

HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Update: Thursday 26 November 2020, our twenty-fifth Update

Spike and Kate write: Our quartet, OXUS, has continued to rehearse when it has been possible (often in gardens, less successfully on Zoom!) and given two live-streamed concerts, but we are really excited to be planning (fingers very tightly crossed) two real, live concerts, with real, live audiences in All Saints' Church, Headington, this winter. Our initial plans for concerts in November and December were foiled by the current lockdown, so we plan to present one concert in December straight after lockdown ends, and the next in January. Both events will have 'sittings' at 4.30pm and 7.30pm to maximise numbers while allowing for distance between family bubbles. Numbers will be limited, so seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis from the online bookings.

On **December 6th** the programme will be Postcards from a String Quartet, which is one of our favourites, and it adapts as we discover more musical gems from around the world. *Forget your troubles for an hour; come on holiday with OXUS and sample sights and sounds from around the world. From sunny Parisian boulevards to African festivals, Danish foot-stomping folk dancing to the pastoral English countryside; let us transport you!*

Tickets need to be purchased in advance, so that we can work out the seating bubbles, and work with NHS Test and Trace. If we have to postpone the event you will have the option to transfer your booking to a new date or request a refund. If you'd like to join us, please click here to book for December 6th:

<https://www.bookthatin.com/Book/oxus>

Finally, we've been doing some housekeeping during lockdown, and setting up a GDPR-compliant mailing list. If you would like to continue receiving information about our forthcoming performances and ventures (including our January concert), please click here and complete the short form: <http://eepurl.com/hijjq9>

De-cluttering? Donate unwanted items to the British Heart Foundation... by post: Even though most charity shops are temporarily closed, if you are having a clear-out during lockdown, you can still donate by post for free. Provided they are in good condition, box up your old clothes, fancy ornaments, video games, jewellery, records or electronics, then download a Freepost label and take them to your local Collect+ drop-off point (121 London Rd.). Donations go to British Heart Foundation shops and support raising funds for lifesaving heart and circulatory disease research. See: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/news-archive/2020/june/post-to-donate-items-to-bhf>

Footpaths in and around Oxford: Tony Dale, of Oxford City Ramblers, spoke at our AGM and inspired many of us to get out our walking boots. In response to members' requests, here is the link to the OCC interactive footpath map: <https://publicrightsofway.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Web/standardmap.aspx>

1. Enter 'Countryside' in 'Search' on the home page
2. Click on 'Countryside access'
3. Click on 'Online map'
4. Search the map by typing in a specific place or Grid Reference OR Just trawl the map, zooming in where required.

HRA Book Group: This has been going for several years. Ten or so of us have been meeting in each others' houses every two months to discuss one or two books chosen by the group, covering a wide range of authors and styles- modern literature, classics, Booker prize listed authors, crime and historical. It's a democratic group, taking turns to suggest books and host the meetings. In this time of Covid, we've moved online to hold Zoom meetings, starting with discussion of Maggie O'Farrell's 'Hamnet'. There's space in our Zoom meetings for up to three new members, but if there's a lot of interest in joining the book group, we can help with setting up a new group. Please contact the HRA committee if you are interested. Susie Pye and Diana Chandler.

Now for the Five-a-Day! Gloucester Green's Wednesday fruit and vegetable market remains closed. The vendors will not return till lockdown is over; thereafter, who knows?

However, Headington's Saturday Market continues in Quarry Hollow Park (not the recreation ground), and is open from 09:00 to 14:00 - the earlier starting time is to help space customers out. There is no reason at present to think that it will not be able to continue after 2nd Dec. An enlarged market with some Christmas activities is planned for 12th Dec. The last market of the year will be on 19th Dec, and it will resume in Quarry Hollow Park, on 9th Jan. For details see:

<https://www.headingtonmarket.org/>, and the market's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HeadingtonMarket/>.

Covid-19 Testing and Christmas Travel Arrangements for both Universities:

The Government has advised universities that teaching should take place exclusively online from 9th December. However, both universities in Oxford have confirmed that most in-person teaching will have finished on 4th December, with exceptions for a small number of students such as those carrying out healthcare placements as they are exempt from the guidance.

In line with Government guidance, and in consultation with local authorities, all students leaving Oxford during the Christmas Travel Window from 3rd to 9th December will be offered free 'Christmas Travel Tests' before they leave. These 'lateral flow tests' (LFTs), known as asymptomatic testing, will be available in Brookes University campuses at Headington, Wheatley, Harcourt Hill and Swindon this weekend, and in Oxford University colleges by Monday 30th November. Students will be asked to take two tests, three days apart in the week before leaving.

Once students have received two negative test results they are advised to return home. Students testing positive will need to take a confirmatory PCR test (i.e. the highly accurate polymerase chain reaction test), via NHS testing centres such as the on-site centre at Oxford Brookes Headington Campus, or for Oxford University students via the University's two dedicated testing facilities). If that is positive too, they will need to stay in Oxford and self-isolate for ten days. While students are being encouraged to travel home for the Christmas break, both universities are making plans to ensure that appropriate support is in place over the Christmas period for those who remain in Oxford.

Arrangements for how to manage testing ahead of students' return in January will be made known once finalised and confirmed.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of Oxford City Council, said: "Oxford's two universities have worked effectively together alongside the Director of Public Health and the City and County Councils to help bring down the number of COVID-19 cases among students. I welcome today's announcement of their test and travel approach which will enable students to join their families and be safely united for Christmas. The staggered departure arrangements will be a relief to local residents as it should help minimise travel disruption in the city."

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>

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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 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.