



HRA NEWSLETTER

Highfield Residents' Association

<https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com/>

hracttee@gmail.com

Autumn 2020

Community events with a difference

Frank McKenna and Patrick Coulter (Events Group)

Usually in the autumn newsletter we list all our community activities over the summer and look forward to our Autumn/Winter programme. While HRA has been as busy as ever since the spring it's been almost entirely in response to the Coronavirus crisis.

In March, we set up the Covid-19 Support Group to provide support to all our residents throughout the lockdown. The group has successfully dealt with many referrals drawing on our team of volunteers (see p. 2). We also worked with Oxford Together to set up a Headington-wide support network based on a system of street reps and local WhatsApp groups. We have contributed to the work of the Oxford/Barton Hub which has brought together GPs, local councillors and community groups like ours to provide support for residents with more complex needs. For Highfield, we've produced weekly bulletins with updates on matters which affect our neighbourhood. These bulletins have been commended by the County Council as examples of good practice. Despite the social distance limitations, our Easter Egg Hunt led to a proliferation of eggs in our windows. We supported our NHS through our weekly doorstep claps which also allowed a small but welcome interaction with our neighbours. Many of our residents displayed rainbow pictures and NHS banners. The Great Sunflower Initiative continues with some specimens reaching over 3 metres! We've made donations in support of individual members' initiatives including Spike and Kate's wonderful daily street concerts and May Wylie's amazing sewing project to provide scrubs for our local hospitals. Our Garden Group has maintained a great show of flowers in our Lime Walk planters throughout the spring and summer. More recently we've worked actively to support Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in Headington and in particular Highfield.

We'd like to offer our warm thanks to everyone who helped plan and deliver all these initiatives which have undoubtedly strengthened our community bonds at this very difficult time.

While much of the work outlined above will continue, we are also considering a programme of social events for the coming six months. These may include a series of online meetings on a range of topics led by local experts. We are also investigating the possibility of some small-scale, carefully managed, real world events which would accord with local and national rules and guidance. We will provide further details at the AGM next month (see p.4). **Suggestions for future events are very welcome.**

Pop-Up Concerts In The Street

Sally Brodhurst & Simon Lowles (Residents)

Early on in lockdown, professional musicians, Spike Wilson and Kate Bailey, sent a message on the Stapleton Rd WhatsApp to say they would like to play some music from their windows for anyone who might like to listen from their windows, doorways or in the street. For the next 88 evenings at exactly 6 pm, up went their first floor windows,

and residents were treated to 7 or 8 minutes of superb music. One classical piece, one more popular piece, each carefully arranged by them to fit violin and cello, rehearsed and then performed with their customary verve and professional style.



Some residents came every night, many came most evenings and some attended whenever they could. A small troop of children came regularly with their parents. They danced, and later on were given chalks to draw on the pavement. At the end of the concert season, over £1500 was raised and donated to **Music in Detention.**

HRA Covid-19 Support Group

Hilary Rollin (current Chair)

Friday 13 March saw the first thoughts about creating an HRA Covid-19 Support Group. We wanted to avoid anybody living within the HRA boundaries, HRA member or not, feeling uncertain about how to manage the practicalities of daily existence during lockdown. By Monday 16 March we had our first 17 volunteers. Since these included a number who should theoretically be avoiding contact with the outside world, we were delighted when more volunteers came forward. And more, and yet more! The kindness and generosity of people offering to help residents whom they had never met was heart-warming, as was the gratitude and relief expressed by residents who had been anxious about how to cope with shopping, collecting prescriptions etc. No less remarkable was John Nealon's role in handling the IT side of enrolling the volunteers. Thank you John; without you the scheme would not have got off the ground!

In the summer, we kept the Support Group in place in case of need later in the year. That need may well soon be upon us. Any Highfield resident, who through illness, quarantine, or being vulnerable by age or underlying condition is unable to go out and has urgent need of supplies etc, please contact: hra-covid19-support@googlegroups.com. If you have no access to email, please ask a neighbour to contact the group on your behalf, or phone 01865 761545 and we will find you a volunteer.

Related Covid-19 links:

Covid-19 Testing stations (including Oxford Brookes University) **Oxford Brookes NHS testing station** in the former Brookes Restaurant on Gipsy Lane is also available to the general public. Appointments can be booked on:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

Local alert levels: [Oxfordshire County Council - Covid-19 local alert level](#)

For further links, see HRA website

<https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com/>

HRA Subs for 2020-21 Gillian Beeston (Treasurer)

In April when the AGM and our summer programme were postponed, the committee decided to delay collecting subscriptions until the autumn. With the renewed Covid-19 restrictions, it is unlikely that HRA will be holding face-to-face events during the next few months. The committee has decided to waive subscriptions for the current year, 2020-21.

