

NEWSLETTER

Number 78: May 2020



WORKING FROM HOME?

TUMBLING BAY KITCHEN&CAFE

WEEKLY LUNCH MENU

£5 - WOCA MEMBERS

£6.50/6 - NON MEMBERS

To receive the menu or pre-order (at least 48 hrs in advance) send email to tomas.imre@gmail.com or SMS 07772 842524.

Pick up only.

Botley Road, evening rush hour, Monday 18th May (Photo courtesy Helen White)

WOCA and the West Locality Hub—Richard Adams, Hub Coordinator



Keith, Beth, Gurbax, and Vicki outside the centre, hi-vizzes at the ready

Since the beginning of restrictions in late March the West Oxford Community Association have kindly allowed Oxford City Council to operate its West Locality Hub from the Community Centre, and Centre Manager Keith Birnie has been working with City Council Locality Hub staff in response to the current crisis. There are Locality Hubs across the city helping people affected by the restrictions to access the support they need. This may include emergency food parcels, welfare checks, leaflet drops or assisting people with more complex needs get help. All the Hubs across the city have been working very closely with OxfordTogether and their volunteers. Whether a person needs regular

shopping, prescriptions collection, a friendly phone call, OxfordTogether volunteers provide practical support and a friendly face. The arrangements for the delivery of food (breakfast, lunch and evening meal prepared by the amazing chefs at Pembroke College) have been organised from the West Hub with Council staff and colleagues from Oxford Direct Services delivering seven days a week.

We continue reach out to people who need assistance and encourage anyone who needs help to contact us on 01865 249811, via the website oxford.gov.uk or through OxfordTogether.org

Funding

WOCA supports community projects beneficial to people in West Oxford. Application forms for funding from WOCA are available from the centre office or at www.woca.org.uk. Our capacity to provide grants directly has been badly affected by the centre closure, but even if we can't help with money, we can point you in the direction of other funds that may be available to make your good idea happen, or keep it afloat.

Oxford City Council has been pulling together a list of external funding opportunities for a wide range of causes, from supporting individuals experiencing hardship during coronavirus, to community support and resilience. Visit their website at www.oxford.gov.uk and search for 'External Funding Opportunities' - please spread the word!

The list is updated regularly so it's worth checking back when you can.

If you'd like to help WOCA, one of the easiest ways to support us is to become a member—see back page for details.

Botley Bridges during lockdown – May 2020

Botley Bridges, the local family support service has been busy adapting our usual practice to continue to support families during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hayley Hayle, the Coordinator has been doing Facebook Live, interactive story & singing time sessions twice a week from her shed. These sessions have also suggested ideas for home learning including easy and cheap craft activities with everyday household items. We have had fantastic feedback from families: *"I've found these virtual sessions so important in keeping the kids connected and feeling part of the community."*



We have been running 2 Zoom Baby Groups a week for babies up to 1 year. Parents can sign up for this, share information, support each other and join in with and learn songs suitable for babies. We also include a relevant baby topic during every session such as Treasure Baskets, early language and communication and looking after yourself.

Botley Bridges also recognised that there is a brand new set of families who have given birth during the lockdown period. Not only have they not been able to access the professional support usually available to parents of a new baby, they were also missing out on family support due to social distancing regulations, in turn leading to feeling of isolation.

We are delighted to have formed a partnership with The Maple Tree at Wheatley, Donnington Doorstep, Flo in the Park, NHS Health Visitors, Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support, Oxford Sling Library, Motherkind Café and OXPIP. We are now running two weekly Zoom Baby Groups for babies born since 1st March 2020. In the first six weeks, we have 59 families signed up from all over Oxfordshire. Some of the feedback we have received is as follows:-

"It has been so isolating as a first time mum under lockdown - this group helps me feel less alone, exchange tips and advice with other new mums and build new friendships for the future"

During the stay at home period lots of people have been discovering paths and walks that they didn't know existed. A couple of volunteers have also been busy mapping walks in the local area. These are now available on the Botley Bridges website along with activity ideas to do on your walks. For further information about any of the above, see our website, www.botleybridges.org, our Facebook page or you can contact us at coordinator@botleybridges.org.uk

Your Local Democratic Representatives

Your city councillors are:

Colin Cook, 12 Riverside Rd OX2 0HU

Email cllrccook@oxford.gov.uk

☎ 721844

Susanna Pressel, 7 Rawlinson Rd OX2 6UE

Email cllrspressel@oxford.gov.uk

☎ 554001

Susanna is also your county councillor.

