

Making Friends in Oxford

The Newcomers' Club is for the partners of visiting academics and University staff. Here are some ideas for anyone new to Oxford who wants to feel part of the community, whether or not they are eligible to join the Newcomers' Club.

Where to start?

Community notice boards, notice boards in libraries and the Daily Info www.dailyinfo.co.uk are good ways to find out about groups, activities and events in and around Oxford. If you live on your own try www.meetup.com to find out about walking, theatre and other groups for young working people.

The Community Centres in different areas of Oxford offer classes, creative activities and opportunities for socialising. Which is the nearest to where you live?

Summertown www.northoxfordassociation.co.uk Abingdon Road www.southoxford.org

Jericho www.jerichocentre.org.uk/jcc East Oxford www.eocc@oxford.gov.uk

Volunteering

To find out the wide variety of opportunities there are for volunteering in Oxford look on www.ocva.org.uk and www.oxfordhub.org.

You may have noticed the number of charity shops we have in all areas of Oxford, and the Fair Trade shops at the Northgate and in Headington. Working in any of these shops means being part of a friendly team, meeting a variety of people and is an opportunity to practise speaking English! The Ashmolean, the Natural History and Pitt Rivers Museums also depend on volunteers, for a variety of roles.

Refugee Resource, www.refugeeresource.org.uk and Asylum Welcome, www.asylum-welcome.org welcome volunteers, especially those who are here for more than a year.

Opportunities for Learning

To discover the wide range of subjects offered by the Oxford University's Department of Continuing Education visit www.conted.ox.uk

Abingdon and Witney College uses venues all over Oxford to deliver classes for all ability levels. Find out from www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk/oal

Singing

The following choirs are known to be friendly and welcoming. No auditions are required. These sites will give you further details of where and when they meet and the kind of music they sing.

www.joinedupsinging.co.uk www.oxfordcitysingers.com www.rockchoir.com

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Do you have small children?

There are many playgroups in Oxford where you can make friends with other parents. **Rainbow House** in New Inn Hall Street is the nearest to the City Centre.

St Clement's Family Centre in Cross Street, comes highly recommended.

Most local churches run playgroups and toddler groups. The Ashmolean and MOMA have activities for toddlers, and there are workshops for older children in all Oxford's museums, galleries, and the Botanic Gardens, at weekends and during school holidays. Search under "Family Activities".

Exercise and Fresh Air

People of all ages enjoy Swing Dancing and you don't need a partner! www.oxfordswingdance.co.uk and www.oxfordlindyhoppers.co.uk

From www.getoxfordshireactive you can find out about classes indoor and out as well as walking and running groups.

<https://premier.tennis.co.uk/discover/parks-tennis> organises inexpensive tennis lessons, for all levels of ability, in three Oxford parks all year round. The coaches are highly skilled professionals.

The Ramblers is a national association dedicated to walking Britain's footpaths. It is voluntary and inexpensive to join. Every day of the week you can find a walk near you, led by one of the members. www.ramblers.org.uk/oxfordshire From this site you can find links to groups for younger people, and weekend only walks.

If you are interested in nature conservation find out about local groups on www.ocv.org.uk The work is often challenging but fun and takes you to areas of Oxford's green spaces you might not have discovered.

Church Groups

The following have been recommended as particularly welcoming to those who have come from overseas to work or study here. They offer social events as well as religious services.

St Andrews in North Oxford: www.standrewsoxford.org

St Barnabas in Jericho: <http://sbarnabas.org.uk/>

St Aldates: www.staldates.org.uk St Ebbes: www.stebbes.org.uk St Columba's URC Church www.saintcolumbas.org in the City Centre.

The Baptist Church in Headington: www.hbc.oxford.org.uk

These are Protestant churches but there are many other places of worship, including Orthodox and Catholic churches, several Mosques and a Synagogue in Oxford if you belong to any of these faiths. The Chinese Christian Church is supportive to Chinese students whether or not they are believers.