

To: Council

Date: 29 April 2019

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers. Including written and summarised verbal responses from Board Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Board members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda.

Addresses in part 2

1. Address by Alistair Morris – Climate Emergency and more trees
2. Address by Dr Graham Jones - procedures for assessing minor planning and licensing applications
3. Address by Izzy and Kamila – dealing with climate change
4. Address by Artwell – IHRA declaration and twinning with Ramallah
5. Address by Judith Harley – Cowley Marsh Car Park Consultation

Addresses in part 2

1. Address by Alistair Morris – Climate Emergency and more trees

Hi, my name is Alistair Morris from Marston. I would like to thank the Council for declaring a Climate Emergency. My reason for speaking to Council is to raise awareness about the huge potential of trees in the city. We all realise the seriousness of Climate Breakdown and the need to do much more to combat it. One of the best ways to offset the carbon emissions is to plant many more trees.

Trees capture carbon and mitigate Climate Change, they improve air quality significantly, and they reduce the summer air temperatures in cities by several degrees. To get life threatening temperatures rises under control we almost need to go on a war footing.....

IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) say we've got 11.5 years

XR (Extinction Rebellion) say we've only got 6 years !!!

Where there is a WILL there is a WAY !

So, I propose /suggest/plead that we ALL work constructively, urgently and effectively together to achieve this. For this outcome we need to be far more creative, imaginative and proactive. Let's not think of problems BUT solutions, let's think laterally and out of the box.

So my BIG thing is TREES , lots of trees. It is a FACT that they are one of the most effective ways of tackling Climate Change. 1 trillion trees across the globe would totally cure the current temperature rise in global warming. My HOPE and your aim should be to plant 10,000 more trees around the City, and my personal ambition is to plant 1000 trees in Marston. I will pledge to plant this number with your help and support.

This can be easily done, if there is the will power, co-operation and SUPPORT from everyone. There is plenty of space eg sections of the City's Parks, roadside verges, the edges of playing fields, etc. We have just recently secured permission from City Parks to plant a small community woodland in New Marston Recreational Ground. This is good news, but we can and should be doing far far more. Community Groups, volunteers and local residents can all help, - we NEED to do this.

If the council could help supply trees and recommend the most suitable tree types and perhaps suggest /recommend/ agree best locations then we can get on with this. Because trees take time to grow and we only have 11 years, we should be trying to implement this part of the solution NEXT autumn/winter , so we should start planning for this immediately.

10,000 trees might seem daunting but it really isn't that difficult to plant that number. The important consideration is the after care. But we need to encourage everyone to get involved, and community groups would be a good start, along with interested individual residents. We need to give more power and responsibility to our citizens by organising planting crews and aftercare groups, even using Council equipment out of hours, with possibly volunteer staff supervision. ?

There may be complications with insurance, liability, care and legality BUT these can be resolved ... WHERE THERE IS A WILL, THERE WILL BE A WAY.

In conjunction, and in support of this I would like you to seriously consider introducing a 100m buffer zone of instead of "Ring of Steel ", of "Ring of Trees!" around the whole of the city before any further development occurs. This would have the benefit of keeping the city boundary distinct, break up urban sprawl, make for a more attractive and healthier environment and soak up pollution. You could insist on this before more expansion occurs and that developers incorporate this into their plans, even at a greater cost... NEEDS MUST!

You could also create a circular cycle track and walking/running track around this city, I'm sure this would prove to be extremely popular. Let's make Oxford more green and an even more pleasant place to live as well as firmly demonstrating the City's total commitment to seriously tackling Climate Change !

We all need to do this and we need to do it NOW, not tomorrow, not next week, NOT NEXT YEAR ! Thank you,

Alistair Morris

PS can we give Greta the freedom of the City! 😊

Written Response from Councillor Hayes

As Mr Morris points out Urban trees provide multiple functional benefits in relation to climate change, including:

- Sequestration of atmospheric carbon
- Reduction of local air temperature and hence reducing the risk of overheating
- Interception of urban storm water run-off;

Trees can play a role in offsetting carbon emission in the city as each new tree absorbs carbon and stores it. Each single tree has the potential to sequester 1 ton of carbon dioxide by the time it is 40 years old. Trees also provide us with opportunities for adaptation to climate change through the protection against flooding and excess heat.