Your MP is **Layla Moran**:

House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA

☎ 020 7219 3905

Email layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

We'd love to hear from you

Are you part of a community group that is providing support? Or got an idea of how we can help residents to deal with the outbreak, recover collectively, or just a way to cheer everyone up?

Please contact us—details below.

☎ 01865 245761— Keith is working variable hours at the moment, but will get back to you if you leave a message 😊

Email info@woca.org.uk

Website www.woca.org.uk



What a strange time this has been and continues to be... Here at LCWO we hope you have been keeping well, and if possible, finding good moments in what is unfolding.

Even though we can't meet right now, LCWO is still busy online. We had a great zoom workshop on greening personal finances (part of our ACT Now series) in May; a video and slides are available on the website. Our workshop on emotions will be online soon, so watch this space.

The website is being kept up to date with news of online events - both a few of our own, as well as a pick of some the best opportunities being offered online by others. On the blog, you'll also find ideas for lockdown-safe activities with kids, ways to help wildlife, recent news on transport planning in the city, and more.

Find us at:

www.lowcarbonwestoxford.org.uk

Twitter: @Low_Carbon_West

www.facebook.com/lowcarbonwestoxford

What is #BuildBackBetter all about?

You might have heard the phrase 'Build Back Better' being used by campaigners with reference to what happens to our city, country, world after lockdown. The term comes from the UN and encapsulates the idea of seizing the moment of a disaster, like a tsunami, or in our case, a worldwide pandemic, as an opportunity to create a more resilient, healthier, fairer and environmentally responsible nation or society than existed before the disaster.

NEWSFLASH

- **81% of Oxford's businesses back new segregated cycle ways**
- **83% back road closures and safety measures outside schools**
- **92% back more secure cycle parking**
- **81% back new zones for outdoor tables and chairs.**

These figures come from a new survey of businesses across the city, and suggest some very positive co-benefits for active travel in our city.

At the end of May, Oxford City Council asked businesses across the city for their views on measures being considered by them and Oxfordshire County Council, to enable pedestrians and cyclists to safely maintain social distances once shops reopen. In total, 191 organisations responded, including some of Oxford's largest employers, small and large retailers and hospitality businesses, cultural organisations, NHS institutions and university colleges.

Source: www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1442/oxford-businesses-support-measures-to-improve-social-distancing-for-pedestrians-and-cyclists

There is no question this has been an incredibly challenging time for so many of us. What the #BuildBackBetter movement demands, however, is that we use it as a turning point for what comes next.

Head to www.lowcarbonwestoxford.org.uk-tag/buildbackbetter/ for blog articles about the movement in Oxford, relevant research and opportunities to get involved.

COOL FOR KIDS

There are some great **FREE online resources** emerging under lockdown, aimed at children being homeschooled.

- **KidsCAN workbooklet on climate change for Y5&6:** Downloadable workbook on climate change for Year 5 & 6 kids, based on SATs literacy revision. <http://kidsclimateaction.org>

- **Wild Days from Earthwatch:** Daily structured activities and video content to guide you through around an hour of outdoor learning that you can do in your own green space. For children aged 4-11. www.wild-days.org

- **Earth School from TedEd:** 30 quests for kids around the world to celebrate, explore and connect with nature. Topics include the food we eat, biomimicry in transport' (**did you know a Japanese bullet train's design is based on an owl, a penguin and a kingfisher?!**), and climate change explained using a giant game of Tetris. With short videos, quizzes and even the opportunity to write your own quiz on any topic, my daughter **LOVES** this resource. <https://ed.ted.com/earth-school>

- **Home learning inspiration from Oxfam:** '... fun and educational activities to use at home with children aged 7-14. Whether you are a parent looking for creative ideas during lockdown, or a teacher supporting families to learn remotely we have something for you!' www.oxfamapps.org.uk/coronavirus/education/

- **Westmill Windfarm and Solar Park learning resources on energy and renewables:** Get children engaged with the topics of energy, renewables, and sustainability. www.weset.org/?page_id=144

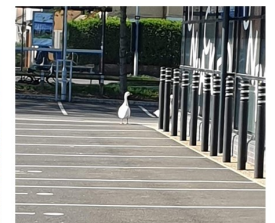
Fascinating research in a time of Covid-19: how our behaviour has changed

LCWO friend Dr Philipp Grunewald has been continuing his research into time and energy use in the home, but with a new twist - looking at what has happened to our activities, energy use and enjoyment under lockdown!

