

## Opening Doors – Widening Horizons

for people with physical and sensory disabilities

Summer 2015

### Welcome to the Summer 2015 Newsletter



### The Lord Mayor charity fund presentation

Hazel and Lilian from Unlimited, Hannah and Martin from Restore, visited the Lord Mayor Mohammed Obassi and Civic secretary Jane Stubbs in the Lord Mayors chambers at the Town Hall. Lilian accepted the Lord Mayor's cheque on behalf of Unlimited, Hannah accepted the one for Restore and we had a very interesting informal hour talking about the events of the year and our future plans.

The Lord Mayor and Jane very kindly gave us advice on future funding possibilities. We thanked them for all their support and photos were taken. It has been an amazing year as one of the Lord Mayor's charities, taking part in events, lots of promotion and receiving kind donations from many organisations.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the Lord Mayor's events and to those who donated to our charity. Vodafone, Oxford City council Fleet & Maintenance team, Waitrose at Headington, Oxford University Newcomers club, Showmans Guild, Currys superstore, Paul Bakery, D.F.S., Regal community centre and attendees at the Carol service, the Lord Mayors & councillors reception and the Lord Mayors dinner.

Our thanks also to all the City Council staff who worked tirelessly with Jane Stubbs to make sure that each event went off without a hitch and everyone enjoyed themselves

The Oxfordshire Sports Partnership Disability and Inclusive Sport Newsletter aims to keep you informed and updated on the latest information.

We welcome any comments, questions and contributions so please send your news and information for the next edition to...

[disability@oxfordshiresport.org](mailto:disability@oxfordshiresport.org)

Lucy Tappin Disability and Youth Sports Officer. Our mailing address is:

Oxfordshire Sports Partnership. C/O Community Services Directorate, Oxford City Council, Horspath Road, Oxford, OX4 2RH



### THE OXFORD TALKING NEWSPAPER FOR THE BLIND

We are very pleased to announce Oxtalk was re-launched on Tuesday 12 May, the weekly recording will be produced every Tuesday night at the Resource Centre, at Oxfordshire Association for the Blind.

Oxtalk listeners should receive the yellow pouch and memory stick by the weekend. The recording will also be available to listen to on the website each Wednesday morning following the recording [www.oxtalk.org.uk](http://www.oxtalk.org.uk)

The majority of Oxtalk's volunteers are able to continue offering their time to record and copy the weekly news plus we have some new volunteers. For volunteering opportunities please contact Ray on 01865 765609 [jr\\_anson@hotmail.com](mailto:jr_anson@hotmail.com)

For enquiries on behalf of new listeners or for self-referral please contact Bridget on 01865 750797 or email [mail@oxtalk.org.uk](mailto:mail@oxtalk.org.uk)

We look forward to producing Oxtalk for many more years and thank our new partner, Oxfordshire Association for the Blind [OAB], for offering Oxtalk the use of the Resource Centre facilities.

Margaret A Simpson chair of Oxtalk.



### Abingdon Towpath

Unlimited working with the Vale Disability Access Group There is now a wheel chair accessible rout to the east side of the Thames towpath from Bridge Street. Also on this route a newly built universal toilet. Coin operated with an over-riding radar key access for disabled customers.

My moan is about a disabled WC (sorry! WC for disabled people – I don't want to use a WC that is broken!). The offending loo is in Doncaster, someway from Oxford but the loo was so awful it was laughable (well, not really). I arrived early with friends in Doncaster to attend an AGM (Rescue), so we went to a hotel for coffee. The hotel (and the coffee) were fine; no complaints. But, the loo was the worst I have ever seen! The door lock didn't lock, so I had to prop the door shut with my crutch (difficult to enter if I needed help). Immediately in front of the pan was a cleaners bucket (containing yucky water and a mop), this had to be moved. By the side of the loo was a collection of vacuum cleaners and other cleaning materials, chairs, stores, etc.; the room was packed, no way could a wheel chair get in, let alone be wheeled alongside the loo. The pan's contents were disgusting, I realised why when I'd finished – the flush did not work! Also, the 'red emergency pull cord' was tied up so unusable (recently I even had to complain to my GP's surgery about this problem). I shall send a copy of this to the hotel, and to the town's access officer. If you come across an Oxfordshire disabled WC even half as bad as this, please report it.

Are you paying too much for respite care? Do you know that OCC is paying over 20% less than a self-funder for the same accommodation? This is not EQUALITY! Comments welcome.

**OXTRAG successes in early 2015** - do come and join us! Our aim is to make Oxfordshire a county where highways & transport are easily accessible by all. Come and support or join us via OXTRAG@gmail.com or by phoning 01865 815576.