We welcome the call for an improved Urban Forest and as a land owner we are working to ensure that opportunities for appropriate tree planting is taken on our sites. We have already planted trees across many of our parks and made management changes which sees more wildflowers and less intensively managed land.

Through our role as a Local Planning Authority we also seek opportunities to ensure trees are planted as part of many planning proposals.

To really understand the value of the Cities trees and to inform our future planning of Oxford's Urban Forest we have undertaken a Tree Canopy Cover Assessment and i-Tree Eco Project survey of the entire tree population in the city with the aim of assessing existing baseline tree cover, identifying the key characteristics of the tree population and to quantify the functional ecosystem benefits provided by trees.

The field study for this project will be completed in Summer 2019. Initial results (yet to be published) have found that there are an estimated 248,000 public and privately owned trees in the city. Common ash is the most common species representing 10.9% of the tree population. Average canopy cover across the city is approximately 21.4%, but it ranges locally from a low of 11.4% in Lye Valley Ward to almost 30% in Headington Northway Ward. It is estimated that the Oxford Urban Forest sequesters 1902 metric tons of carbon of carbon per year and stores 66300 metric tons of carbon.

This confirms that Oxford's Urban Forest is really important. Of course much of the forest and tress are in private ownership and we therefore all need to work in partnership to maintain, improve and increase the extent of the city's urban forest. The active lead your community group have taken is a great example of what can be done when we work together and I congratulate you on your achievements.

Summary of verbal response from Councillor Hayes

Thank you for this and I support your view that trees are helpful in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Thank you for your and your community group's work and input.

2. Address by Dr Graham Jones - procedures for assessing minor planning and licensing applications

Lord Mayor, I and fellow residents hope to persuade Council to review the procedures for assessing minor planning and licensing applications relating to licensed premises in residential areas.

The James Street Tavern, between James Street and Crown Street off Cowley Road, has a beer garden where drinking is permitted but which has been rarely used as such.

In November the owners, Greene King, applied for planning permission for signage advertising 'The Yard at James Street Tavern' and 'Street Food'. It was approved by officers as a minor matter on January 29th.

On February 1st a planning application was made for a minor variation of the pub's layout, replacement of structures behind the pub, seating, paving, large overhead sail-covers, barbecue, and fairy lights criss-crossing the car-park. Again, dealt with by an officer. Not called it in to committee.

On February 28th a third application sought a change in the licence to cover the alterations. This too was dealt with by officers, not brought to licensing panel.

The owners sought publicity about refurbishment through the Oxford Mail, which reported their intention to improve the pub's image and the 'offer' to residents.

What was not said, but would have become very clear to anyone viewing the applications together, is that the plan was to open a sort of Tivoli Gardens in the middle of a residential neighbourhood, with all the attendant noise and glare.

Businesses may operate as they wish, within the constraints of statute, and in a different area the scheme might have been welcome. The owners are to be applauded for renovating the property and investing in our area.

However, sandwiched between two residential streets is no place for a beer garden, even if 50 yards from Cowley Road in what some regard as 'party city'. There are young children growing up in these houses and people in old age. People in Crown Street already have their fill of noise and bad behaviour from the Swan. At the James Street Tavern recently a drunken party of men outside the pub left after two hours' rowdiness, openly urinating on cars, walls, and in the middle of the road. A resident of Crown Street says they fear now having noise and disturbance in front of their house and at the rear. No council notices of the applications were posted in Crown Street, just one outside the pub.

The new business model is evident in the signage: neon lit and stencilled lettering in designer grunge, matching the drab grey which has replaced the smart white of the pub's Victorian facade, and advertising not a garden but a yard. Serving food is welcome, but it is burgers and crêpes, more fast food in a neighbourhood drowning in fast food. 'Street Food' hints at yet more litter.