Activity patterns have changed drastically, which is not surprising, but some of the detail might be. Our days generally start one hour later than in 'normal times', and the bump that was evening peak demand for energy has lessened. We're doing a lot more gardening and screen time, and consuming more hot drinks - but strangely enough, reading less. As Phil points out, this is interesting, as when we do read, it gets a much higher enjoyment rating than screentime...

For more on his research findings, and importantly, what this means for electricity demand and renewables, **plus the chance to participate in this ongoing research**, head to the project website: www.joymeter.uk

Botley Road in lockdown...



As works begin again on the Botley Road, here are a few pictures from our lockdown gallery. Rushhour by Ruth Stavris; a Waitrose shopper by Melissa Huckins; and 3:30 on a Sunday by Neville Scrivener.

If you'd like to hear more from us, you can **sign up for our monthly e-newsletter** on our website at www.lowcarbonwestoxford.org.uk/-mailinglists/signup.

Great things (big and small) on Twenty Pound allotments in the last few months — Jude Carroll



Twenty Pound has generated vegetables and fellowship amongst growers for 150 years. I am one of a small team who look after the site and I have never seen so many people working their plots, from newborns to a 94-year-old. If you scan the site, it's mostly well-tilled soil and rows of sprouting beans. That's new. Plotholders tell me their 'highs' have been watching the lovely Spring unfold, becoming absorbed in small tasks and forgetting the strange world beyond our gates, having time to cultivate 'properly', and seeing others from



a safe distance to ask, "How are you?" then wait for an answer. The management team has had many offers to help from people who never before stepped forward – all gratefully accepted to keep this precious asset going. Of course, some plots are overgrown because some cannot or choose not to venture out. Thankfully, Oxford Hub volunteers and some locals can step in if asked. It's harder to address other issues – for example, those without homes often sit by our gates. We have had three break-ins. There was a bomb disposal unit outside last Sunday, dealing with a suspicious object in the river. This haven sits in a troubled world and lockdown is changing. Traffic on the river has restarted and noise from Tumbling Bay is ramping up. Botley Road is audible again, and some of the kids who have been busy watering vegetables are returning to school. We know this place cannot remain a haven but oh, it was valuable whilst it was.

Photos courtesy Helen White

West Side Stories...Life under Lockdown

Alexandra Road

The WhatsApp group in Alexandra Road was set up quite early under lock-down and has been spreading like a (benign) virus ever since. Through it, we've learned and shared. Highlights are – a visit from the three legged cat – lots of resources for kids – a regular update on the status of yeast in Waitrose – kefir grains and sourdough starters – Dom's Self-Isolating Indie disco every Friday night – and a socially-isolated dance in our doorways. As well as some really funny videos, we've shared cartoons, photos – lots of cats, dogs, and food! and poetry – and learned the collective noun for bassoonists. Our Street Photographer – did just that, and photographed people in their doorways, to share on WhatsApp if they like. The photos mean we can put faces to names and numbers – and realise how lovely we all are! And we have a new baby in the street. In the wider world, several fairy haunts have appeared on St Georges Field, as well as a series of lovely story book pictures pinned to trees along the cycle path. It's not all bad.

Riverside Road

We have a longstanding email group, contact by flyers from neighbours offering support, phone calls to people not on line so people in the road have been in touch regularly. Many brief and distanced catch ups have happened as people have passed in the street or even used Bullstake Stream, or when supporting shopping has been delivered. A weekly concert has been offered by the Appel family and people can watch these live or after the event and that you shouldn't need a Facebook account to do so - <https://www.facebook.com/leoappelviolinist/>

Harley Road

On the evening of 29 April someone suggested taking part in the "Somewhere over the Rainbow" singalong being organised by Horns of Plenty on May Morning. Over the next 36 hours our Harley Road WhatsApp group buzzed with excitement. Which lyrics? What key to sing in? Pianos or car sound systems, Coordinated rainbow coloured outfits from red at the top of the road to violet at the bottom, Which end is the top? Hair dye, Is No 8 in this group? etc, Over 200 WhatsApp messages later, we pulled it off. It was a riot of Green Ball gowns, Purple towels, Children in blue bins, Red coats and Purple people in the yellow section. The singing was frankly terrible, but it was a whole lot of fun and perhaps another Harley Road tradition has just been born.

Prestwich Place

Expanding the street WhatsApp group has been a great way to build community spirit and help everyone on the street to feel supported. Sharing tools, finding lost cats and spotting the local wildlife have been hot topics so far. I hope we will continue to use the group into the future to organise community events and share ideas and resources.

