Thank you to all staff and students who submitted information for this section. So much great information was submitted we couldn’t fit it all in the report, but we have done our best to summarise all the examples. We acknowledge that the stories reported are only a small fraction of the entire volunteer work done by our students and staff to improve the community. Thank you to everyone who does give time to make a difference to others.

Oxford Brookes University has a strong and valuable presence within the local community, with students and staff involved in a number of different programmes and initiatives. Oxford Brookes graduates also make valuable contributions to the economy, both in Oxford and further afield.

More than 3,500 people each year study health and social care subjects at the University and the University trains many of Oxfordshire’s teachers, continuing to support them with training and professional development throughout their careers. Many of these students go on placements as part of their course and in 2013 the Placement of the Year Awards Ceremony was held at Oxford Brookes, to celebrate excellence in student placement provision by health and social care service providers.

The University was also a runner up in the Guardian University Awards 2013 for Commitment to Widening Participation. This was due to its BROOKES BRIDGES programme, a programme of free short courses available to adult learners who come from a disadvantaged area or background.

Brookes Hub is the focal point for charitable and environmental activity at Oxford Brookes University, empowering students to create a positive impact in their local and global community by engaging with social and environmental issues through projects such as Food Justice, OxGrow, AgeAid, and The Schools Plus programme which allows Brookes students to tutor school children in the local community.

The teams of Student Community Wardens were recruited to build and strengthen relationships between students and the wider community. The team have expanded their involvement with Oxford City Council and work closely with the recycling team and Community Response to educate students on recycling and waste management through events such as Freshers’ Fair. They have increased the number of litter picks they do and were involved again with OxClean. The Gipsy Lane Estate team also used recycled waste to create Christmas decorations that decorated Headington.
The Brookes Union is committed to improving relations between its members and the wider community. The Brookes Union has strong relationships with local Residents’ Associations and over recent years has worked with them to promote to students their responsibilities within the community, aiming to minimise noise and disruption that arises from student nightlife.

THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

MSc Sustainable Building: Performance and Design students and staff teaching on the Design In Context module have contributed to the Summertown St. Margaret’s Neighbourhood Forum’s development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Summertown car park by providing in-depth research on the socio-economic, architectural and urban context of Summertown. 2nd year BA (Hons) Interior Architecture students worked on a co-housing scheme in Cowley. Jeni Burnell, research associate at CENDEP, ran a creative community engagement programme in the Blackbird and Greater Leys neighbourhoods involving approximately 135 people from 11 local community groups.

BAMBOO BIKES

Engineering students and staff at Oxford Brookes designed and built an environmentally friendly, bamboo bike. Bamboo is an environmentally friendly material, a fast growing grass which requires less land and water than other trees, and it can absorb up to five times more CO2 and release up to 35% more oxygen than an equivalent stand of trees. During the University’s LIVE FRIDAY event, staff hit a target of riding 150km in an evening. The bikes are now available for purchase.

STUDENT COMMUNITY FUND

Supported by the generous donations of Brookes alumni, the Student Community Fund gives grants of up to £500 to current students who wish to set up a project in support of the local community. 2013/14 saw the introduction of projects including cookery lessons for students, a palliative care workshop and an online arts journal.

OXFORD BROOKES SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

The programme has helped fund initiatives including Broken Spoke, a cycling cooperative, The Knowledge Project, providing affordable courses for adult learners, and Sustainabus, converting old buses into sustainable holiday homes. The scheme was runner up in the Guardian HE Awards Student Experience category 2014 and won the UnLtd Lived It Supporter Award 2013 and 2014.

EIE (THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE)

EIE is a unit in Health and Life Sciences at Oxford Brookes providing UK organisations with guidance on reducing energy, water, and waste. They have visited 70 village halls and community centres and trained over 120 hall committee members on reducing energy. EIE has also run events about energy reduction for 3 years with over 40 secondary schools. They have recently teamed up with Low Carbon Oxford Week to provide businesses with advice on good energy and waste practices.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS

Some Occupational Therapy students volunteer at KEEN, a charity that provides sporting and recreational activities for children and young adults with special needs. Several final year students carry out their placements with Restore, a mental health charity, and many students go on to work within charities and services within the local area.
CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AT OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-14 ALSO INCLUDE:

- Open Lectures with over 2000 attendees
- Oxford Brookes University representation by staff members on a number of city and regional bodies
- Sponsorship of The Oxford Academy
- Zumba4Bump, an exercise group for pregnant women, started by lecturers
- Development of The Strengthening Families Programme 10-14 (UK)
- The Human Rights Film Festival organised by members of the School of Architecture (CENDEP)
- Community studio projects
- New Veterinary Nursing courses launched with Solihull College
- Centre for Ecology, Environment and Conservation projects
- Volunteering at Oxford Brookes’ 150th year anniversary launch event, Live Friday
- A live project for final year Local Planning undergraduates involved working with the Headington Neighbourhood Forum that is drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area (which includes Oxford Brookes).
- The Oxford Brookes Hub for Science Education
- Community scholarships offered to students who have overcome personal or social difficulties
- Pro Bono Society: Around 100 Oxford Brookes law students each year take part in legal-related volunteer work. Two students won the National Pro Bono Centre Award 2013 for their contribution to the Oxford County Court Family Duty Clinic
- The Student Ambassadors Scheme
- Work with Low Carbon East Oxford
- Work with the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership
- Oxford Brookes has been awarded money by the Primary Science Teaching Trust to set up the Oxford Brookes Hub for Science Education
- Community scholarships are given to students who have been an excellent role model in the community
- The Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) has organised multiple field trips to rebuild and help vulnerable communities around the world and offers internships for field-based research.
- Students from the Art Foundation programme presented their fifth collaboration with the Pitt Rivers and Museum of the History of Science.
- Aylin Orbasli, from the School of Architecture, gave a talk to the Headington U3A on Conservation Architecture and approximately 70 people attended
- 2nd year BA (Hons) Architecture students designed and built small projects for the local community, managing a small budget provided by clients. Projects were generally very eco-friendly as they made use of local and reclaimed materials.
- Students from the Department of Computing and Communication Technologies’ robotics society went into a local school to work with the children on programming robots
- Foundation Built Environment students worked with the Heritage Canal Group in Oxford, developing creative ideas about the improvements to be made to the canals and local areas
- Accounting for Charities, Engaging Students (ACES) sees 2nd year accounting students provide accounting services for 1 year on a part time voluntary basis to local charities
- Brookes Sport offers a range of services to the community. In addition, this year its teams and members have raised over £6000 for Maggie’s Cancer Care UK.