To be sure you can vote, check that you have an accepted form of ID. These include:

- UK, European Economic Area (EEA), or Commonwealth passport
- UK, EEA, or Commonwealth driving licence
- Concessionary travel pass, such as an older person's bus pass or an Oyster 60+ card.

Anyone not having one of the accepted forms can apply for a free ID, known as a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) online at the [Voter Authority Certificate website](https://www.voterauthoritycertificate.gov.uk) or by completing a paper form - contact the Council's electoral services team at elections@oxford.gov.uk.

The full list of accepted ID is available on the [Electoral Commission's website](https://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk), along with more information about the new requirement. The deadline for applying for a VAC for the 2nd May election is 24th April. Those using a postal vote do not need photo ID or a VAC.

Distraction theft alert: There has been an increase in the number of distraction thefts, often following a pattern; offenders enter a café/ restaurant, approach people who are sitting at a table, place a piece of paper on it. They then ask for money and may also distract the unwary by placing a hand on the victim's arm. Once the offenders leave, taking the piece of paper away, victims notice items (usually mobile phones) have been stolen. This appears to be an organised group.

Change in mail box collection times: This is a significant change- for the better! The daily collection from the boxes at Valentia Rd. and All Saints' Rd. is now at 9.00 a.m. (Monday to Friday), and at 7.00 a.m. (Saturday).

Youngsters being used as money mules: The National Crime Agency is calling on parents to help young people recognise the signs of money muling, and avoid their being persuaded or manipulated into laundering criminal cash. See: <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/national-crime-agency-calls-on-parents-to-help-young-people-recognise-the-signs-of-money-muling>

Keyless car theft, also called 'relay theft' is increasingly common: Cars with a keyless entry system unlock automatically when the fob comes within a short distance of the car, whether in one's hand, inside a pocket or bag. If you have to push a button on your car key to open your car, you don't have keyless entry.

Keyless car theft happens when a device is used to fool the car into thinking the fob is close by. This unlocks the car and starts the ignition; thieves only need to be within a few metres of your car key to capture the signal, even if it is inside your home. This means that although your car and home may be secure, thieves can still unlock, start and steal your car.

However, by taking certain simple steps you can reduce the risk of falling victim to this type of crime:

- When at home keep your car key (and the spare) well away from the car.
 - Put the keys in a metal box or signal-blocking pouch, such as a Faraday Bag, and check every few months that the bag or pouch is still working.
 - Re-programme the car keys you have recently acquired a second-hand car.
 - Park another car (with a traditional key) to block in your keyless-entry car to prevent it being taken.
- NB Do the wing mirrors fold in when your car is locked? Criminals can tell when such cars are left unlocked.

Number of fines doubled in Thames Valley for using a mobile phone while driving: According to the Automobile Association (AA) the tightening of the law has led to a substantial rise in the number of such offences across England and Wales, but the AA also sees the increased use of dashcams as helping catch drivers using their mobiles.

Home Office figures show Thames Valley Police handed out 944 fixed penalty notices to people for driving while using a hand-held device in 2022. An offence carries a minimum £200 fine and six points on the driver's licence.

The rules for privately-owned e-scooters have not changed: Warning- it is against the law to use a privately- owned e-scooter in public places. This is because they are classed as motor vehicles, for which you need a licence, insurance and tax. However, it's not currently possible to get insurance to use privately-owned e-scooters in public. This makes them illegal. If you use an e-scooter illegally:

- you could face a fine
- you could get penalty points on your licence (if you don't yet have a licence, the points would be put on your licence once you have one!)
- your e-scooter could be seized

Thames Valley Police will be 'educating' people found on privately-owned e-scooters used anywhere other than on private land. Persistent offenders are likely to receive the same punishment as would the driver of a motor vehicle for having no insurance. This means 6 points on their licence, a fine and the scooter being seized. For more information see: https://orlo.uk/escooterusage_QpyaP

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:

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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.