Officers acted properly. Conditions were imposed and plans revised: no music, additional lighting, or use of the yard after 10.30pm, and removal of sail-covers and fairy-lights, but only after I, and ward councillors I alerted, objected to the applications at a very late stage, having understood they were for an up-market gastro-pub and ignorant of the beer garden plans. Procedures seem not conducive to 'joined-up' administration. Had the three 'minor' applications been viewed in relation to each other, the scheme could have been assessed holistically, brought to committee and licensing panel, and stronger conditions debated to better protect the public realm and neighbours' interests.

The police, hard-pushed in East Oxford to contain the epidemic of drug and alcohol abuse, have for years, with the support of ward councillors and residents, worked hard to uphold the area's Alcohol Saturation Policy. They may have wished to speak to the licensing panel about the doubling of the pub's drinking area, while incidentally leaving just one ladies toilet and none for the disabled.

I urge Council to remit this issue of procedures to Scrutiny Committee so that similar schemes can be subject to improved governance. The current system incentivises the trade to submit a succession of small incremental changes so they can all be classed as 'minor' and thereby avoid proper scrutiny and public accountability.

Thank you, Lord Mayor, and for Council's hoped-for response.

Written Response from Councillor Hollingsworth

Planning and licensing legislation is not interdependent, so applications cannot be 'joined' together and decided together, even though they relate to the same premises.

Decisions on Minor Variation applications are dealt with by licensing officers acting on behalf of the Licensing Authority and there is no provision in the legislation for the application to be decided by a committee. Each application is considered on its own merits, but the minor variation must not have an adverse effect on the promotion of any of the licensing objectives and if more than one variation is proposed, none of them, whether considered separately or together should have an adverse effect on the licensing objectives (for clarity the licensing objectives are: the prevention of crime and disorder; Public safety; the prevention of public nuisance; the protection of children from harm).

To ensure a joined up approach the General Licensing Team opens consultation for each application and seek comments from Responsible Authorities – Planning, Police, Fire Rescue, EHOs etc. In addition the applicant must serve the application on all the Responsible Authorities for comments and put up notices for the application within the premises. The Council publishes the application on our website as well as sending a weekly email to all Councillors with the list of current applications. Members of the public can comment on all minor applications.

Should relevant concerns come to light the Authority can reject the application. In these circumstances the applicant would have to make a full application for a variation and then the matter could be referred to the relevant committee for a hearing.

With regard to planning all local planning authorities are advised that they cannot seek to control matters that are dealt with through other legislative processes. This covers such legislation as licensing, environmental health, and also building control.

As a planning authority we cannot control when an applicant submits an application of whatever type (planning permission, advertisement consent etc). When an application is submitted we are then bound by statutory time periods in which they have to be determined.

In this case there seems to have been two applications submitted at different times; the first being the advertisement consent for the signage, and the second for the variations to the layout of the public house. It is important to note that these are two separate applications because they amount to very different developments and considered under different legislation.

In both cases different matters are being considered – the signage can only consider the suitability of the signage itself in visual terms and whether there are any impacts on

highway safety. It is not related to the concerns with respect to the uses operating within the public house.

Planning applications are subject to a statutory consultation period in which we notify neighbours of an application and also consult other statutory consultees such as Environmental Health to ascertain their views on the proposal. We are required to take these into consideration.

In summary, there is already a joined up approach to determining different applications that are covered as part of different pieces of legislation. It is not always practical or feasible to join up applications as the address asks, because we have no control over how they are submitted. These matters are all considered through the various processes however and controls exist to deal with any issues that may arise through the various legislation of different regulatory authorities.

Summary of verbal response from Councillor Hollingsworth

Unfortunately these are two separate processes governed by separate laws and it is not possible for us to join together what the government has seen fit to keep separate.

3. Address by Izzy and Kamila – dealing with climate change

Hello we are here today to discuss our petition and how you can help us improve the standard of living via sustainability in education. Recently you announced a climate emergency within Oxfordshire, this is a great step towards tackling the climate crisis and we thank you for that. We feel passionately about this because the future of our planet is at stake. We believe that the key way to combat climate change and make Oxford as sustainable as possible is through education and the example our schools set to future generations.

