

HRA Update Wednesday 12 January 2022 our forty-eighth Update

Carol singing and Santa's visit on Saturday 11 December: Since Oxford's Lights Night, Highfield's streets had already become a little fairyland, alive with gold, silver and multicoloured lights of every conceivable configuration. However, undeterred by the drizzle earlier in the day, Highfield took on a new vibrance on 11 December when some 60 people gathered to sing carols to the accompaniment of our resident musicians and to meet Santa. We thank the Events Committee for organising this special event, of which refreshments are an important part. Grateful thanks are due to this year's hosts who exercised great ingenuity and treated us to a splendid selection of home-made goodies in an open-air, Covid-compliant setting with seasonal lights twinkling.



Changes to the Highway Code: As of 29 January, the Highway Code will include 8 new rules and 49 updates to existing rules. The focus is on creating a 'Hierarchy' of Road Users, giving priority to the more vulnerable, such as cyclists and pedestrians. This means that those who can do the greatest harm to others have a higher level of responsibility to reduce the danger.

Rule H1, for example, stresses that all road users have responsibility to ensure their own safety, as well as that of others, and that cyclists and those on horse-back have a responsibility to look after pedestrians. Rule H2 states that drivers, motorbike riders, cyclists and those on horse-back should give way at a junction to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross a road into which or from which they are turning. Cyclists also have to give way to pedestrians on shared-use cycle tracks.

Cyclists are now advised to ride in the centre of their lane to make themselves more visible on quiet roads and in slow-moving traffic, or on the approach to junctions when it would be unsafe for a vehicle to overtake. Another new rule designed to protect two-wheeled road users suggests that drivers should leave 1.5 metres when overtaking them at speeds of up to 30mph and should allow more space when overtaking at higher speeds.

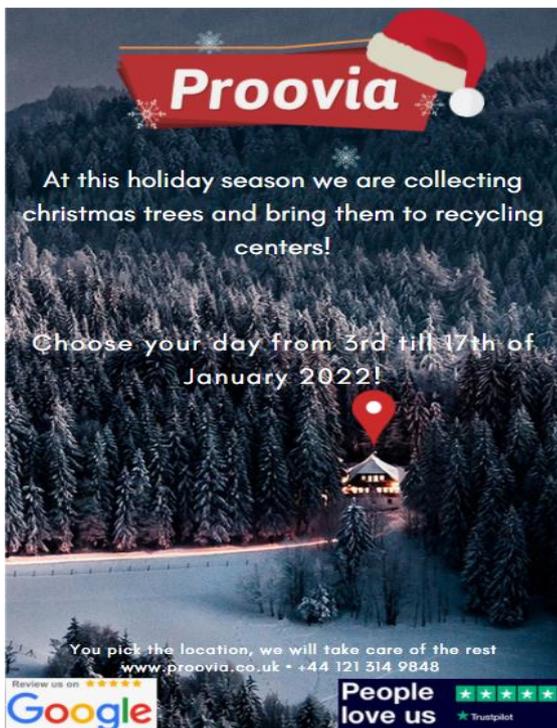
Some of the changes in favour of vulnerable road users could cause confusion, particularly if not everyone is aware of them; an example is the new rule stating that pedestrians have priority over a car as it turns into or exits a road.

Under the Road Traffic Act, the Highway Code can be used in court to establish liability in the event of an accident. This includes rules which say 'should/should not or do/ do not.' NB If you are found to be at fault in an accident as a result of not complying with the Highway Code, you may face charges in court.

The 'Dutch Reach' is recommended. Using the 'Dutch Reach' makes for a much safer way of opening the door of a parked car. It means using the opposite hand to the one that is close to the door, making one reach across the body and turn outwards, resulting in naturally seeing what is approaching from behind, reducing the risk of opening the door onto a cyclist.

Reminder about Changes to Oxford's bus network: A combination of factors has led to a revision of bus services as of 2 January 2022. Timetables, maps and information on any ticket changes or refunds that may be required, can be found at the operator websites:

- Stagecoach <http://stge.co/zC4O50GViv>
- Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel <https://www.oxfordbus.co.uk/news>



Disposal of Christmas Trees: Have you received an email from Proovia *(see left). Does it look familiar? You might have thought ‘What a good idea; I’ll book right away.’ However, remember that real Christmas trees (lights, decorations and pots removed) can be collected on green/brown bin collection days for free by the Council who will recycle them into compost. You do not need to have a brown bin subscription in order to use this service. Moreover, supposing you miss the collection days, you can always take your tree to a collection point, the nearest ones being:

- Bury Knowle Park, North Place car park
- Margaret Road Recreation Ground
- South Park, Morrell Avenue

Donor Cards no longer need be in your wallet: It is now assumed that unless a person has opted out of organ donation, they automatically agree to donate.

Banking: After victims were conned out of £1.26bn last year, banks have decided to take action in a bid to protect customers from scammers stealing our money and our identity. The recently-launched national emergency hotline number, 159, puts customers through to their banks so

they can check with an operator whether they are being targeted by fraudsters. Banks hope the new scheme will prevent money being stolen from customers, which has cost them tens of millions of pounds a year in refunds. If the 12-month pilot is successful, Stop Scams UK will ask Ofcom to make 159 a universal number, similar to 101, 111 or even 999.

ATM scams: 1 ‘Cash Trapping’: Nationwide Building Society has warned customers to be vigilant when using ATMs so as to avoid falling victim to ‘cash trapping’ – a method whereby criminals insert a device called a glue trap inside the machine, which stops the cash being dispensed.

When using an ATM, customers should ensure the cash slit is clear and if there is anything in it or covering it up, the ATM should not be used, and customers should let the bank know. They should also alert the bank if there is no flashing green or blue light when the ATM dispenses money. If anything suspicious or unusual is spotted at an ATM – “stop, don’t use it and report it immediately.

2. ‘Shoulder surfing’: When someone watches a customer entering their PIN at an ATM or in a shop, they could be waiting to steal the customer’s card. Before stealing their card, they often use distraction techniques or pickpocketing.

3. ‘Skimming’: Using a device and camera attached to an ATM fraudsters record the details from the PIN and magnetic strip of a card prior to creating a fake card with these details and using it to make cash withdrawals and purchases.

4. ‘Card trapping’: Devices that look like part of the ATM are used to capture and keep the card. Criminals may try to trick customers into re-entering their PIN while they watch so they have the information when they retrieve the card later.

Oxfordshire County Council Interactive Covid-19 Dashboard: See the facts at:

https://phdashboard.oxfordshire.gov.uk/?utm_source=YourOxfordshire&utm_campaign=41e26f4a48-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_02_26_11_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_206c6fb447-41e26f4a48-408038548

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

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 HRA Website: <https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com>
 HRA Covid-19 Support Group: hra-covid19-support@googlegroups.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 help they may need as a result of Covid-19: oxford.gov.uk/CommunityAssistance or 01865 249 811 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

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 will be circulated on an occasional basis, according to the information thought to be of relevance to members.