

PRESENTATION TO OXFORD CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON MONDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2012 BY OXFORD SAFER MASTS GROUP

As residents of Donnington we were dismayed last autumn to discover a 3G mobile phone mast had been erected outside the Peugeot Garage on Iffley Road with no public consultation apart from letters to a couple of households on either side of the site although the emissions from the mast extend over several hundred yards. This prompted us to look further into what was going on in Oxford in terms of the siting of masts and the Ofcom map of the area revealed that there were already over 40 mobile phone masts within a square mile of the city centre last summer.

We then had access to the list of new Roll Out plans for 3G masts which was circulated to Councillors in the Autumn and which lists 200 new and very powerful masts which had already been built and were sited either in the city centre or in areas of dense population near homes and schools. The list includes such sites as: Barnardo's Store Cowley Road, Boswells, the Gipsy Lane Campus and Walton Well Road among 196 other such sites.

Scientific evidence strongly suggests that the higher frequency services like 3G and Tetra are more dangerous to humans, especially children than the earlier models of masts which were already highly controversial. It appears that not only was there no public consultation about this development whatsoever but that attempts have actually been made to disguise the presence of the masts from the eyes of the public. They do not appear currently on the Ofcom map of masts and many are disguised so that the public have no idea they are there, as well as their emissions obviously being invisible.

Residents of Oxford are therefore facing unprecedented and alarmingly high levels on exposure to microwave radiation about which most people are blissfully unaware. This is in addition to the personal use from mobile phones, wireless broadband, wi fi, cordless phones, digiboxes and soon to be brought in Smart Meters. 3G is soon to be replaced by 4G nationally which will demand even stronger and more powerful frequencies in masts.

We are aware that there is intense pressure from the telecom companies, media marketing and government to increase everyones instant access to information through Smart Phones and other rapidly evolving technologies and that an increasing number of people now use these and are finding it impossible to survive without them. However, it would appear that the significant body of scientific research from around the world which highlights the many health risks associated with exposure to pulsed microwaves is being largely ignored by both local and central government. Much of this research is published on the Powerwatch and Mast Sanity websites.

A new Council of Europe Resolution, passed in May 2011, calls for a dramatic reduction in human exposure to Electro-Magnetic Frequencies and microwave radiation from mobile phones and other wireless devices. This Resolution makes a strong call for properly applying the precautionary principle / approach to EMFs - both from electric power and from wireless communications technologies, something that all governments have so far completely failed to do. The Stewart Report makes similar recommendations.

Any encouragement by telecom companies, planners and government to promote wireless technologies needs to be balanced with serious consideration of the health risks involved. Common symptoms,(which have been widely researched and reported on and some of

which we have noticed in Donnington) include sleep disruption, memory loss, headaches, tiredness, adrenal problems, behaviour changes in children, epilepsy, nosebleeds and skin complaints. Generally children are considered to be more susceptible than adults because of their developing nervous system, and so need our extra protection. More serious diseases such as childhood leukaemia has been found to be linked to proximity to masts and animals are also not immune. Major diseases such as diabetes and cancer are rising to epidemic proportions in Britain and there is a growing body of evidence to link exposure to pulsed microwaves as a significant factor in the development of these diseases.

Even the World Health Organisation, usually a very conservative body, has recently stated that Radio Frequency energy exposure is a “possible human carcinogenic”. Over the last 10 years there has been a 25% increase in cancer rates in Oxford City according to the Oxford Times last autumn. Could there be a connection?? Cancer is now the biggest cause of early death in Oxford.

We are concerned about the Donnington mast and would prefer it to be moved to an area of less dense population. However, in view of the intense proliferation of masts city-wide we are more concerned about the City Council’s strategy for all its citizens and its understanding of its “duty of care”. There are alternatives such as increased use of satellites and fibre optic cables to create safe communication networks which several other European countries, notably Germany and Austria are leading the way in. As Oxford is a city of learning, of science and of innovation we would expect our leaders to inform themselves of the issues, look at the approaches taken by councillors in other authorities and seek to adopt a 'best practice' policy even if central government is choosing to ignore this significant risk to public health.