Mill Street area

New (or as I like to think of it, Original) Osney has vibrant email and WhatsApp groups that have really helped bring the community together during lockdown. As well as looking out and running errands for one another, these have become lively ways of swapping, borrowing and finding a new home for things, passing on community notices, seeking advice or local info, and Charlie's tune for the day. Mercifully we haven't had the flood of Covid-related requests we anticipated but it's never quiet for long . . .

More on the back page. Share your highlights of lockdown with West Side Stories: westsidestories@wocc.org.uk

WOCA COMMITTEE

Chair: Rebecca Huxley

Trustees: Elizabeth Ball, Lisa Bird, Martin Bourne, Anne Clilverd, Rebecca Huxley, Gayle Lonergan, Jim McMahon, Sarah Morgan, Helen Reid, Kate Sant, Shan Saunders, and Louise Siddle.

You can contact the committee via the Centre.

Join WOCA!

By joining, you can help keep us going and get involved in the many ways WOCA is working for West Oxford. WOCA needs your support more than ever at the moment: the current closure of the centre means there is a big hole in our budget for 2020, and every little helps!

Joining is easy – Local Membership costs just £6.00.

Just give us your name, address, and contact details, and agree to abide by our constitution (available on our website).

You can contact us via email at info@woca.org.uk, or our website at www.woca.org.uk and pay by BACS (we will provide details), or drop your details and cash or a cheque through the community centre letterbox.

St Frideswide's and St Margaret's News

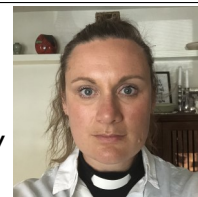
Kate Seagrave

Lockdown has impacted us all in very different ways. Some have enjoyed the break, others are desperately worried for our health, relationships or finances. On many of our streets we have reached out and supported our neighbours. Many are asking spiritual questions, many of us are more vulnerable than we ever realised, and kindness and generosity have been shown time and time again. My prayer for us all is that we find hope, healing and peace- physically, emotionally and spiritually. I have faith this is possible and that however far we still have to go through this time, we will emerge from it.

Due to the lockdown we have had to shut the church building. We are still open however online, so do check out our Facebook page and get in touch if you would like to be added to a weekly email list, a WhatsApp prayer group or would appreciate someone to talk to

and some spiritual support.

W: www.osneybenefice.org
E: osneybenefice@outlook.com
P: 07765 175164
F: www.facebook.com/St.FrideswideOxford



Sponsorship/Advertising

We're hoping to produce the newsletter more regularly, and in colour—but that costs WOCA time and money, and relies a lot on volunteers.

Do you have a bit of time to help get more sponsors and advertising for the newsletter? Or are you a local business that could help with an ad? Contact us for more details (see bottom of page 2)

....more 'West Side Stories'...

Henry Road

From small beginnings mid-March, the group has grown to include nearly all the houses in Henry Road. We have two musicians in the street, so our Thursday "claps for key workers" is also a singalong and a chance for a socially distant chat with neighbours, as are birthdays and other events like May Morning and VE Day.

We share information (such as which shops have essential items or small queues); books, gardening stuff, surplus food, DIY equipment and such like, as well as more light-hearted stuff, plus requests for - and offers of - help for all sorts of things.

Our lockdown portrait photography project is going strong with households pictured outside their homes, each writing a few paras about themselves, how long they've lived in Henry Road and a comment about life in lockdown. It's a lovely way to get to know each other a bit better!

Duke Street / Marlborough Court

The WhatsApp group brings together three physically connected streets of West Oxford. Spreading messages from Oxford Hub and lessening the feelings of isolation and distance people may have during this time, our group quickly grew to share ideas, plants, and practical information. We offer support, lend and borrow everything from pressure washers to piping bags, and there's also space for a bit of joking around too. Many of us knew each other before the lockdown but one silver lining of this situation is that we are now much better connected to our neighbours, and we intend to keep these lines of communication open post-Corona, whenever that may be. Any resident who isn't already a member is very much welcome!

Earl Street part of the Duke St etc WhatsApp group and email group

Wonderful weather – I needn't have packed my raincoat! Finding the local customs a little weird, though. Once a week they all pop out of their houses and make a dreadful noise with saucepans and the like. Maybe to scare off evil spirits? The local wildlife is fantastic: blackbirds, badgers, coal tits, and a very long, very colourful species of snake....