Local Planning

William Marx has recently taken on planning matters for HRA

The HRA Committee has for a number of years taken responsibility to monitor proposals for residential and commercial developments in Highfield and the areas of Headington that border Highfield. All proposals of this kind are submitted to Oxford City Council Planning Department. These are open to scrutiny and comment by members of the public. Recently, a link has been added to the HRA website <https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com/> that takes users directly to 'Planning Services' on the Council's website. 'Planning' is located under 'Environment' in the top line: clicking on this heading reveals a number of options; selecting 'Planning' will take you directly to this part of the Council's website. The site has copies of all the documents that each proposal generates; these include statements of 'Planning, Access and Design', assessments of the proposal (the 'Delegated Report'), comments and objections, and a final decision, which, if it is negative, is open to appeal.

I am just coming to terms with the process and the types of documents involved. Having worked through a small number of proposals and provided summary reports for the HRA Committee, I am willing to follow up queries from residents of Highfield concerning proposals for planning and development. In other words, please feel free to contact me via hreactee@gmail.com and I will do what I can to sift through the documentation and provide a summary or report on the state of play.

Recently, an HRA report, along with submissions from a number of individuals and organizations in Headington, affected the proposal to convert 105 London Road (the former Barclays Bank) to 'drinking establishments'; the proposal has been rejected by the Planning Department of the Council. You cannot help but notice, however, that there is building activity at 105 London Road. This is for another project to add a second floor of flats. The proposal was approved, no doubt because it will add to the housing stock in Headington. The plans as they are outlined on the Council's website suggest an addition that is distinctive.

Great Sunflower Initiative:

Keep those statistics coming in to hreactee@gmail.com
Deadline for entries
Tues 6th October.



HRA Website

<https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com>

John Nealon (Webmaster) writes:

In response to requests from members, some new pages have been added to the website. For example, look at the **Birdsong** and **Wildlife Survey** pages. The main additions are:

Covid-19 Information (under the Home page)

Environment, with sub-pages on:

Character Assessment (prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan)

Nature & Wildlife (Highfield Trees, Wildlife Survey, Wildlife Photos and Birdsong)

Planning (information on reading and commenting on planning applications)

Traffic & Transport (buses, etc.)

Anti-social Behaviour (who to contact)

Our Street Trees - *James Larminie gives us an update:*

There are a number of 'vacancies' in places where trees should be, or where trees have died, in Stapleton, Latimer and Bickerton Roads particularly. Despite badgering our councillors, no progress has been made with replacements, and we might need to reconsider taking matters into our own hands again. To be fair, councils do have pressing matters on their hands at the moment.

The Rowan tree which the HRA planted at the bottom of Stapleton Road just under a year ago has done very well – some branches have grown about 2 feet. We thank William Marx in particular for keeping it watered and weed-free. The council planted a Swedish Whitebeam near the top of Stapleton, and this is also in good health, though it hasn't put on the stupendous growth of its cousin (both trees are types of *Sorbus*). Thanks to Kate and Spike for keeping that one watered.

All Saints' Church

Most people will know that Jim Cocke, Vicar of Highfield and HRA member, retired in March. It looks like we might have a replacement minister early next year – this is a very fast turnaround for the Church of England. In the meantime, we have re-started a service at 10 am each Sunday, and the church is open on Sundays and Thursdays. Officially, this is for private prayer, but it's equally open for people to have a look around. JL

All Saints' Church House

Our local community centre is up and running again, though with much reduced activity. Pilates, Yoga, keep-fit, and aerial gymnastics have restarted. Guides will re-start soon. Judo has re-started in the form of a 'no contact fitness' class called Judo-fit. Sadly, the long-established Little Sharks playgroup is bound by the 'rule of 6', so cannot re-start. The same problem would apply to any event the HRA thought of organising. No concerts are allowed either. JL

Incident Book

The Incident Book enables us to keep tabs on the less desirable happenings in our neighbourhood, less welcome aspects of behaviour, and deficiencies in e.g. maintenance of road-side drains. By keeping this log we can detect trends; without it, such occurrences could be dismissed as once-offs.