Our petition calls for climate change to be made a core part of the national curriculum and that sustainability is made a serious concern within the education system. Our petition asks for:

- The ecological and climate crisis to be made an educational priority
- Well founded, evidence based training for teachers so that they are properly equipped to teach the future generations
- The immediate overhaul of the current curriculum in favour of one that aims to prepare children for the realities of their future.
- Sustainability judgement criteria to be added to Ofsted values so that schools must 'practice what they teach' as they act as the main role models to children as they grow up.

So far we have 68,000 signatures, we have been in newspapers such as the Oxford Mail and the Daily Mail and have been on world service radio and the BBC. We never thought we would get this far however we need to do more. We need you, our council, to support our cause and to make Oxford the start of an educational movement that could save our planet and give all future generations the knowledge they need to make the change we need to tackle climate change.

The first way that you can help us is by lobbying parliament to get our goals discussed and recognised. This is the next step on a larger, national level and it would be great if you could help us achieve this. Whilst that is important we are also interested in what we can improve within Oxford in terms of sustainability and education. Oxford, supposedly a cycling city, still has massive problems with driving. For example, we could improve Oxford's climate by reducing the amount of emissions caused by students driving to school unnecessarily. People quite often forget how relatively small Oxford is and there are so many options for students to get to and from school including:

- Buses that run directly to schools that have been made hybrid
- Cycling
- Walking

Oxford is an amazing city that has all sorts of opportunities and is a hub of culture and history. By cutting down emissions caused by school runs we can hopefully keep our city as beautiful as it is now. It will not only reduce pollution but also create an environment that is not dominated by traffic.

Another crucial point we need your help addressing is waste in schools. As we see it, every day tonnes of recyclable rubbish and food waste that can be converted to energy is thrown into regular waste. We need you to put sustainable limits on un-environmentally friendly orders of goods to schools. Schools must have proper separate bins so food, recycling and general waste aren't all thrown in together and we need you to put an appropriate cap on the amount of waste and electricity schools use,

as well as the materials they consume and how much they can consume. You can help by placing these limits on the schools in Oxford and by making sure schools have the appropriate resources to deal with waste.

Our previous two points on how you can help us are largely physical, sustainability goals however the educational side must also be brought to attention. Within Oxford we have an array of primary/secondary schools and universities. Within the universities we have many qualified teachers who specialise in subjects based around climate change be that from a political, geographical, humanitarian or scientific point of view. One of these teachers is Dr. Kevin Grecksch who works at the University of Oxford researching climate change adaptation from a social science perspective. Dr. Grecksch got in touch with us after seeing our petition and offered to work with us and our school to organise lectures and Q&A sessions for teachers and students at our school. He said “there is so much expertise in Oxford about climate change, wouldn’t it be great to share it and to discuss it with interested people.” This is something that we strongly agree with as there is so much knowledge that can be shared and so many people like Dr. Grecksch. We have a university equipped to teach people about the problems we are facing. We want to create links between Oxford’s Universities and lower education that will enable the younger generations to learn about the future we face and how to stop it. This will not only create a pool of knowledge benefitting our youth but enrich oxford by linking our education system together which will make a more united Oxford.

Through these changes in the way our education system is run we hope to create a better, greener future. The help that you can give in terms of waste, vehicle limits, lobbying parliament and creating links between higher and lower education would make Oxford the pioneer of tackling climate change within the U.K. This could potentially have a domino effect and help the rest of the U.K to recognise that we need to change the way we view the education system. It is not just about exam results but preparing children for their future and setting an example of what a sustainable world could and should look like. We hope that you can help us make it easier for schools to recycle, to be sustainable via limits on certain resources, encourage children to walk, cycle or bus, ideally even making the areas around schools low emission zones. Also to organise ways in which universities can link to primary and secondary schools (e.g. through programs funded by the council) and to get our goals discussed in parliament to take this to a national level. Thank you so much for having us here today and we hope you will consider what we are asking for. Our future and our children’s future depends on it.

Written Response from Councillor Hayes

On behalf of Oxford City Council, I want to thank you for calling for more thorough teaching of climate change at school and ensuring climate education is on the radar of MPs. As a primary school governor in East Oxford, I’m pleased to pass on the news that you are inspiring many local school students. Your campaign has the backing of all councillors and the City Council in your home city. Your campaign to make more thorough teaching about climate change a compulsory part of school education is doing Oxford proud and we wish you every success as you go forward.

