

FROM: NO CCTV

Press Release 23rd March 2009

Attn: News Desks

-- BEGINS --

NO CCTV TO STAGE STUNT ON COWLEY ROAD, OXFORD ON Wednesday 25th March 2009 FROM 12pm, between Princes Street and Bullingdon Road

On Wednesday, 25th March PANOPTICON Photography [1] will be on the Cowley Road, East Oxford offering locals an opportunity to share the PANOPTICON vision of urban photography. With prices starting at just £10* for a unique contemporary action shot or urban portrait, PANOPTICON Photography hope that the people of Oxford will take to the streets to expose the art in urban reportage.

How can PANOPTICON bring their unique contemporary style to the masses for less than the cost of a cheap round? Under the Data Protection Act individuals are entitled to request images of themselves captured by surveillance cameras. The cost is just £10* (the prescribed maximum under the Act).

CCTV cameras are not an effective crime prevention or detection tool, PANOPTICON is offering citizens this opportunity to claw back some of their wasted tax pounds.

[*Please note prices do not include the £500+ million of tax payer subsidy and additional £68,400+vat of local tax payer subsidy for the three cameras on the Cowley Road.]

Barbara del Campo of PANOPTICON Photography said: "We specialise in contemporary urban photography on location: portraits that are more than just a likeness and action shots that ooze reality. Forget Venture, this is adventure. No consent is required, the pictures are taken anyway and our urban photography experience offer extends nationwide for the foreseeable future." [2]

No CCTV are still campaigning in East Oxford despite the presence of three recently erected surveillance cameras on the Cowley Road as part of a trial by the police and City Council. It is No CCTV's view that the results of the trial will show that CCTV has no impact on crime – as with every other major study of surveillance cameras. A 2007 evaluation of CCTV in Cambridge states:

“the Cambridge evaluation is consistent with prior research in showing no significant desirable effect of CCTV on crime in city centres” (p196) [3]

The 3 cameras along the Cowley Road cost around £68,400+VAT [4] to install and will have ongoing maintenance and running costs that will be paid for by tax payers.

Charles Farrier of NO CCTV said: "We want to encourage people to find out the truth about surveillance cameras and allow them to get some use out of this costly and illiberal technology. CCTV is not a cost effective crime fighting tool, over £500 million of public money has been spent on cameras in the last ten years but the return on that investment has been very poor. Many people believe that they are trading freedom for security but in reality they are not. Other measures such as street lighting are often far more effective. Better community reduces crime, technology does not."

-- ENDS --

References:

[1] See <http://www.panopticon-photography.co.uk>

[2] For more detail see the PANOPTICON Photography flyer at:
<http://www.panopticon-photography.co.uk/PANOPTICON-flyer.pdf>

[3] 'The Cambridge Evaluation of the Effects of CCTV on Crime', Farrington, Bennett and Welsh, 2007

[4] Costs calculated from an Optimum Security report "Cowley Road Report and Budgetary Costings for 4 Cameras" presented to the East Area Parliament 24th April 2008

The PANOPTICON was proposed as a model prison by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). The Panopticon ("all-seeing") functioned as a round-the-clock surveillance machine. Its design ensured that no prisoner could ever see the 'inspector' who conducted surveillance from the privileged central location within the radial configuration. The prisoner could never know when he was being surveilled.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. No CCTV is a UK group campaigning against the excessive use of surveillance cameras in the UK. Their homepage is at www.no-cctv.org.uk
2. No CCTV presented a report to the East Area parliament in November 2007 outlining concerns about the Cowley Road CCTV proposals and urging them to look at the paltry evidence of CCTV's effectiveness . The report can be downloaded from the press section of the No CCTV website - <http://www.no-cctv.org.uk/press>
3. For further information contact Charles Farrier at press@no-cctv.org.uk