



HRA NEWSLETTER

Highfield Residents' Association

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

hracttee@gmail.com

Autumn 2024

HRA Events.

Earlier this year HRA held a recruitment drive to encourage members to play an active role in organising our programme of events. We are still seeking members willing to commit small amounts of time to help us plan, organise and manage our regular events. Please let us know if you would like to join our team of volunteers helping to build our community through a programme of local events like film nights, street parties, music evenings.

In September, we held our annual Street Cinema. The rain cleared and the sun came out at just the right moment, and over a hundred neighbours and friends enjoyed a street café and meal followed by a showing of "Wonka".

In October, we held a very successful walk from Highfield through the Warneford Meadow and Lye Valley. Despite the dire weather forecast the sun came out and accompanied us for the duration of the walk. Congratulations to Wocky and Lucy for organising this initiative; the general consensus was that members would like this to be the start of a series.



On **Friday 1st November**, as part of our community cinema programme, we're showing "The Lady in the Van" as a tribute to a great local actor and star, Maggie Smith, who was educated and trained in Oxford. Excellent reviews, for example, "Maggie Smith is terrific as the muse in the driveway" (Guardian). All Saints' Church House 7.30 pm, doors from 7.00 pm. On **Saturday 14th December** join us for our annual street carol singing 6.00 pm followed by refreshments in All Saints' Church. In **early February** we hope to present an evening of music and song in aid of Asylum Welcome. So far, these regular concerts have raised over a thousand pounds for this very worthwhile local charity. Details to follow. Please let us know if you have suggestions for events or would like to join us on the Events Group (hracttee@gmail.com).

Frank McKenna and Patrick Coulter. Photo © Kate Bailey-Wilson

HRA Incident Log. In the Incident Log we record untoward incidents or behaviour in our area – anything from late-night noise, suspicious testing of car door handles, speeding, vandalism, potholes, missed bins, attempted break-ins, whatever...

Don't think that any such incident is too petty to be worth reporting. In the first instance, please report the problem to the relevant authority, then fill us in at hracttee@gmail.com stating the Crime Reference Number if you have referred the issue to the police. By informing HRA of any incidents, you enable us to assess if there is a pattern, and if so, draw it to the attention of the relevant authority, speaking with a louder voice than can the individual.

Thanks to those who have reported recent incidents. These include bag-snatching in Bury Knowle Park by a cyclist approaching pedestrians from behind; theft and vandalism on Old Rd and Bickerton Rd, testing of car locks on Bickerton Rd; bike theft from the JR and from the locked bike sheds on the Old Road Campus.

Hilary Rollin

Update on 60 Old Road. Members of HRA will no doubt recall the concern over plans published in 2021 and 2022 to develop what is known as 60 Old Road. This site is very large and stretches from Old Road to Coolidge Close. The developer aimed to convert the original multi-room dwelling into an HMO and to use the remainder of the site for a high-density housing project. Oxford City Council approved the first phase of the project (2021), and the building is now in use as an HMO with adequate off-road parking. The second phase (2022), however, provoked a number of objections including from the HRA on the grounds of high density. In the light of objections, in September 2022 the developer withdrew plans for this second phase and submitted an outline for a much-reduced version of the project for 8 x 1-bed flats. The one curious aspect of this plan was that it would back onto, not face onto Coolidge Close. The source of this feature was that the previous owner had retained what is known as a ransom strip, here a narrow strip of land along Coolidge Close. This would prevent access to the flats from the road. The good news is that in the most recent proposal (24/02038/FUL) access to the site is shown as from Coolidge Close with two dropped curbs. It would seem that the developer has purchased the ransom strip or it was given up by the previous owner of the site. Altogether, this shows what can be achieved through dialogue between residents and developers.

William Marx

Update on Warneford Park. To recap: the original buildings at Warneford hospital cannot be the future of the care that is offered there. A new hospital is needed. It will be built on the open space on the site, adjacent to the meadow. There will be space for the university research department and for some start-up companies. Once the hospital is built, the old buildings will become a graduate college. This will find them a new use, and modern accommodation for the students will also be built.

This is all dependent on the NHS finding the money to build a new hospital. The headline figure for the cost of the scheme is £500 million; some of this will be linked to the university, but that's still a big number.

Those planning this scheme have reached out to residents' associations in advance, but last month they launched a public consultation. This is still at the concept level, but as you'd expect people are interested in all the things that come with a big development: light, noise, traffic etc. There's also the disruption that comes from construction traffic getting on and off site. The meadow itself is a focus - the architects want to avoid the looming effect that some of the Churchill buildings have and will plan the buildings differently. There's more information at <https://warnefordpark.co.uk>

Mike Ratcliffe

Telraam S2 Traffic Counters <https://telraam.net/en/what-is-telraam>

After a long delay, we now have two operating traffic counters installed in Highfield. These were ordered a year ago, but only recently became fully operational. The devices record travel every hour for 24 hours seven days a week and provide the following breakdown: **pedestrians, two-wheelers, cars, heavy vehicles, night traffic, car speeds, direction of travel.** For the first two weeks of October, the following statistics were recorded:

Stapleton Road – modal split:

Pedestrians:	20.23 %
Two-wheelers:	20.33 %
Cars:	50.90 %
Heavy vehicles:	8.55 %

Lime Walk – modal split:

Pedestrians:	17.06 %
Two-wheelers:	11.32 %
Cars:	64.89 %
Heavy vehicles:	6.73 %

The volume of traffic in these two roads is higher than in most residential streets in Headington and the patterns of behaviour link directly to the cycles of access to work, treatment at the hospitals and education. There are now other counters in Headington and possibly more to come.

