



HRA NEWSLETTER

Highfield Residents' Association

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Spring 2024

HRA Future Plans? For the past fifteen years or so HRA has organised a programme of community events throughout the year. These include street parties, cinema evenings, litterpicks, concerts, pub quizzes, ceilidhs, street carols, plays and much more. We also look after planning developments which may impact on Highfield and link to our local councillors. We keep members in touch through regular updates online and a six-monthly newsletter.

Mostly, this has been achieved through the activity of a small team, many of whom have been playing key roles for a considerable time. If we are to maintain our HRA as a key part of our community we really do need to recruit new members to this team to take the lead on planning and organising events and activities. Otherwise, over time our HRA will decline and our community will be much the poorer.

To encourage members to play an active part in the future of HRA, we have organised an Open Morning on Saturday 11th May 10 to 12 in All Saints' Church House, New High Street, where you can talk to Committee Members over a tea/coffee and find out more about HRA and how you could play a role in its future development. It can be both rewarding and good fun!

So please book this date in your diary and come and talk to us.

HRA Events: Since our last newsletter we have held several very well attended film evenings. We have held our annual Street Carols which proves more popular each year. Our Spring Litterpick was a great success with over thirty members (including lots of very keen children, some very young as in the photo) joining us to clean up our local streets. For the coming months we hope to include more film evenings and perhaps a street party. Our future programme will depend on the success of our recruitment initiative (see HRA Future Plans above).

Patrick Coulter



51st Annual General Meeting

Thursday 25th April at 7.30 pm, All Saints' Church, Lime Walk

HRA belongs to you so come along to the AGM and:

- hear what we've done in the past year
- discuss plans for the coming year
- raise local issues
- hear how we've spent your subscription
- select officers and committee for 2024 (new committee members welcome)

Followed at around 8.15 pm by:

The Future of Green Spaces in Oxford and Headington. Presentation by Mattia Troiano, Project Leader Oxford University School of Geography and Environment. Mattia will describe the project, which seeks to research and improve how we protect and conserve our green spaces. Then we'll have questions and discussion followed by refreshments at 9 pm.

From Our Treasurer - To all our Street Reps for their excellent work in collecting subs from our members. Many of our long-standing members will recall that in past years we have collected subs in the Spring. We wish to revert to this practice but feel that asking for subs this April would be too soon after the last collection. Our finances are in a healthy state and so we have decided that Street Reps will not be calling and asking for your subs this year but in the Spring of 2025.

Chris Dinsdale

Warneford Park Project: On Thursday 14 March, Hilary, Patrick, and William, representing HRA, attended a meeting organized by executives of the Warneford Park Project. This is a multi-faceted, long-term project to develop Warneford Park as a centre for research into and treatment of mental health. Currently, the Warneford Hospital is a major centre for this kind of research and treatment, one of only two in England. The project involves Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, University of Oxford, and a University Partner & Donor. The goal is to deliver:

1. A new mental health hospital for Oxford and Oxfordshire
2. New research facilities for the Psychiatry Department and related University of Oxford departments
3. A major innovation centre for biotech, pharma and start-up companies
4. New graduate college for University of Oxford, focused on medical sciences, bio-engineering and related disciplines.

The project needs approximately £200 million of capital to fund the hospital element of Warneford Park, and it needs to secure £300 million match funding. The executives have engaged with stakeholders about the need for this funding. The project continues to receive positive national feedback and strong local support and will continue engagement during the planning process. For the objective of securing planning permission for the site, the timetable is:

1. June 2024: first formal public engagement on the planning application
 2. October/November 2024: follow-up public engagement based on residents' feedback
 3. Spring 2025: submission of planning application
- There is more to come on this project, and we will aim to keep members of HRA informed. It will be helpful, if as many members as are able, were to attend the open meeting in June 2024 for a presentation on the planning application.

William Marx

HRA Street Gardening: The planters at the junction of All Saints' Road and Lime Walk have been a feature of the local street furniture for several years now. Splendid daffodils have been in flower in March, and although predicting anything when it comes to gardening is, at best, chancing an arm, we can expect alliums in the coming months. The summer plan is for a mixture of marigolds, lobelia, white cosmos, and rudbeckia. Two things keep the planters in good shape: regular, periodic replanting in fresh compost, and a roster of local residents prepared to keep them watered throughout the summer months. You know who you are – thank you!