However, we (your committee) are not clairvoyant; we rely on you to keep us updated on crime, anti-social behaviour, rats, speeding, diseased trees, blocked drains, etc. Street WhatsApp groups do a splendid job keeping people informed by street, but please also keep HRA updated of any such issues via hracttee@gmail.com

NB For incidents you have reported to the Police, please include among other details the Police Reference Number. For concerns you have expressed to other authorities e.g. to the Council, include all relevant details. HR

The HRA Update

Envisaged as a short-term weekly update on the local scene, with information as to what was open or closed due to Covid-19, Updates have now gone beyond their twentieth edition. With the easing of restrictions, it was anticipated that circulation would become fortnightly or cease all together. So far, it has skipped a week on only a couple of occasions!

Our thanks to thoughtful neighbours who have printed out copies of Update for those who have no Internet access. In response to demand, we have been trialling putting a copy of Update on the HRA notice board for those residents who have no Internet. We have yet to assess how much this helps, particularly when people are less likely to venture out due to seasonal weather, quarantine or illness. HR

PS to yesterday's 20th Update: Brookes University is meeting the Residents Associations on Thurs evening (8th Oct). If you have any issues you would like the HRA representatives to raise, please forward to HRA via hracttee@gmail.com by Weds lunchtime (7th).

Notice of HRA Annual General Meeting for 2019-20

Hopes that by autumn we could hold a live AGM having been dashed, we shall hold a **delayed AGM by Zoom on Tuesday 3rd November, 7.30-8.45 pm (latest)**. For this you will need a computer, tablet or smartphone and an email address. There will be a brief opportunity to ask questions. Members on our email circulation list will receive the Zoom invitation for the AGM on **Friday 30th October**, and again on **Monday 2nd November**. **For offers of help with Zoom see below.**

Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of 46th AGM, 24th April, 2019
2. Reports:
 - a. Chair's Report
 - b. Financial Report for period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020
 - c. Other brief reports inc. Planning, Website, Future Events, Vital Energi Funds, Traffic (including Liveable Streets), Book Group, Gardening Group
3. Election of committee for 2020-21
4. Our guest speaker, Tony Dale (Chair of Oxford City Ramblers), will talk on *Footpaths in and around Oxford*, followed by questions and discussion

AGM by Zoom: The AGM is being held using the video conferencing system **Zoom**. If you would like help setting up and using Zoom please contact John Nealon between **26th and 30th October** on hra.website@gmail.com

Useful addresses

Member of Parliament (Lab), Anneliese Dodds MP, Unit A, Bishops Mews, Transport Way, Oxford OX4 6HD.
T: 595790. E: anneliese4oxford@gmail.com

County Councillor: Headington & Quarry

Roz Smith (Lib Dem), 12 Weyland Road, Headington Quarry, Oxford OX3 8PD. T: 750371. M: 07584 257156.
E: roz.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

County Councillor: Churchill & Lye Valley

Liz Brighouse, OBE (Lab), Willow Bank, Old Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 8TA. T: 766995. M: 07710 451769.
E: liz.brighouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk

City Councillors: Headington Ward

Stef Garden (Lib Dem), Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX. M: 07443 331700. E: cllrsgarden@oxford.gov.uk
Mohammed Altaf-Khan (Lib Dem), 83 Hugh Allen Crescent, Oxford OX3 0HL. T: 798777. M: 07931 345554.
E: cllraltaf-khan@oxford.gov.uk

City Councillors: Churchill Ward

Mark Lygo (Lab), 20 Valentia Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 7PL. M: 07826 527047. E: cllrmygo@oxford.gov.uk
Susan Brown (Lab), 34 Canal Street, Oxford OX2 6BQ. M: 07775 792447. E: cllrsbrown@oxford.gov.uk

Thames Valley Police website: www.thamesvalley.police.uk. For emergencies T: 999

Headington Neighbourhood Police Officers: PC Simon Collins and PCSO Ahmed Mohamed. T: 101.
E: OxfordNortheastNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Oxford Brookes Community Relations Officer: Andrea Siret. T: 484451; E: community@brookes.ac.uk

Oxford City Council website: www.oxford.gov.uk. T: 249811

Antisocial Behaviour Team: website: www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decC/Anti_Social_Behaviour_and_CANAcT_occw.htm

Community Response Team: E: saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk; T: 249811; **Streetscene**: T: 252971

Free reporting service for lost, found and stolen pets in Oxford website: www.oxford.animalfinders.co.uk

Oxfordshire County Council website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk. T: 792422

Headington website: www.headington.org.uk; **Highfield History** section: www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/highfield/

Co-wheels Car Club website: www.co-wheels.org.uk

HRA Committee:

Chair (rotating between committee members):

hrachair@gmail.com

Admin:

hracttee@gmail.com

HRA Webmaster:

hra.website@gmail.com

HRA website:

<https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com/>

HRA Covid-19 support group:

hra-covid19-support@googlegroups.com