

## OXFORD WEST END REGENERATION NEWSLETTER

### Science Oxford Launches New Innovation Centre



Science Oxford launched its new Oxford Centre for Innovation in March to provide office accommodation and business support to a selection of entrepreneurs and start-up companies. Around 30 new and growing companies have

already moved into the 25,000 sq ft site, next to Oxford Castle on New Road. Oxford Innovation has been appointed to manage the centre and provide business mentoring and advice, along with access to its investment networks. The innovation centre is part of Science Oxford's long-term plans to build a £30 million science hub that will attract as many as 100,000 visitors a year. Envisaged as a world-class attraction showcasing cutting edge science and technology, much of it from the Oxfordshire ecosystem, the facility will feature a suite of interactive galleries and a digital planetarium together with a plaza, café and shop.

### Westgate Update

Westgate owners, the Crown Estate and Land Securities Group PLC, have been undertaking studies to explore Oxford's existing retail offer as part of their background research into the potential to redevelop the Westgate shopping centre. These studies included profiles of potential customers, catchment size and average spend. They presented their summary findings to the Joint Venture Board in March and have agreed to further explore deliverability of any redevelopment. Discussions are now in progress with Oxford City Council and others in this context.

### Oxford Moves Ahead on Wayfinding Project

The wayfinding system in Oxford is to be redesigned with the aim of enhancing the pedestrian experience for residents and visitors alike. Effective wayfinding means improving the ease with which people navigate to, from, and within a built environment. It includes carefully chosen routes, landmarks and destinations; legible, well-designed signs, maps and information points; and the effective use of digital and interactive technologies. Oxford City Council and the West End Partnership are investing in the scheme to better convey Oxford's unique character; by raising awareness of what the city has to offer, wayfinding can support local businesses and attractions and encourage visitors and residents to discover more about the city, stay longer, and return again. The first stage of the project involved an audit of the existing wayfinding provision and a review of pedestrian movement patterns. Following a series of stakeholder consultations and workshops, the project team has moved into the concept design phase. Public consultation will follow in summer with full details of the scheme and a prototype installed in Bonn Square to demonstrate design and materials. Dates will be announced well in advance of installation to encourage as many people as possible to come and give their views on how the project is taking shape.



### Spotlight on... Oxford Town Hall

Oxford's historic Town Hall is a Grade II-listed Victorian building at the corner of St Aldates and the High Street. The site has been the seat of local government since a Guildhall was built there in 1292, however the current building – elaborately designed in the gothic revival style by Sir Henry T. Hare – was opened in 1897. The Town Hall continues to play a key role in the civic life of Oxford, with meetings taking place in wood-panelled chambers, along with corporate events, concerts and private functions. The building also houses the Gallery Suite and the popular Museum of Oxford, where the story of Oxford is brought to life through original artefacts and room settings. Visit [www.tinyurl.com/WETownHall](http://www.tinyurl.com/WETownHall) for full details – and look out for the 1931 inscription on the south-west corner which reflects the area's rich medieval Jewish history: *'This street known till 1300 as Great Jewry contained many houses of the Jews including the Synagogue which lay to the north of Tom Tower'*.



## OXFORD WEST END REGENERATION NEWSLETTER

### Quirky Installation Unveiled in the West End

Rochester House, a Victorian building on Pembroke Street, is undergoing major refurbishment to become the new home of the Story Museum. The museum has existed online for five years holding storytelling workshops and events throughout Oxfordshire, however a £2.5m donation from an anonymous benefactor last year facilitated the creation of a permanent home in the West End. Next time you're passing don't forget to look out for their rather unusual shop window. The window – dubbed Rochester's Story Supplies – is a portal to a household goods store catering to the world's fictional community, with such must-have items as glass slipper polish, magic beans, and big, bad wolf repellent. The quirky display has been generating huge interest and now appears to be on the visitor circuit, judging by the numbers of tourists passing by for a view...



### Old Fire Station - What's New?

Plans to transform the Old Fire Station at Gloucester Green into an inspirational centre for the arts and social enterprise are on schedule for the planned October launch of the West End venue. Oxford City Council and the homelessness charity Crisis are working in partnership to redevelop the 114-year-old building, which is being refurbished throughout to become a new Crisis Skylight centre and café. The facility will also house a new arts company, *Arts at the Old Fire Station*, an independent charity set to provide professional development for artists and creative activities for the public together with a range of spaces, including a gallery, theatre and studio.

### Third Consultation Planned for Frideswide Square



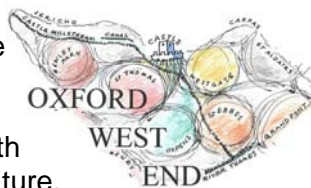
A third round of public consultation will be held this autumn on the future of Frideswide Square after two preferred design options were agreed at a meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> March. Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport discounted other alternatives, such as diverting traffic into neighbouring streets, in agreement with the majority of responses gathered during two previous phases of consultation. Both options (pictured here) are based on the 'shared space' principle which would see the traffic lights removed and replaced by compact roundabouts with courtesy crossing points and narrowed road widths.

The transformation of Frideswide Square from a cluttered, congested junction to a welcoming and efficient public space is a core priority for the West End Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council, and every avenue is being explored to finance the scheme, including bidding for national government funding. Further design work will be undertaken before this autumn's round of public consultation, which will then be reviewed by the project team before the final design is determined in spring 2012.



### West End Community Group – Give Your Views

Given the interest in long-term regeneration plans for the West End, it's important to have a community voice to help represent the views of people living in the area. If you would like to lend a hand to help build on and shape the way ideas from within the community can be best represented in the coming months please get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you at 01865 252803 or [pwolf@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:pwolf@oxford.gov.uk) by the end of May with a view to setting a meeting date in the near future.



### West End Web Toolbar 'Go Live'

Noticed anything new on the West End website? That will be our Wibiya web toolbar, which connects you to our latest Facebook and Twitter updates as well as our colourful West End photo gallery. You can also share or translate content at the click of a button. See the changes for yourself at [www.oxfordwestend.co.uk](http://www.oxfordwestend.co.uk)!