The tree-garden on the corner of All Saints' Road and Barrington Close is much more of a work in progress than the planters. The idea is for anyone who has anything to plant to come on down and stick it in. At the moment, the name of the game is the survival of the fittest. Snowdrops, forget-me-nots, crocuses, and primroses have been added recently, and I'm hopeful that ferns planted last autumn will revive. It will take time to reach a critical mass of flora such that the site actually begins to look like a flower garden, but if we can keep the dogs and the Voi e-scooters off it then it stands a chance. At the end of the summer, when we've seen what has, and what has not, come up, we'll have a much better idea of what will work best. The ground is already tight with networks of fine fibres that I assume are extensions of the tree roots. It may take time for the right plant to find its rightful place. **In the meantime, we'll have a free-for-all planting day on Saturday April 13th from 10 am. If you've anything to plant bring it along and we'll plant it.**

Phil Hunter

Unite Garden – where's the promised landscaping? The annual litterpick is neatly timed in spring. While the notions of a 'spring clean' may have faded, it's a chance to go around paying attention to the marginal areas where litter can accumulate. While collecting on London Road, I looked at a large litter-strewn patch that was off limits for the OxClean mandate: the former front gardens of numbers 36, 38 and 40 -



now Beech House. I'm sure that Unite will clear the litter, but of a deeper concern is how little has been done on the landscaping. In the planning permission for the student accommodation the developers submitted both a Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme and a Landscape Management Plan. We were promised an enhancement as part of the development. What happened, of course, was a few ferns and a lot of bark chippings. Each year spring brings a reminder of the gap between the developer's promises and what Unite has delivered as the annual garden plants re-emerge – particularly those that lined the path leading to number 36. Unite values its student properties at £5 billion and made £100 million profit in 2023. I bet they could run to a make-over of those former gardens in line with their plans.

Mike Ratcliffe

Harry Edwards in conversation with HRA

1. Can you tell us about your early life? My sister and I were brought up in Orpington, and I went to a technical high school in Sidcup. After A Levels, I undertook an HND Mechanical Engineering course at Oxford Polytechnic. I met Sandra whilst on a temporary lab technician post at the Churchill Hospital.

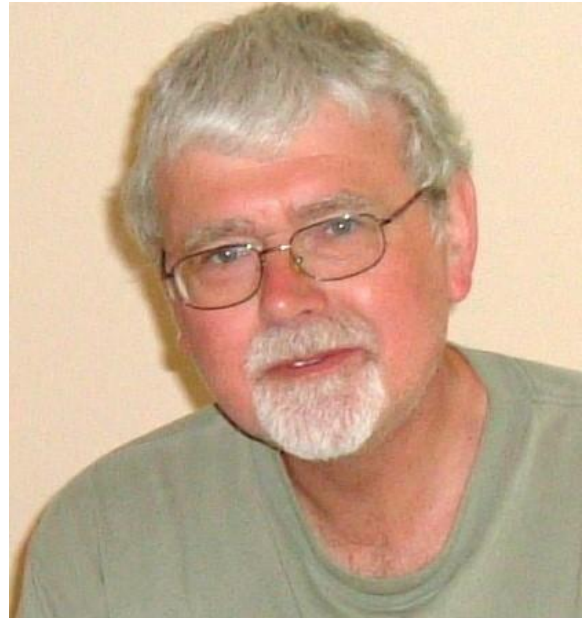
2. After the Oxford Poly what sort of career did you go in for? My first real job was Scientific Officer at the Government's Hydraulics Research Station at Wallingford, designing instruments for measuring water flows, sediment movements in rivers, canals, and coasts. After seven years at HRS, I joined British Ever Ready in their new development group in Abingdon to work on new battery types and solar cells (PV) – which particularly interested me. Although Ever Ready plc collapsed a few years later, I was able to transfer some PV technology to BP who had taken up solar PV commercially. That seven-year job included a two-year posting to South Africa with my family. Back in the UK, I joined the Government Renewable Energy Development Programme at Harwell. The aim was to help industry meet UK renewable energy objectives. That consultancy role involved more world travel – Japan stands out as a really fascinating and engaging culture.

3. What came next? In 2002 I took early retirement, set up as a PV consultant, and trained as a Domestic Energy Assessor to carry out Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) when these became mandatory on selling a house. A pleasant 'winding-down' period of self-employment.

4. How did you become involved in canal work? An ad in the Oxford Times led to me crewing a Cotswolds Canal Trust trip-boat on the Thames at Lechlade and then to hands-on canal restoration in Stroud. As a family we enjoyed many canal holidays, so this was a logical step – now Stroud is our second home, social scene and hobby – which keeps me fit!

5. When and how did you come in contact with HRA? That's lost in the mists of time – soon after moving to Finch Close in 1986 and perhaps Tony Joyce persuaded me.

