



HRA NEWSLETTER

Highfield Residents' Association

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

hracttee@gmail.com

Spring 2025

Community Events: Organising community events is one of the most important activities of the HRA. We have held a good number since the last newsletter, and more are planned for the summer.

In December our **Street Carol Singing**, accompanied by Father Christmas, gathered a bigger crowd than ever before, too many to count really, over sixty in any case. It was great fun, and a good number gathered in All Saints' Church for refreshments afterwards. We had a very enjoyable **Community Walk** down to the University Parks in February, and also another **Film Night** – on Valentine's Day. We showed the (according to some) unsurpassed film *Casablanca*, much enjoyed by the thirty-five or so people there. This was using our newly acquired projector, which will make it easier to do this in future. On 8th March we had our **Annual Litter Pick**, where more and more people each year help clean up our area, and we now reach out further afield to Boundary Brook and Valentia Road, and the woods south of Old Road. The brook yielded three shopping trolleys and one scooter, as well as more conventional litter! A wonderful concert of folk music in the Upper Hall of Church House in aid of **Asylum Welcome** finished off our Spring meetings in great style. These concerts are always so good. About £500 was raised for Asylum Welcome.



Coming up there is another **Community Walk** on 11th May. This will be around Shotover. Either meet in the car park there at 2:30 or, for the more energetic, meet at the community notice board in All Saints' Road at 2:00 pm. Later in the year, we will have a **Summer Street Party** in June or July, an **Open Gardens Day** in July or August, a **Street Party and Cinema** on 20th September 4:30 to 9:30 pm. Details of all these events are still being finalised and will be publicised. And of course, there is the **Annual General Meeting**, details below.

James Larminie

HRA AGM 16th April 2025 7.30-9.00 pm in All Saints' Church:

The first half-hour or so is an opportunity to review HRA activities in 2024-25, and plans for 2025-26 with brief reports from HRA officers, including events, finance and planning matters.



For the second part we are delighted to welcome Dr Judy Webb, MBE, BEM, local ecologist and conservationist with a special interest in Oxfordshire's alkaline calcareous fens, and among her many other activities, Chair of Friends of Lye Valley (FOLV).

After her presentation, titled "Transforming 'The Dump' or 'The Pit' to the high nature-value site it is today" Judy will take questions. We are highly privileged to have Judy as our guest speaker. This is an event not to be missed. For further information, see: <http://judithwebb.weebly.com/> And <http://friendsoflyealley.org.uk>

Hilary Rollin

Photograph by Tony Gillie of the Lye Valley

A message from the Treasurer: Would YOU like to save HRA money? If so please read on as it is now cheaper to pay our subscriptions electronically rather than paying cash, as our bank will be charging us for cash, notes or cheques paid over the counter in the bank. It's a simple process and we know a number of you already make payments to HRA this way and guess many of you make other payments in a similar fashion. In the option for making Bank Payments or Transfers, enter the following under the headings:

Payee Name: *Highfield Residents' Association*
Sort Code: *30-96-96*
Account Number: *77892468*
Reference: *House Number and Street*

Having done this, then please let your Street Rep know.

Do come along to the AGM on 16th April, when more information on this year's accounts and subscriptions will be discussed.

Chris Dinsdale

Update from the Webmaster: Over the last six months we've been working hard on the website to make it more attractive and accessible and keep it up to date so that it's a rich resource for everyone.

A new addition to the site is a list of **suppliers and contractors** based on the experience of local residents. There're lots of categories so take a look and revisit when you need to know who to contact for a good job at a reasonable price. Also, it would be great if you're able to make any recommendations that others would find helpful. Send them to me at hra.website@gmail.com

The website has been provided free of charge until now but there's no guarantee it will remain free after the summer. We would like to jump before we are pushed so we are considering a number of ways to have a website at an affordable price. More information to follow. If anyone has experience in website design using WordPress, your assistance in setting up the new website would be greatly appreciated without any long-term commitment.

Please contact me if you, or someone you know, can help.

Peter Leaver

Warneford Park Project: progress report: Members of HRA and Headington Action along with residents of Headington have been following the developments of what has come to be known as the Warneford Park Project. This is an ambitious plan to use the historic Warneford Hospital building and the vast grounds that surround it, the 'park', to develop a modern mental health and brain health research centre and hospital. Where are we now? The recent public consultations have been part of what is referred to as the 'pre-planning application consultation'. In the light of these meetings, full plans for the project will be submitted to Oxford City Council's Planning Department this Spring, and will be open for further public scrutiny and comment online. The development team anticipates that satisfactory planning permission will be granted by Autumn 2025.

William Marx

Community Building: Headington is unique in having such a range of educational and health institutions within such a small area. To develop its sense of identity and community there is a range of voluntary groups. At the most elemental there are around a hundred street WhatsApp groups, mostly set up during the pandemic. These are overlaid by residents' associations like **HRA**. Most parts of Headington fall within an RA which organises events and represents local interests and needs. Next are several umbrella type groups which look after Headington as a whole.

Headington Action was formed about thirty years ago as a registered charity. It embraces all community groups and all the Headington local councillors (twelve in total), running the Saturday Market, the Headington Festival, Christmas lights and some significant projects on green issues. It also awards a range of grants to local organisations.