No experience is needed – just an interest in making things more inclusive. Membership is free and others will support you. You will meet a friendly group of people, gain experience which could lead to a career path and appreciation for your knowledge and skills.

In Unlimited's spring 2015 Newsletter Oxfordshire Transport & Access Group sought new contributors.

Recently we have: **Updated** our 'Secret shopper'. **Hosted presentations** (from National Express, Business Development, LTP4 & Vulnerable Road User Auditors). **Championed legal challenges** against poor transport services or provisions. **Contributed to national seminars** (Excel & TFA). Identified a new route to town for the relocated **Oxford City Shopmobility** scheme. Assisted **accessible station infrastructure** design. (TFL's workshop "what makes a good step-free station" and individual projects locally). Lobbied for **replacement bridges** (under rail electrification changes) to be accessible. Contributed to multiple **developers schemes** (including Orchard Centre Didcot, Great Western Park, Westgate Oxford & Oxford Regeneration Showcase/ projects). Written **Oxon Developer Guidance**. **Input into strategic County Council documents** (e.g. LTP3 a & 4 also Connecting Oxfordshire – a transport vision for the future). Addressed **individuals issues** (mostly difficulties with using Bus stops and buses). Helped re-promote **Helping Hands Journey Assistance Cards**. **Spoken at meetings** (e.g. CDC Forum, have bookings in July & October). **Taken-up training opportunities** e.g. Dementia training/ friends. Developed an **OXTRAG website & Logo's**. Used **Fix my Street** to report street issues. Contributed to many **countryside footpath** developments & supported multiple community car schemes. **Linked with other groups** (e.g. DAG & MIGWAL). Encouraged E&E Supported transport programme to consider a **travel training scheme** which could include the **travel with confidence/buddy scheme**. Been included in the Oxford Bus Company win of the **Access for All Award** from the Beautiful South Awards 2014.

**We have a list of projects awaiting resource so please do join us and help address yet more issues!**



Contact Dave Holmes (Membership secretary) for membership details and events  
Email: [membership@unltdox.org](mailto:membership@unltdox.org) Tel: 0800 044 8192





**Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS)** is the only independent charity which speaks up for the interests of disabled people in Buckinghamshire. We are really pleased to be creating links with Oxford Unlimited and hope that we will be able to help and support one another to benefit disabled people in both areas.

BuDS focuses on removing barriers and finding answers. Most of the people who run and volunteer for BuDS are disabled people. This means that we can use our combined experience and specialist knowledge to make change happen. We use a collaborative approach with a variety of different organisations to help us fund projects which disabled people have told us are important to them. As a result we always have lots of projects on the go and some of these include:

**Fair4All Taxis and Minicabs** – a quality assurance scheme to ensure disabled people receive fair and good quality service.

**Benefits Information Events** – free talks updating people about the massive welfare reforms that are taking place.

**Access Everywhere** – including working with local access groups and creating the first ever fully accessible footpath – The Stoke Mandeville Way.

**Disability Hate Crime** – including working with 2 local schools to create posters which will be displayed at blue badge parking bays.

**Services project** – Monitoring NHS and council services for disabled people, providing constructive criticism and feedback so they can make improvements.

You can find out more about these projects, and everything else that we do, at our website [www.buds.org.uk](http://www.buds.org.uk)  
We look forward to working more with Oxford Unlimited in the future.

Liz Hobbs (Trustee and Charity Secretary)

**Are you experiencing difficulties with managing in your current home?**

**Do you know what options are available to you to improve your situation?**

**Would you like to know what options are available for you?**

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/housingoptions](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/housingoptions)

Ask for a copy of the Housing Options guide for adults with a physical disability from your district council office:

Cherwell District Council - 01295 227001

Oxford City Council - 01865 249811

South Oxfordshire District Council - 01491 823000

Vale of White Horse District Council - 01235 520202

West Oxfordshire District Council - 01993 861010

**Fed up with PALS not working for you?**

Why not try this direct approach, write to the Chief Executive: Making a formal complaint <http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/about/complaints.aspx#complaints>.

**Please put your complaint in writing to:**

Chief Executive, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, Headley Way, Headington, Oxford OX3 9DU

Email: [complaints@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@ouh.nhs.uk)

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**What happens**

**next?** We take all complaints very seriously and will conduct a thorough investigation. We will then respond to you as quickly as possible. We

may contact you when we receive your complaint to discuss it further. We will formally acknowledge your complaint within three working days. We will do our best to give you a full reply as quickly as possible, usually within 25 working days. In our reply, we will try to tell you what action we are taking to make sure the problem you raised does not happen again. The fact that you have complained will not adversely affect your treatment and your complaint is not kept in your medical notes. Help with making a formal complaint Raising a concern (pdf, 295 KB).