The UN warns that the world faces a climate catastrophe if we don’t accelerate the rate of carbon abatement in the next eleven years.

In 2030, you will be 26 years old, hopefully continuing to make the city and country a better place. But, in order for that to happen, we need more politicians to help stop our climate breakdown. In 2066, you will be the current age of the current Prime Minister. We have problems in our politics, and a big one is the intergenerational unfairness of

climate change, caused in part by the fact that the people making political decisions at the top today may not be around to face the climate consequences.

Your City Council has been active in working on the environmental agenda and I want to highlight a few examples, not because I want to suggest that we have all the answers, but because I want to give you the confidence that many of the elected public servants in your home city share your concerns and want the same thing.

The City Council is active in working with schools to tackle air pollution. Our STOP Project inspires young people to take action to reduce air pollution and has delivered real-time NO2 and PM10 air quality monitors in six schools, an educational toolkit to teach the causes and impacts of polluted air, and an anti-idling campaign to encourage sustainable travel.

We have been active with local schools to encourage recycling and encourage climate education during our annual Green Week and Big Green Day Out. We fund upgrades to cycling infrastructure and back the thrust of the National Infrastructure Commission report on investment to improve cycling in Oxford.

We have also been instrumental in setting up the Low Carbon Hub which organises community investment in solar PV for Oxfordshire schools. Oxfordshire County Council, as the education and transportation authority, have additional powers which could help to further your campaign.

As part of our effort to become a zero carbon city and council, we have just announced the country's first citizens' assembly for dealing with climate change. To be held in September, we want to hear from a representation of the city's viewpoints, so that we can develop a zero carbon strategy as quickly as possible but also one that has the democratic consent of the city.

Climate change is bigger than all of us, but we must all do what we can. Oxford City Council wishes you every success in your campaigning.

Summary of verbal response from Councillor Hayes

Thank you for your petition, your vision and your campaigning, and we wish you every success. I will be in touch with the local MPs to put your points forward.

4. Address by Artwell – IHRA declaration and twinning with Ramallah

Oxford City Council is to be commended for its 2018 brave decision to twin with Ramallah; as this gesture draws precious attention on the militarised suffering and Judicially enforced racial discrimination daily endured by the Semitic people of Palestine.

However, Oxford City Council professes its intolerance for racism. With the Prime Minister of Israel (*Benjamin Netanyahu*) writing on March the 11th 2019 that Israel “is not a State of all its citizens.” Adding that “according to the basic law we passed, Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people and they have an exclusive right to self-determination in it.” [*reference below*]

The Prime Minister of Israel’s statement was reported by most of the major news agencies worldwide.

If England, France or Germany were to announce that their laws granted greater rights and self-determination to their English, French or German citizens only; whilst publicly discriminating against its other citizens. Justice promoting nations of the world would be very concerned and would seek to shun such England France and Germany.

This policy of the Israeli State is racial discrimination against the native and Semitic Arabic population of Israel and this policy is racial discrimination against all non-Jewish people who live in Israel.

For this reason, I call on Oxford City Council to rescind its 2018 decision to adopt and implement the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) policy, until the “Jewish only” State of Israel rescinds its blatantly racist and discriminatory laws, which sadly receives the full support of the Prime Minister and Members of the Israeli Knesset.

Human history teaches that evil flourishes when people of conscience remain silent when evil deeds are perpetrated.

Reference

Netanyahu says Israel “belongs to Jewish people alone,” in attack on nation’s Arab population. Independent Newspaper, Sunday 10th March 2019.

Netanyahu: Israel is the state of “Jewish people alone.” Washington Post, 10th March 2019.

Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel is “not a state of all its citizens.”

Guardian newspaper, Sunday 10th March 2019.

Written Response from Councillor Brown (also read out)

I have been very clear in this chamber previously in expressing my condemnation for Israel’s 2018 ‘Nation State’ Law – and I note that the country’s President has criticized the Prime Minister for his comments last month that Israel ‘is not a State of all its citizens’.