6. What can you tell me about your role in HRA? Under Tony's Chairmanship I soon took a special interest in responding to local planning applications. I was keen to set up the forum (Headington Forward) for all the local institutions, councillors and resident groups to debate stakeholder influences on the future of Headington and more recently, put changes to the local plan at the Inspector's Inquiry – sadly to no avail! There were some successes – improving communications between City



Planning, Building Control and Enforcement following on from a presentation from officers to HRA on City Planning processes. A big community success was achieving Warneford Meadow declared a Town Green in the face of fierce opposition by the NHS, which had been ordered to dispose of land assets to raise funds.

7. Every year your runner beans tower over your garden wall. Are you a keen gardener? The runner beans grow well in a six-foot-by-six-foot patch. Our gardening flourished during lock-down and having outgrown the 'top field' we now grow tomatoes and other vegetables in barrels.

8. What changes have you seen in the Headington area over the years? The biggest thing has been the growth of the institutions. The Radcliffe Infirmary moved to Headley Way soon after we moved here and since then all the hospitals, Oxford Brookes and the Old Road Campus have continued to expand enormously. Whilst access to the hospitals is handy for us, it has meant a huge growth in traffic and the planners struggle find solutions.

9. What do you value most about HRA? The social events which foster community cohesion, like the street parties, film nights, litterpicks, - these are all very positive.

HRA Garden Group is about enjoying each other's gardens and discovering more about plants. If you are interested, contact Sally Brodhurst (sallybrodhurst@gmail.com)

HRA Book Group meets every six weeks or so at 5.00 pm, for an hour - normally on Monday evenings. We are a fairly small group and meet in people's homes. If you would like to join, email Susie Pye, (susiepye@gmail.com) to find out more.

Incident Log: Have you ever felt that the quality of life is being affected by a break-in, stolen bike, broken wing mirror when parked, mal-functioning streetlight, e-scooters with three on board creating havoc on pedestrian-only pavements, late-night noise etc? In addition to reporting these to the relevant authority e.g. police/ councillors/ FIX MY STREET (<https://www.fixmystreet.com/>) - send details to hracttee@gmail.com (including Police Reference number if reported to the police). HRA will log these, and where a pattern emerges, we can bring pressure to bear.

Hilary Rollin

Useful addresses:

Member of Parliament (Lab), Anneliese Dodds, MP, Unit A, Bishops Mews, Transport Way, Oxford OX4 6HD.

T: 01865 595790. E: anneliese4oxford@gmail.com

County Councillor: Headington & Quarry

Roz Smith (Lib Dem), 12 Weyland Road, Headington Quarry, Oxford OX3 8PD. T: 01865 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: 01865 766995. M: 07710 451769.

E: liz.brighouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk

City Councillors: Headington Ward

Chris Smowton (Lib Dem), Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX. M: 07443 331700. E: cllrcsmowton@oxford.gov.uk

Mohammed Altaf-Khan (Lib Dem), 83 Hugh Allen Crescent, Oxford OX3 0HL. T: 01865 798777 M: 07931 345554.

E: maltafkhan@hotmail.com

City Councillors: Churchill Ward

Mark Lygo (Lab), 20 Valentia Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 7PL. M: 07826 527047. E: cllrmylgo@oxford.gov.uk

Susan Brown (Lab), 34 Canal Street, Oxford OX2 6BQ. M: 07775 792447. E: cllrsbrown@oxford.gov.uk

Thames Valley Police <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk>. For emergencies T: 999

Oxford Northeast Neighbourhood Police Team:

Sgt Marc Robinson, Sgt Peter Ciechan, PC Lauren Edkins

PCSO Anabel White and PCSO Joshua Tedstone

T: 101 E: OxfordNortheastNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Oxford Brookes Community Engagement & Social Responsibility:

Andrea Siret. T: 01865 535225. E: community@brookes.ac.uk https://service.brookes.ac.uk/cms/community_complaints

Oxford City Council: T: 01865 249811 <http://www.oxford.gov.uk>.

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

Community Response Team: T: 01865 249811 E: saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk

Streetscene: T: 01865 252971

Free reporting service for lost, found and stolen pets in Oxford: <http://www.oxford.animalfinders.co.uk>

Oxfordshire County Council: T: 01865 792422 <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk>.

Headington News: <https://www.headington.org.uk/news/today.htm> E: stephanie.jenkins@gmail.com

Highfield History section: <http://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/highfield/>

Headington Action: <https://headingtonaction.org/> E: headington.action@gmail.com

Co-wheels Car Club: <http://www.co-wheels.org.uk>

Fix-My-Street: <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

HRA Committee:

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