



HRA NEWSLETTER

Highfield Residents' Association

Spring 2018

HRA Community Events

Frank McKenna and Patrick Coulter write:

Since our last newsletter we've held four community events. The Highfield history evening in November looked closely at the history and character of our local streets and gave us a much richer understanding of our neighbourhood. We carolled our way round Highfield in December with support from Father Christmas. In January we held another music evening with a band of brilliant local musicians and raised over £400 for Asylum Welcome. In February we held our first community cinema evening when Tom Hanks showed us how to land a plane on the Hudson. Unfortunately, we had to postpone our Spring Litterpick due to snow and icy winds, and this will now be held in April (see below) in warm sunshine. **This financial year we've held nine community events and we hope to have a similar programme for the coming year.** For a start - in April we have our AGM, in June a Summer Street Party and in September our annual street meal and cinema evening, details below. Our thanks to everyone who helped organise events and came along to support on the day. By holding regular events we strengthen our community ties. If you have suggestions for our programme or would like to help us plan and carry it out please contact us.

Spring/Summer Programme

25th April (Wednesday) **Annual General Meeting**
7.30pm, All Saints' Church House, New High Street

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 2018 (new committee members welcome)

Followed at around 8.15pm by:

Medical Research in Headington – Professor Sarah Gilbert will describe the medical research programme currently being carried out on the Old Road Campus. Then we'll have questions and discussion followed by refreshments at 9pm.

21st April (Saturday) 10am **Annual Litterpick** – come and help us tidy up our neighbourhood, everyone welcome – we provide gloves and equipment and refreshments (indoors!) afterwards.

June 24th (Sunday) **The Great Get-Together** - a day of celebration including a picnic lunch (on the street), street party games, open gardens, afternoon teas, music and an evening social in the Butchers Arms. All Saints' Road will be closed for the day. Further details shortly. *[The Great Get-Together is a national event sponsored by the Jo Cox Foundation aiming to get communities to come together to celebrate connections and commonality.]*

Late September – **Street Meze and Cinema** on All Saints' Road – details later.

Community Fund. Residents may be aware that Vital Energi contributed £10k to be spent by the community in recognition of the disturbance caused by the construction of the energy pipeline. The money is currently being held by Headington Action for the community. We have agreed that £1k will be provided to Sandfield Rd residents and the remaining £9k will be spent in Highfield under the auspices of HRA. When canvassed last autumn, residents were keen on measures to improve the street scene and to reduce traffic speeds. We (HRA) are working up some options. When these have been prepared (hopefully quite soon) we will arrange an exhibition to obtain residents' views.

Local Green Spaces

Mike Ratcliffe writes:

Strictly, the streets that form our residents' association area have precious little public green space. The public parks are a little way away, Valentia Road being closest, but then the contrasting spaces of South Park and Bury Knowle Park, with the playing fields of Margaret Road are well known to young footballers. **Not immediately obvious, though, are three contrasting green spaces, each undergoing a transformation under the care of active friends groups.** Those new to the area might struggle to find these, but the reward is worth it.

Warneford Meadow. The subject of much concern about possible development, the meadow is now **protected as a town green.** Tucked behind Roosevelt Drive or Hill Top Road, the meadow is 20 acres of natural grassland. An important part of the green corridor through Headington, it is now under more active management and has been mown in recent years to promote biodiversity. The orchard has also received some attention.

Lye Valley. Internationally recognised as being a rare habitat formed by the springs that feed the brook and create a fen. The path to this hidden valley runs from The Slade, and there is now a well-constructed boardwalk that takes you along so you can either leave at its namesake road, or head on around the golf course towards Temple Cowley. As it's so distinctive, there are many rare and scarce plants and animals. The Friends of Lye Valley are particularly active, working with the City Council to protect and enhance the space. A delight just to walk through, do check the Friends' website for their many informative and fun events (and also for the opportunity to help).

Stansfeld Woodland. Even harder to find, Stansfeld is behind Quarry Road and runs down towards the bypass. Given to Birmingham City Council, it was sold to the Oxford Trust which is developing a new Innovation and Science Education Centre on the footprint of the old residential buildings. Although a few groups of children had been allowed access, it was private land. The new plans should provide better access and volunteers are supporting the Trust in clearing the overgrown areas and restoring access routes. When the Centre opens in 2019 we should have access to the green spaces too.