But, I don’t follow the logic of fighting racism with anti-semitism. The Labour Party, the Liberal Democrat Party and the Conservative Party have adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism – and the Greens are to debate it at their spring conference in June. The definition makes clear ‘criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic.’

There are over 1,000 Jewish residents in Oxford today. Indeed, there has been a Jewish community here in Oxford since 1080, initially located right here on St Aldates. While they suffered antisemitism, expulsion and expropriation over the centuries – Jewish scholars suggest Oxford was always a more tolerant and harmonious place than many other cities in medieval England. Let’s keep it that way.

5. Address by Judith Harley – Cowley Marsh Car Park Consultation

Lord Mayor, Councillors,

To comply with conditions attached to the 2017 grant of planning permission for the expansion of the Cowley Marsh Depot and upgrading of the Cowley Marsh Car Park, Oxford City Council recently proposed a Parking Places Order to change parking provision at Cowley Marsh Car Park. The deadline for submitting objections to this has just passed. I'm addressing the Council today about the difficulties associated with submitting such comments.

First, in order to view the relevant document, members of the public had to visit Oxford Town Hall on a Monday to Friday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. This is impractical or impossible for most working people. Indeed, I managed to view the document only a week before the formal deadline for submitting comments. Given the online availability of various Council documents in today's internet age it is somewhat antiquated that neither this document, nor the original 2011 Order to which it referred, were available via online links.

Second, instructions for submitting comments to this order requested that objections should be sent in writing to St. Aldates Chambers. No e-mail comments were invited, and no e-mail address was given on the order notification. This, and the absence of online documents, placed considerable obstacles in the way of anyone of working age used to communicating via the internet (as is common practice for much Council business), who wished to comment.

In the week before Easter I raised these, and other, points with those Council Officers who were still working and not away on holiday. All officers who replied were extremely helpful, and by close of business on Maundy Thursday had provided electronic versions of relevant documents and e-mail addresses for receiving comments. I am very grateful for their courteous and timely help and co-operation which allowed me, and several of my neighbours, to make appropriate and informed comments, with an extended deadline, and I would like to thank all those officers concerned.

I am asking the Council that all future consultations, of this or any other nature, and any supporting documentation, be available through online links as well as in paper format, for ease of unlimited access to the general public. I am also asking that it be made possible to e-mail responses for any and all consultations, not just for comments to be in writing. I understand that, following my communications with officers, this might be investigated by the Head of Law and Governance, but I am asking Council to support my request and bring it to being.

Regarding the consultation itself, the Council's reasons for justifying the proposed charges at Cowley Marsh car park made no mention of the car park serving recreational users of Cowley Marsh Park. This car park should be primarily for the benefit of users of Cowley Marsh Park, especially families; and for local residents and businesses; and to reduce neighbourhood parking problems, not just to provide general off-street parking for all and sundry, and especially not to provide unlimited free parking for employees of the adjacent private company ODS Ltd.

I have suggested changes in the proposed structures and fees to recognise that Cowley Marsh car park is meant to support and promote the recreational use of Cowley Marsh Park, and to encouraged everyone to embrace a healthy lifestyle. Photos taken by local residents show that daytime use of the car park coincides with the main hours of working of ODS Ltd., with the car park full until around 2 – 3 p.m., when many ODS employees leave work, then there is plenty of space for the rest of the day and evening.

I have also requested that the start date for implementing charging, of 1st May, should be delayed until a satisfactory solution has been found to limit the parking required by ODS Ltd. employees, without the imposition of a CPZ.

I am asking Council to work with residents to resolve parking problems created by ODS employees, in addition to asking that all Council consultations be made electronic.

I hope that you will all support both requests.

Thank you.

Written Response from Councillor Hollingsworth (also read out)

Thank you for raising these issues on the proposed charging regime. Your points will be duly considered as part of the consultation process with other responses.

I have noted your comments regarding the accessibility of the consultation documents and would to thank you for raising this issue. Whilst there is no legal requirement to provide this service, we will look to encompass an online option in future car park consultations.

Any suggestion received as part of the consultation will be given consideration. Implementation of any new charging structure will begin once all the objections, comments and suggestions have been carefully considered, this may delay the proposed start date.