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2 July 2009

Councillor John Tanner
Member for Cleaner Greener Oxford
Town Hall
St Aldate's
Oxford OX1 1BX

Dear Councillor Tanner

Litter on Oxford's by-pass

I am writing to you, as Chair of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, to ask you to stop the buck passing that has led to the dire state of Oxford's bypass and the main roads in Oxfordshire. There is visible litter on verges and in bushes.

For over a year, we have been told that the Districts and the County cannot coordinate road closures for grass cutting and litter picking. We have also been told that the setting of Oxford is a low priority for the surrounding District Councils, who have responsibility for most of the major roads and for the side of the bypass away from Oxford City. On top of this, councils seem to be unfamiliar with their boundaries.

To illustrate with a personal experience, I cycle weekly to Eynsham along the A40 cycle path. Twice so far this year, the grass verges have been cut without collecting the litter beforehand. The litter is now shredded into smaller bits. I am told it is picked up before grass cutting, but it very obviously wasn't. On top of this, each district I approached tried to persuade me that I should talk to another district.

We organised very successful Spring Cleans in March 2008 and 2009, but as City Works officers were concerned about safety for community groups working along main roads, we were discouraged from recruiting volunteers to clean up the by-pass.

We live in a beautiful city with 9 million visitors a year; many of whom comment on the litter on the approaches. It shames us all.

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We would like:

- a published regular programme of cleaning up litter on the by-pass and other main roads in Oxfordshire;
- co-ordination of litter picking with grass cutting (which clearly does not happen);
- clear acceptance of responsibility - at present anyone who reports litter on main roads gets passed from council to council.
- signage and bins in laybys to remind drivers of their responsibility. It is not acceptable to litter, even from a vehicle.

We will be organising another Spring Clean in 2010 (5 and 6 March) with support from the City Council. What about the bypass?

The OxClean Steering Group looks forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Rosamund Weatherall
Environment Secretary, Oxford Civic Society
Acting Chair, OxClean