As we gather data over an extended period we should be able to develop further details about days, weeks and months to help developing better traffic management. For more details and to see what is happening across Oxford: <https://telraam.net/en#14/51.7554/-1.2131>

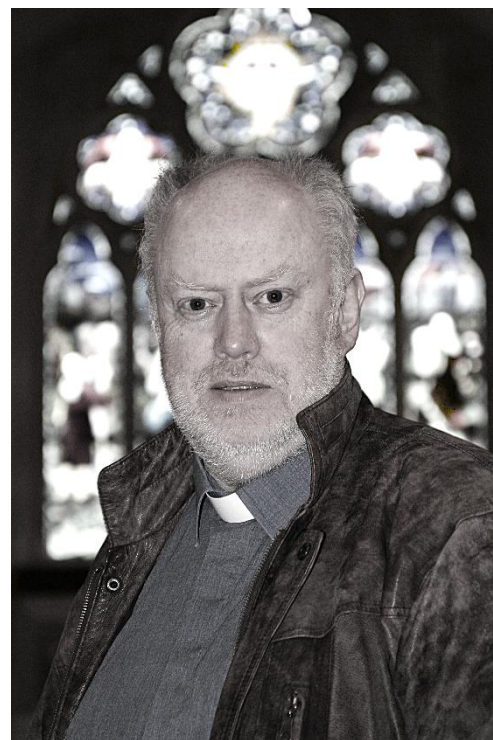
Frank McKenna

Rev Captain Paul Niemiec, Priest-in-Charge, All Saints' Highfield, in conversation with HRA

Where did you spend your early years? I was born in north London and attended schools on the Hertfordshire-Essex borders. My school days were not particularly noteworthy, but when I was twelve, I wrote to Thomas Cook's asking for a job. They advised me to re-apply when I was sixteen.

Tell us about your career and the most significant stages of it. I re-applied to work for Cook's and was taken on. I then had ten years with them learning the travel business.

Did your job with Cook's mean you travelled about a lot? Not as much as you might think. I went to Spain, Denmark and Indonesia. Indonesia had a huge effect on me, because of the terrible poverty almost side-by-side with opulence. I was put up in a five-star hotel and told not to turn left at the end of the road. Me being me, I did turn left. It was a real eye-opener.



When did you decide to become ordained and was this the culmination of a long process, or a sudden conviction that this was your true calling? I had a motor-bike accident, which led to me being a patient at Stoke Mandeville Hospital for two years. This gave me time to reflect on my future and I decided to go into Christian ministry. I became a Church Army officer in 1984. My work was with young people, initially being responsible for Wiltshire and Dorset. Later I took on Northamptonshire, Rutland and much of Peterborough. I arranged and participated in a large number of events and festivals. I met a huge variety of people, including Billy Graham, Rick Stein and three Archbishops of Canterbury. But the most inspiring person was someone whose name I have forgotten, but she was a very ordinary-looking woman, about five foot tall, who had opened sixty schools in Africa. With a colleague I developed a programme of worship aimed at young people called *Critical Mass*. But I was not allowed to celebrate Holy Communion. This was the spur to becoming ordained.

Is there an aspect of your previous life that is particularly relevant to your role here? In my previous roles, I met many people and that is what I am doing here. My aim is to be in touch with all the local church leaders and as many local people as possible. I am most impressed by the variety of church groups we have in Headington. Spiritually we are well provided for here. This is in stark contrast to the situation in the countryside, where church attendance is difficult to foster. A major problem is the enormous amount of distracting alternatives on offer to people, especially the young. To take only one example, think of how reading habits have changed radically since about 1980 with the advent of electronic media.

The Church of England is sometimes perceived as appealing mainly to the elderly. What opportunities do you see for involving more young people and children in the life of the church? Young people are our future, and as I said, I have been involved with rock festivals and concerts, including one in Salisbury Cathedral. We need financial investment in our young people, and I have been lobbying for more resources for a long time. Fortunately, the Church of England is putting a lot of funding in this area and young people are receptive to the Christian message.

Excluding the Bible, what is your favourite book? That's easy. It's *Mash* by Richard Hooker. (Not the theologian, by the way.) It depicts how humans cope in desperate conditions.

What are your tastes in music? I would describe them as 'totally eclectic.'

Nicholas Rollin

Community planting. Thanks to the roster of waterers that kept the planters at the junction of All Saints' Road and Lime Walk looking good all summer. Plans are in hand for an autumnal tidy once seeds have set so that we can grow on more of the same for next year.

The plot we've called the Tree Garden on the corner of Barrington Close is much more of a work in progress. Hollyhocks, rose campion (*Lychnis coronaria*), strawberry plants, and ferns have established themselves, along with a variety of other plants that we may, or may not, see next year. It's interesting to see that seeds from the nearby locust tree have germinated too. We'll aim for a review in the spring along with a session of weeding, followed by some more planting-up.

Phil Hunter

HRA Garden Group. Despite the ups and downs of our summer weather this year, the Garden Group has been happily active, with a summer of interesting visits. We aim to have one garden visit a month. Starting off in April, with the yellow blooms of spring, we carried on via the roses, geraniums, agapanthus and of course vegetables, of summer, right through to September and the fine rich autumn colours of those reliable perennials, asters, rudbeckias and sedums. Even when gardens have been visited before, there is always something new to see in them.

We would be delighted to welcome any new gardens and their owners (if you are interested, contact sallybrodhurst@gmail.com). We will meet again next spring.

Sally Brodhurst

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.

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

Oxford Northeast Neighbourhood Police Team:

Sgt Stephen Why, PC Charis Dant, PC Matthew Bryce, PC Robert Offer,

PCSO Anabel White, PCSO Joshua Tedstone. T: 101 E: OxfordNortheastNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Oxford Brookes Community Engagement & Social Responsibility Team:

T: 01865 535255. 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

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/>

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