



## **Annual Report of the Trustees of the Society for year to 31/12/2008**

During another very busy year in Oxford, the Society has continued its programme of varied and well-attended events. These included 8 open speaker meetings, 7 members' visits, nearly all repeated by popular demand, and 6 walks with 12 repeats.

75 new members kept the total membership remarkably steady at 948, and we were joined by six new corporate members.

The Planning Sub-Committee continued to meet fortnightly, scrutinising around half of the 2700 planning applications submitted to the City Council, and sending detailed written comments on 118 of them, around the same proportion as in previous years. The Sub-Committee's other activities: pre-application discussions, consultations with city and county council officers during the development of new plans, verbal representations at the City Council's Area and other Committees and at various Appeal Hearings, have continued unabated.

We have maintained our links with the Civic Trust, the newly revived Civic Trust South East and the Association of North Thames Amenity Societies.

Our involvement with Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Board, on which we are represented and for which we provide the administrative support, has continued. Nine new plaques were unveiled during the year.

The work of the OxClean group has been the major achievement of the year. The highlight of their programme to promote a cleaner greener city was the Spring Clean weekend in March, when 94 community groups, approximately 1500 citizens, turned out to clean the city of litter. Our partnership with the Oxford Times who provided regular weekly publicity, and with the City Works Department who over a Friday, Saturday and Sunday executed the extraordinary programme of deliveries of equipment and collections of all the gathered waste – including 3000kg of scrap metal – was a significant innovation in partnership working and an organisational triumph. The group have continued their campaign with a programme of school visits and competitions, and new initiatives to tackle eating and drinking 'on the go', fly-tipping and cigarette butts. We look forward to an even more impressive Spring Clean in March 2009.

The Travel Behaviour Group has continued its work on the quality of bus stops, publishing its widely acclaimed booklet 'The Bus Stops Here,' the influence of which is already to be seen. The group has also studied bus connectivity within the city, with the aid of questionnaires completed by members, and has recently published its findings in another booklet which it is hoped will carry weight with the bus operators and council planners. Oxfordshire County's plans for 'Transform Oxford' have also been scrutinised and commented on.

The Communications Group has continued to develop our website. The Society's working papers and publications are now rapidly accessible in this form – all part of our efforts to improve our service to members, and to extend the ease and speed of our communication with other bodies.

## **Financial Review**

The accounts continue to show a satisfactory state of affairs overall with income exceeding expenditure by £912. This surplus is less than 2007 and reflects the increased activities of the Society and the effects of inflation.

On the income side of the account general subscription income is slightly down but Corporate membership income at £620 has provided a welcome boost to our funds. Income from other sources has remained largely unchanged.

On the expenditure side some costs continue to increase: printing of the newsletter and other publications and the associated postage costs; general administration costs; primarily because we are doing more. The net costs of supporting the OxClean initiative rose to £856 in 2008.

Despite these increases in expenditure there is once more a surplus for the year. The Trustees remain confident that the Society has adequate income and reserves to support an expanding level of activities to meet the challenges of the future. The accounts have been examined as required by the Charity Commission and the Trustees of the Society approved them on the 3rd February 2009.

The Report was approved by the Trustees on

Chairman of Trustees

Hon Secretary