Headington Neighbourhood Forum is a statutory body responsible for preparing and managing the Headington Neighbourhood Plan. It lobbies for Headington interests on planning and development matters of which there are many. It also manages the Community Levy fund distributing grants for local projects - for example the redevelopment of the tennis courts and café in Bury Knowle Park. For more information on all these groups, look up their websites. Perhaps you'll be motivated to volunteer and help build and strengthen our local community!

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

Headington Neighbourhood Forum <http://headingtonplan.org.uk/>

You can read the Neighbourhood Plan including a map of Headington's boundaries

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

Patrick Coulter

HRA member Andrew Connell of Stapleton Road talks to Nicholas Rollin

I am told that you have lived longer in Highfield than any other resident. Can you tell me a bit about your early life? My parents rented the house in 1933 from a family in Lime Walk. Dad was the head porter at Queen's College. I went to Margaret Road infants' school. Then on to the junior and senior schools as well as the Catholic county school. My sister Mary was born in Little Tring in 1931, brother Dan in 1935. I was born in 1949 at the Churchill Hospital. My brother was in the RAF and when he got out, he bought the house with a mortgage.



After school I got a job as assistant groundsman at the Morris Motors Athletics and Social Club. I was there from 1964 to 1970. Then I worked for Rentokil for a year before working as a van driver for International Stores, then at Pressed Steel Fisher for five years, and seventeen years at UKAEA, Culham Laboratory, followed by eight years at Harwell before retirement.

You must have seen a lot of changes in Headington? Well, there have been so many changes. There are many more houses now and lots of in-filling. I saw Barrington Close being built. There has been a constant in-filling of empty spaces. Nursery Close was a market garden occupied by Ryman's and Mattocks Roses. There was a Post Office opposite the Church in All Saints' Road. The occupations of the people living here have changed. A large proportion of residents were connected to the motor works. Now we have NHS and university people all around us. This began with JR 1 in 1972, when the Infirmary began to move from Woodstock Road to the Headington site, followed by JR 2 in 1979 when the rest of the medical services moved to Headington.

Presumably, the shops have changed over the years. Yes, we used to have three men's outfitters, a shoe shop, fishmongers, butchers and greengrocers. Shergold's sold all sorts of practical products. The Co-op was much larger than now. It was almost a department store. We had five banks and a couple of

building societies. Now we have no banks, and although there has been talk of banking hubs, it's only been talk so far. The Co-op is still there and is useful if you want cash, otherwise you need to go into Oxford for banking services. Lots of charity shops have sprung up. Educational institutions in Headington have grown enormously over the years. What used to be the Oxford Tech (officially College of Technology), changed into Oxford Polytechnic and finally has become Oxford Brookes University. The medical developments along Roosevelt Drive and the Old Road Campus have also grown and grown. Something that irritates me is that people come to the Churchill Hospital and find it very difficult to park. Yet a multi-storey car park on the Old Road Campus seems underused. Why can't it be used to take the pressure off the car park at the Churchill Hospital? A couple of things of historical interest were that during the War, there was an Italian prisoner-of-war camp near Titup Hall Drive. The Slade Camp, on the way to Shotover, had two sorts of hut: wooden and concrete. Some had running water and the others did not.

What positive developments have there been? On the positive side we don't have football on Wednesdays and Saturdays (Oxford United played on a site now occupied by the Manor Hospital). Motorists who came through could be very surprised at the crowds leaving the matches. We don't have Maxwell's helicopters flying him over to London and back from Headington Hill.

HRA Incident Log? Why don't they mend our potholes? That street light has been off for ages! Rowdy late-night parties- no consideration for others! Stuff taken from our shed again! Another wing mirror smashed on our car! House trashed and money taken! HRA's Incident Log, designed to support members and make Highfield as congenial a place to live in as possible is a mere email away. If you want your complaint to be logged, after reporting an incident to the relevant authority (and if it was a matter for the Police, including the Police Reference Number), contact hracttee@gmail.com. The Incident Log enables us to identify ongoing issues that have become a pattern, and therefore back up members' complaints.

Hilary Rollin

HRA Gardening Update: HRA has three ongoing ad hoc gardening projects. The first, and most popular, is an evening get together for an hour or so in a local resident's garden, once a month throughout the summer. The idea is that one of us opens their garden to host the meeting. It's quite informal, and entirely weather dependent. We advertise the details of who, where, and when via email so if you'd like to be included send me an email via the HRA website (<https://highfieldresidents.weebly.com/>).

The more long-standing project involves the planters at the cross-roads of Lime Walk and All Saints. These get a roughly twice yearly make-over and are watered through the Summer by a team of local residents. Gill Beeston is particularly successful at germinating seed harvested at the season's end, then growing on plants for the beginning of the next. We're occasionally surprised by the appearance of things that we haven't planted, but then that's all to the good. Indeed, guerrilla gardening is the name of the game with the third project – the tree garden at the corner of Barrington Close and All Saints. If you have something that you think might work, conditions are not exactly ideal, but stick it in the ground and we'll see what happens. At the time of writing, we have snowdrops: harbingers of Spring.

Phil Hunter

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:

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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