



HRA NEWSLETTER

Highfield Residents' Association

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

hractee@gmail.com

Spring 2021

HRA Events and Activities:

Frank McKenna and Patrick Coulter write

Regular events where we meet friends and neighbours have been central to strengthening community ties in Highfield. Our regular street parties, cinema evenings, music events, Christmas celebrations and the like, help make Highfield a great place to live. However, for the past year we've had to find alternative approaches to keep within the pandemic restrictions. Thanks to your support, we've held an Easter egg hunt, an online quiz, lit up our streets for winter and Christmas, sung street carols and brought Santa to visit Highfield. To keep in touch we've set up a volunteer system to help neighbours, organised WhatsApp groups for our streets and circulated 35 online news updates by the time this is circulated.

We're now looking forward to the gradual lifting of restrictions so that we can plan our autumn programme which will hopefully include a street party, community cinema and several concerts. Suggestions and offers of help with events are always very welcome.



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Notice of HRA Annual General Meeting for 2020-21

We shall hold our 48th **AGM by Zoom on Tuesday 27th April, 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 23rd April**, and again on **Monday 26th April**. If you would like help setting up and using Zoom please contact John Nealon between **Monday 19th and Thursday 22nd April** on hra.website@gmail.com

Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of 47th AGM by Zoom, held on Tuesday 3rd November 2020
2. Reports:
 - a) Chair's Report
 - b) Financial Report for period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021
 - c) Other brief reports include Planning, Website, Future Events, Vital Energi Funds, Traffic (including Liveable Streets), Book Group, Gardening Group
3. Election of committee for 2021-22
4. Our guest speaker, **Dr Sarah Darby**
Her provisional title is: ***Are we nearly there yet? Getting to zero carbon emissions and a healthier planet, at home and abroad***

The speaker at our AGM will be Sarah Darby, HRA member, who will share with us some insights gleaned from her work at the Environmental Change Institute of the University of Oxford. Sarah's work with the Energy Programme at the ECI has included evaluating energy advice programmes, new patterns of demand and the smart meter rollout. She and colleagues are now involved in Project LEO (Local Energy Oxfordshire), working with SSEN (Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks) and the Low Carbon Hub to develop ways of operating an electricity system that can run entirely on renewable supply.

If you'd like some background reading, go to <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-uk-is-now-halfway-to-meeting-its-net-zero-emissions-target>

Highfield Planning: *Mike Ratcliffe* discusses various planning issues that confront us

There's still a lot of controversy in planning, ranging from the national to the local. The government continues to promote the Oxford to Cambridge Arc – with a prospect of a framework and an over-arching body that might over-ride local plans and local planning authorities. Although it might lead to some benign outcomes (such as re-opening the Varsity Line – giving us rail links to Milton Keynes, Bedford and eventually Cambridge) it may also threaten the countryside that lies between the towns. Housing plans are also picking up – forcing South Oxfordshire to meet its required number of new houses which may come right to the edge of the city.

Inside Headington, that tension plays out too. The intensification of use of land will see the Barclays Bank building gain a new level – you can pick your euphemism from a list including 'bold', 'striking', 'modern'; we can only hope it looks better than in the drawings sent to Planning. The other intensification is the scheme to put housing on the Co-op site. That would mean closing the Co-op (and the Post Office inside it) while this is done. It's not so long ago that there were complaints about there being too many supermarkets in Headington, but things have settled. Local election campaigning has kicked off with the Post Office in centre-stage. The developer will come under pressure to retain the local amenity both in the short and long term.

Less politically contentious is the continuing development of the masterplan at the Old Road

Traffic In Highfield: *Frank McKenna and Patrick Coulter* write

Since 2005, HRA has campaigned to restrict through traffic in Highfield. Surveys showed that around 6000 vehicles per day used Highfield streets as a cut-through between London Road and Old Road. With much effort we persuaded the County Council to provide the junction narrowing at All Saints'/Lime Walk.

We've continued campaigning without success until last year when the County Council adopted a policy to provide low traffic neighbourhoods in residential areas subjected to excessive through traffic. It has begun to install traffic restrictions on a trial basis in East Oxford and will commence trials in Headington (including Highfield) later this year. This will involve installing through traffic restrictions on a six-month trial basis at key points and encouraging travellers to use buses, cycle or walk. For Highfield, this would restrict traffic cutting between London Road and

Campus. As the cladding goes onto the Institute of Developmental and Regenerative Medicine (and it now looms over the former Park Hospital building at the end of Lime Walk) a brief consultation was held on an Institute for Global Health building to go on the corner facing Old Road at the entrance to Highfield Avenue. It's



not an understated building. This last year has opened the eyes of many to the work of the University of Oxford in Headington. In our patch (with the new Botnar building too) it's quite visible.

We continue to struggle without a reliable notification system for planning developments. Email and web systems supposed to pick up local applications don't always work. Drop us a line if you spot something coming up that concerns you – a committee member will try to have a look too and we can make representations if necessary – but we don't have a veto.

Old Road. As soon as the County Council's plans are available we will publicise them to our residents and make sure you're involved in the consultation process.

Incident Book: The HRA committee is most grateful to those residents who have reported incidents for the Incident Book, enabling us to get an overview of the extent of problems, deficiencies, speeding, break-ins, potholes etc. Please carry on reporting incidents and issues to the relevant authorities, and to us at hreactee@gmail.com with the subject line 'Incident Book', giving your name, the problem, its location, and if a police issue, the Police Reference Number. Keeping a log can enable us to identify a pattern, which increases the chances of getting it resolved. Thank you!

