



HRA NEWSLETTER

Highfield Residents' Association

oxfordhighfield.org

info@oxfordhighfield.org

Spring 2026

HRA Events: On **Friday 23rd January** Tom Bedford gave a talk on 'Birds of the Lye Valley' in the Upper Room of All Saints' Church House. It was well-attended by a very appreciative audience.

The **Film Night** on **Friday 5th March** featured the American comedy-drama 'Thelma', about a grandmother who falls victim to a phone scam and tracks down the perpetrators with the aid of her grandson. It was much enjoyed by all who attended.

On **Saturday 6th March** we held our annual **Litter Pick**. An army of volunteers turned up to be issued with hi-vis vests and litter-pickers and did a great job cleaning up our neighbourhood. We are grateful to all those who attended, and to all those involved in collecting and returning equipment and providing refreshments (see photo).



Look out for the **Asylum Welcome** concert at 7.30pm on **Friday 24th April** and our **Community Walk** in May (date tba). And don't forget to come to the **HRA Annual General Meeting** at 7.30pm on **Thursday 30th April** in All Saints' Church.

HRA Website

Have you visited our new website yet – oxfordhighfield.org? There's so much information that can help you, as a local resident, find what you want to know about the locality and what's happening. A couple of items to highlight are:

- Recommended Suppliers & Contractors listing suppliers and contractors recommended by local residents. See the link oxfordhighfield.org>contacts>local-links
- Committee Minutes – We have started publishing the minutes of HRA Committee Meetings so you can see what is being discussed and decided on your behalf by the committee. Visit Noticeboard>Committee Minutes

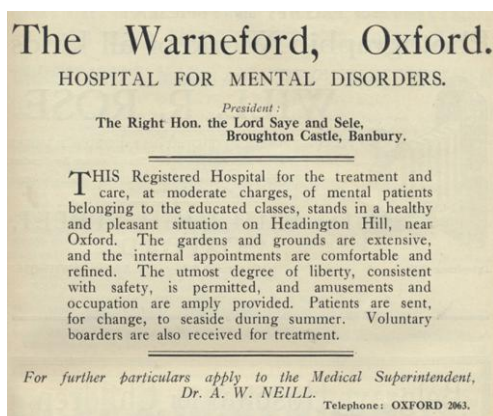
or you can just browse the website to see what interests you – you'd be surprised! 🤖

The Warneford Hospital – 200 years of Headington’s first hospital



The Warneford was the first Headington hospital, built 200 years ago this year, so let’s look back at how that site has evolved over two centuries and the radical changes proposed now. The Radcliffe Lunatic Asylum was intended to be the sister hospital to the Radcliffe Infirmary on the site off Woodstock Road, but the City was rapidly encroaching and space was limited, so the new Oxford Lunatic Asylum was built on more extensive, and cheaper, land at South Fields, Headington. It opened July 1826 for applications for patients, being charged two guineas, one guinea, or twelve shillings weekly – depending on ‘classes’.

The Rev. Samuel W. Warneford contributed the enormous sum of £70,000 to it over his lifetime and in 1843 the hospital was renamed The Warneford Lunatic Asylum; his statue sits in the hospital entrance. The grounds were extended, leading up to the present Churchill Hospital, by acquisitions, including Warneford Meadow in the 1920s, when lands of Southfield Farm were sold. By that time the hospital name and terminology had changed, as seen in this 1928 advertisement in Kelly’s directory which mentions liberty, amusements and being ‘sent ... to seaside during summer’!



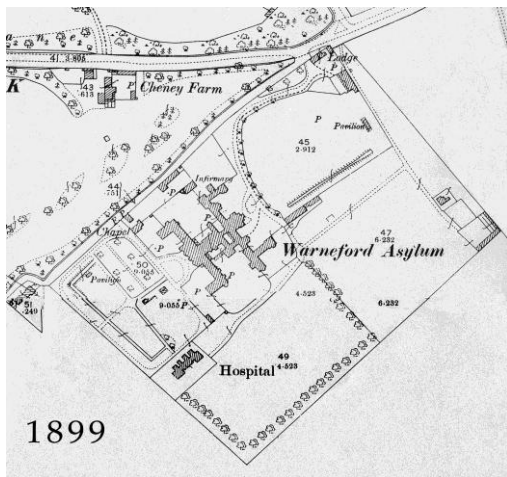
The buildings underwent a series of modifications and extensions over the years including the current entrance (pictured at the head of this article) built in two stages in 1877 and 1887. Various parts of the older buildings are listed by English Heritage. There have been several recent alterations and additions to reflect the changing needs for mental health care, particularly for younger patients, covering the catchment of Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

In 2006 local resident groups (including HRA) mounted a 3-year campaign to protect Warneford Meadow from development. After a series of legal challenges, formal registration as a Town Green was granted in 2009 and this land (including an orchard of rare apple varieties, discovered on the perimeter) is being managed for the community by the NHS Trust in collaboration with Friends of the Warneford Meadow.