**Making a formal complaint** (Easy Read leaflet) (pdf, 288 KB) SEAP (Independent Health Complaints Advocacy). SEAP can help you write your complaint and can provide someone to come to meetings with you. **Tel: 0300 343 5718** <http://www.seap.org.uk/services/nhs-complaints-advocacy/>

Email: [oxfordshire@seap.org.uk](mailto:oxfordshire@seap.org.uk)



**Insurance**  
Should it be an optional extra?



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## VERA Scheme

VERA scheme focuses on identifying, reassuring and providing advice to vulnerable or elderly residents who may have been victims of crime or who may, for any reason, be at heightened risk. Some residents may have mobility or health problems or memory loss which may lead to police helping them, for instance if they have a fall at home behind locked doors, if there is a sudden flood risk or if they become lost or confused.

The scheme records and securely holds contact details for family, carers and key holders for each resident on the scheme. Should these contact details be needed urgently if police get a call, we can help a resident more quickly. We can also sign post residents towards other agencies depending on their individual requirements and situations. If you would like to be registered on the scheme or hear more about it, please contact PC Jan Warner by calling 101 (if not on duty, please ask to leave a message) or via the neighbourhood policing team on [OxfordCentralNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:OxfordCentralNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

## National Mobile Property Register and Immobilise

Holding the details of over 28 million items of property, the free Immobilise property registration service is a very powerful tool in the fight against crime. Since launching in 2003, it has been directly linked to the Police NMPR (National Mobile Property Register), which allows officers to search the serial numbers of recovered goods or suspected stolen property. Register your valuables with [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)  
Cycle Crime Register your bike make, model, frame number & photo now online at [www.bikeregister.com](http://www.bikeregister.com)

**'Food For Thought'** meetings are a monthly informal forum for people who use health and social care services to talk about the support they get, and how it could be improved - open to anyone over 16 using health and social care services. You decide what to talk about. You help shape the future. The meeting starts at 6.30pm at West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Rd, Oxford OX2 0BT. Good wheelchair/buggy access and plenty of parking, 5 minutes' walk from Oxford Railway Station. Light refreshments are provided. Numbers limited so please let us know if you are coming. Keith Birnie Community Glue, 106 - 108 Cowley Road, Oxford. OX4 1JE. To find out the dates of the meetings and further details. **Tel 07791 583020.**

## Exercise on Prescription

Did you know it is possible to get a 12 week course of exercise prescribed by your GP? The scheme is available all over Oxfordshire and it is subsidised so it does work out cheaper, most people can take part but the GP has the final decision on referring you (there is a list of criteria they have to sign off on). As soon as you have your referral book two appointments with the specialist instructor at your local centre, the first is to meet and agree a plan, the second is take you through your plan on gym equipment, these are one-to-one with plenty of time to ask questions. I have been taking part since last autumn through the Fusion Leisure Centres (part of Oxford City Council) which means I can choose to go to three gyms - Marston Ferry in Summertown, Barton Centre and the new Blackbird Leys Centre. I have tried out the first two and have felt welcome at both. I have never been to a gym before. I now actually enjoy going. My balance and fitness has improved which has had a positive impact on my daily life. At the centres there is level access throughout with wide doors, they are near to bus stops and have parking. There are accessible changing rooms and easy pool access by ladder or a hoist (set up pool side by the friendly staff).

For more information about the scheme.

**Phone Oxford City council 01865 249811**

<http://www.oxfordshiresport.org/exercise>

By Joanna Matthews.

**Tim's Transport** is one of the leading suppliers of Specialist transport, approved by all Gloucestershire authorities. Fully licenced, registered and insured, their vehicles are adapted with all equipment for outstanding passenger safety and comfort. Unlimited invited this organisation to do a presentation at the Coffee Caffe which is held on second Thursday of each month at the Christian centre, Lyndsay Drive, Peachcroft, Abingdon from 2pm-4pm. Tel: 0800 044 8192 for details. We are aware that accessible transport is a major issue for people with disabilities in Oxfordshire and Tim's have expressed interest in exploring the idea of operating in our County. Tim's Transport pride themselves on offering clients a responsive and competent service, with competitive pricing and designated drivers.

Telephone **01452 739097**

Email [enquiries@tims-transport.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@tims-transport.co.uk)

Contact details: <http://www.unltdox.org/> email: [membership@unltdox.org](mailto:membership@unltdox.org)  
[treasurer@unltdox.org](mailto:treasurer@unltdox.org) [info@unltdox.org](mailto:info@unltdox.org) Tel: 0800 044 8192



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