Hilary Rollin

Environment - Hilary Rollin reports:

Wildlife Survey: Restrictions over the last year mean that our local environment has become even more important to us. The arrival of longer days and more inviting weather mean we shall soon be spending more time out of doors. What animals, birds, insects and wildflowers have you seen in your garden and nearby? Please report back to Olivia Goodrich via hracttee@gmail.com with the subject line 'Wildlife Sightings', giving your name, stating what you have seen and where (road and house number) to enable us to record these on a map for the HRA Wildlife Survey.

Another request: we also invite you to send in for display on the HRA website your photos that you have taken of local wildlife, trees and plants. Stating your name, where and when taken, and with a title that identifies the subject of your photo, please send to the webmaster at hra.website@gmail.com. For the current wildlife report see: <https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com/wildlife-survey.html>

Who's for a sunflower competition? Invitation to keen gardeners and would-be gardeners: how about planting sunflower seeds and seeing how they respond to a little tender loving care? In 2020 some very fine specimens were produced; let's hope for further friendly rivalry in a bid to grow the tallest ones this year and even if they don't grow particularly tall, what joy these amazing plants bring to Highfield. The RSPB recommends adding sunflowers to your wildlife-friendly garden; not only will finches, sparrows, tits, nuthatches and others relish them, but bees and sometimes butterflies will love the nectar. How much better for your carbon footprint than buying commercially produced seed for them! NB Planting-time is fast approaching.

Blitz on litter: The HRA committee will be in touch if and when the city authorities feel that the OxClean litterpick can safely be re-scheduled. Unfortunately, the Council cannot currently loan litterpickers, but if you are equipped with your own litterpicker, why not undertake your own clean-up operation?

HRA Subs for 2021-22 Gillian Beeston (Treasurer)

With continuing pandemic restrictions, our Street Reps will not be making house-to-house collections for our annual subscriptions, due 1st April, until these restrictions are lifted, hopefully at the end of June. As you may recall, the annual subs for 2020-21 were waived.

All Saints' Church - James Larminie reports:

A new priest has been selected to be the minister at All Saints' Church. Leon Catallo is well-known to the congregation as he has been occasionally helping out at services since the departure after over 60 years of Jim Cocke. We are all very pleased and he will be licensed on 6th July.

All Saints' Vicarage: The Vicarage for All Saints' Church at 85 Old Road, adjacent to the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, is to be sold in the coming months. Built in 1913, it is not very old, indeed it is younger than many houses in our patch. However, it was a different age socially, and is far too large for present purposes. The garden is vast. HRA members will be justifiably concerned about what the plot is to be used for. It is not as valuable as might be supposed, as its location means that only one buyer can usefully develop it – the Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust. The expectation is that the site will be developed for key worker housing, for which it could not be more ideally placed, and for which there is a huge need. However, the normal planning procedures will take their course, and probably very slowly. The house next door to Church House (our community hall) is almost certainly to be expanded slightly and become the new and more appropriately sized Vicarage. JL

Church House: After being totally shut down at the end of last year, activities will soon be gradually restarting in Church House.

All being well, activities for children will re-start from 12th April – however only if of an "organised nature" – so informal playgroups will not be allowed. There are some activities HRA members may be interested in. For pre-school children there are Baby College classes (www.babycollege.co.uk). For older children and teenagers wanting something exciting there is aerial gymnastics on Wednesday and Friday late afternoons (www.studio2oxford.com). Judo on Tuesday evenings will also be re-starting at some point. Not much allowed for adults till mid-May, and no social events, but that will include Pilates (www.pop-up-pilates.com) and aerial gymnastics for all ages. It will be a slow process, but hopefully you will all visit on May 6th for the local elections.

JL

How often have you thought ‘Should I, or shouldn’t I bother the Police? But how? I’m not sure how to...’?

You may find the answer to that first question in what our PCSO, Ahmed Mohamed, once said to us: ‘Please help us to do our job by reporting issues to us.’ As for the answer to the second question; how to report:

Emergencies need to be reported to 999. ‘Emergency’ means any of the following: that a serious offence is in progress or has just been committed; someone is in immediate danger of harm; property is in danger of being damaged; a serious disruption to public order is likely.

Non-emergencies: Contact Neighbourhood Police Officers, PC Toby Kirby or PCSO Ahmed Mohamed, Tel. 101, or email to OxfordNortheastNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Anti-social Behaviour including environmental crime, e.g. fly-tipping: Phone the Community Response Team on the main Council number, 01865 249811, or email saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk HR

Useful addresses (as at March 2021)

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: cllrmllygo@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 Tony Kirby 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: T: 249811; website: www.oxford.gov.uk

Antisocial Behaviour Team: website:

www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decC/Anti_Social_Behaviour_and_CANAcT_occw.htm

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

Streetscene: T: 247811; E: streetscene@oxford.co.uk

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

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

Headington: website: www.headington.org.uk;

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

Headington Action: website: <https://headingtonaction.org/>

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 Planning:

hra.planning.oxford@gmail.com

HRA Webmaster:

hra.website@gmail.com

HRA Website:

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

HRA Covid-19 support group:

hra-covid19-support@googlegroups.com