These sites, together with the more managed parks and the Country Park at Shotover, provide



Shotover in the snow. Photo ©Rosie Martin

a context for our patch. Many HRA members are active in the friends' associations and actively look out for potential hazards (including unwanted discharges into Boundary Brook). **If you don't know them, then get out and explore - there's green space just around the corner.**

Links: www.friendsofwarnefordmeadow.org.uk;
www.friendsoflyevalley.org.uk;
<http://theoxfordtrust.co.uk/our-work/stansfeld-park/>

Data Privacy Notice: This privacy notice is issued to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations which are in force after **25th May 2018**. The HRA maintains a list of members, their names and addresses, email addresses if provided, and whether or not the subscription has been paid. This information is used to maintain an email address list for disseminating information, for delivering a newsletter twice a year, and for producing member lists for the street representatives when collecting subscriptions. The complete membership list can only be viewed by the Membership Secretary. The list of members is never shared with any other organisation. The 'lawful basis' for this data processing is the 'legitimate interests' of the HRA – we clearly need to maintain a list of our members. *If you have any questions about this, please contact the Membership Secretary, James Larminie, 81 Old Road.*

HRA Website: highfieldresidents.weebly.com

Mo Chandler writes:

The HRA website is up and running and being regularly updated with local news, details of events, resident surveys and more. There's even an RSS link so please take the time to visit and let us know what you think. You'll find the RSS Feed button in the panel on the right hand side of the News page. To use it:

- Right click on the RSS icon or button.
- Select "Copy Link" to copy the URL of the feed.
- Go to your Web Browser address bar or RSS Feed Reader package.
- Paste the URL into the address bar or Feed Reader package.

Shaping Highfield's Character *Gill Beeston writes:*

At the Highfield Character and History evening last November, Gill and Hilary summarised their report on the Character and Identity of Highfield (area 10) for the Headington Neighbourhood Plan. Some residents brought along old property deeds, early Ordnance Survey maps and even an aerial photo that helped to reveal the history and character of our area.

OS for 1880 showed that there were no houses in Highfield other than the c. 1700 Highfield Farmhouse. In 1875 the landowner, Revd JWA Taylor, advertised for sale the 70-acre High Field being "well adapted for good Houses" which he called Highfield Estate (this did not include the Britannia Inn and its field, which was separately owned). But he had no takers, so he let the land on short leases/ tenancies for farming and market gardening. As examples of his vision, and at his own expense, in 1878 Taylor built two large houses to be sold on: Highfield Cottage on Old Rd, which he described as "a small convenient house" (the house on the south-west corner of Bickerton Rd and Old Rd extended and converted to flats in 2005), and Ellerslie on London Rd, later renamed Dorset House (demolished 2004 for student accommodation but retaining the name).

OS for 1899 showed these two speculative builds, also Brookside House (now Headington Preparatory School) standing in 9 acres of land. The map also showed that Lime Walk and several houses along it had by then been built. Although Taylor's preference was for up-market/select development, he also recognised the need for good quality artisan housing. In 1884 he had Lime Walk at the southern end made up and planted with lime trees up to about where the Methodist Church now is. To protect his estate, Taylor imposed strict covenants as to building lines, uniform front boundary walls, no "sale of intoxicating liquor" or usage for "any immoral purposes so as to become a nuisance". He also stipulated that plans were to be approved by him before building started.

As Highfield land changed hands after Taylor's death in 1886, the restrictive covenants continued: a **deed of 1890** showed that a substantial plot on Old Rd was restricted to one house only, with a building line of not less than 25ft from the road, and again the plans had to be approved by the vendors (for a fee of 10 shillings!). The purchaser was bound "not (to) carry on ...any noisy noxious or offensive trade or manufacture

or business, or any trade, manufacture or business which in the judgment of the Vendor shall be injurious for the health of the neighbourhood, nor do or suffer to be done any act or thing which may lend to the annoyance, disturbance or damage of the Vendor or any of the adjoining owners..."

A deed dated 1911 revealed that land sold for housing in Stapleton Rd had similar trading restrictions.



OS for 1921 showed that much of Highfield was still under cultivation as nurseries or allotments. Seven years later, the orchards along Latimer Rd were being sold off for housing: a **deed of 1928** stipulated that the building line was set back 30ft from the road. An **aerial photo of 1928** was even more revealing, showing very clearly the number of orchards in Highfield, and of course many of these trees are still in our gardens.

If you have old documents that reveal the character of Highfield, we'd love to hear from you.

For a full account of Highfield's history:

www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/highfield

Recycling in Oxford

Hilary Rollin writes:

There has been a wealth of publicity recently about the damage done to the environment by plastics, and the need to reduce our use of this material. But, particularly with regard to plastics, how sure are you about what goes where when it comes to the landfill or the recycling collection? For instance, did you know you can put bubble wrap and clean cling film in the recycling bin? Advice is constantly changing; for example, you can now also put shredded paper into the blue bin, so why not check on [this link](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20074/recycling_advice/25/what_goes_in_the_blue_recycling_bin) for latest advice? **https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20074/recycling_advice/25/what_goes_in_the_blue_recycling_bin**

And while on the recycling theme, you might find that a visit to the Energy Recovery Facility at Ardley, unlikely as this may sound, makes a fascinating and enlightening (free) outing. Or the Food Waste Recycling Plant at Cassington? Visits can be arranged for both. Just contact the Council's Laura Baughan at lbaughan@oxford.gov.uk. If you want to take a group, you can make contact directly via: <https://viridor.co.uk/our-operations/energy/energy-recovery-facilities/ardley-erf/visitor-centre/book-a-visit-2/>