



Annual Report of the Trustees of the Society for year to 31/12/2009

During 2009 the Society celebrated its 40th anniversary with an enhanced series of very well attended events, culminating in a day conference: "Oxford Architecture – The Last Forty Years" attended by over 150 members and guests.

Membership continued to rise to a year end total of 971.

The Planning Sub-Committee continued to meet fortnightly, scrutinising as usual around half of all planning applications – increased this year to 2834, including important proposals from Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University and some Oxford Colleges. Written comments were submitted on 87 applications. The important service of advising individuals on their planning problems was maintained.

Once again, the Sub-Committee devoted considerable time to 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 Appeal Hearings. Additional involvements this year were with the public examination of the City's *Proposed Core Strategy* (still not resolved) and with the City's *Regeneration Framework*.

We have participated in the efforts to replace the defunct Civic Trust through the Civic Societies Initiative and have continued to support 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. This year eight new plaques were unveiled.

The OxClean group repeated the success of 2008's Spring Clean weekend with a similar, but even more effective, event on March 6/7th. With around 100 local groups of widely differing composition participating, the weight of general litter collected throughout the city increased by 25% and of recyclables by 37%. This campaign is now firmly established in the City Works programme, and enjoys strong publicity through our media partner *The Oxford Times*. In addition, the group has maintained a close link with the City Centre Manager and City Works over the special problems of cleanliness in the city centre, and has continued its efforts to reduce the litter scattered around the ring road.

The Travel Behaviour Group took part in a number of consultations on the County Council's plans for "*Transform Oxford*" particularly concerning pedestrianisation and revised bus services, following the publication of our study of *Bus Connectivity in Oxford*. We have also contributed to the early stages in the development of Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 3.

At the city council's request, a sub group has taken over responsibility for the city's Streets for People campaign and, working with city officers and our media partners, facilitated 13 street parties and other events associated with European Mobility Week. We plan to stimulate more extended participation in 2010.

In addition to the support and publicity given to all our activities, the Communications Group has continued to develop and update our website, extend our electronic communication with members, and improve both the quality and size of our Newsletters.

Early in 2009, the future of the Museum of Oxford was threatened when the City Council halved the Museum budget for 2009-10 and proposed closure from April 2010. We immediately organised a group of voluntary helpers to assist the reduced staff in maintaining the programme of openings, and campaigned for the Museum's survival: in response to which a steering group was set up to explore a more stable and sustainable future. So far, a continuing budget for 2010-11 has been proposed, and we are involved in the work which is proceeding on the longer term prospects. We expect this to be a continuing commitment for the Society.

Financial Review

The 2009 accounts show a healthy surplus of Income over Expenditure of £2748.04, a trebling of the previous year's surplus of £912.32. Detailed comments below explain how this came about.

Dealing first with income: the overall income from all subscriptions, ordinary and corporate, is up by £237. This is despite a small drop in ordinary subscriptions which underlines the fact that the way to increase our subscription income is by attracting more corporate members. The programme in our 40th anniversary year was much expanded and as a result the income (profit) generated has gone up from £720 in 2008 to £4184 in 2009, transforming the overall outcome for the financial year. Income from the sale of cards is reduced this year, down from £618 in 2008 to £161 in 2009. Gift Aid income has increased a little. Income from our Deposit Account has been hit hard by the general reduction in interest rates, down from £1251 in 2008 to £311 in 2009.

Raising money by getting grants to support the various initiatives that we have started/continued is an important function of the various groups involved and this year they have been very successful. Oxclean raised £3205 to part defray their costs of £5050 and a grant of £500 was obtained for the Streets for People initiative. Valuable financial support was received from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation and Oxford City Council.

Moving now to expenditure, the costs of the Newsletter increased by £895 in 2009 as the quality and content were improved. It should be noted that costs in 2010 are expected to go back to the 2008 level. The cost of meetings rose in 2009 as we celebrated our anniversary but there were savings against the previous year's expenditure on administration and publications. A donation of £250 was made to the Civic Society Initiative which has been created to assist societies following the demise of the Civic Trust. The cost of supporting the ever expanding Oxclean programme increased to £1845. Other costs remained broadly the same.

Despite the 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 2nd February 2010.

The Report was approved by the Trustees on

Chairman of Trustees

Hon Secretary