To mark 200 years of mental health care at the Warneford Hospital the Trust is holding a series of events including a touring exhibition and a theatre production. The exhibition is hosted at Oxford Brookes University from 28th March until 17th April. For more on the exhibition and the theatre programmes go to www.warneford200.co.uk

In the last few years the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust has been working with Oxford University and a major funder to transform the hospital site into a new mental health hospital alongside a major brain health and research innovation campus and post-graduate college of the University. Now designated Warneford Park, the focus is to move mental health care into a new purpose-built facility and release the original buildings for university research. Details of this major development are available within these two planning applications awaiting decision: [25/01859OUTFUL](#) and [25/01834/LBC](#).

The site plans below show the original 1899 listed buildings, and the Warneford Park proposal, with the new mental health hospital located within the existing ground



Cityscape Digital for Eric Parry Architects

Harry Edwards

With thanks to Stephanie Jenkins (Headington.org.uk)

PLANNING ISSUES

The Warneford Park project is a major development in the area of Oxford that borders Highfield. In connection with this, I would like to draw attention to two recent communications.

The first is from issue 8 (4/02/26) of the Warneford Park Newsletter. This includes a subsection headed 'Our Planning Application' which reads: 'Since submitting our planning application to Oxford City Council last July, we have been engaging with city and county council officers and responding to comments from statutory consultees and the public. We have also continued to engage constructively with a number of local stakeholder groups, particularly in relation to traffic and transport, and have proposed some improvements in our designs for improving pedestrian and cycling safety in the vicinity of the site. As a result, we have made more information available as part of our planning documentation, transport infrastructure and areas such as drainage and ecology. Oxford City Council has confirmed it is consulting again in respect of these specific matters.'

The consultation period ended 20 February. It is notable that what appears in the Warneford Park Newsletter does not seriously acknowledge the long-term problem of the increase in the volume of traffic that inevitably will result from the development of the site. Also, the large number of vehicles transporting building materials to the site will no doubt mean a further increase in traffic congestion on Old Road and elsewhere. The statement subsumes questions concerning 'traffic and transport' under 'improving pedestrian and cycling safety in the vicinity of the site'. These issues and others have been raised in a submission to Oxford City Council but have yet to receive a response.

The second communication on the Warneford Park project is an analysis and commentary from BBOWT (= Berks, Bucks, and Oxon Wildlife Trust). This has been submitted to Oxford City Council – Planning. It is a detailed objection to the application. In summary form the objections are (1) the potential negative impact on the rare and irreplaceable alkaline fen habitat of the Lye Valley SSSI and the Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh LWS as a result of hydrological impact and air pollution impact, (2) potential negative impact on Warneford Meadow Oxford City Wildlife Site (= OCWS) due to hydrology, lighting, disturbance, noise disturbance, recreation impact and air pollution, and (3) potential negative impact on wild bird habitat, contrary to the requirements of paragraph 9A of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as amended in the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) 2012 Regulations. The analysis and commentary are specific and clearly argued.

William Marx

Treasurer's Report

Welcome to any new residents in Headington. This seems an appropriate time to remind everyone that all residents over 16 are eligible to become members of Highfield Residents' Association. The annual subscription, currently £5.00 per household, is due **after** 1 April which is around the time this Spring Newsletter is usually distributed. Any change will need to be agreed at an AGM but no increase is planned this year. Payment can either be made to your street rep or directly into HRA's bank account:

Payee Name: Highfield Residents' Association
Sort Code: 30-96-96
Account Number: 77892468

If making payment this way please put your House Number and Street as Reference and let your Street Rep know that you have paid.

Street Reps are as follows:

All Saints and Barrington	Janet and William Marx	w.marx@uwtsd.ac.uk or j.burton@uwtsd.ac.uk
Bickerton	Debbie Chapel	debbiechapel@aol.com
Brookside	Laura Ess	lauraess9@hotmail.com
Finch Close	Harry Edwards	edwardsharry300@gmail.co
Highfield Avenue	Bruce Howard	bandchoward@btinternet.com
Latimer Road, Grange and The Brambles		hracttee@gmail.com
Lime Walk North	Freda Cammack	fredacammack@gmail.com
Lime Walk South	Pen Thompson	pen.thompson@ntlworld.com
Old Road	Hilary Rollin	hjsrollin@gmail.com
Stapleton Road	Richard Blundel	richardkblundel@virginmedia.com

Our year end is 31 March so looking forward to seeing you at the AGM when our accounts are presented and you can see how your subscriptions are used.

Chris Dinsdale treasurer@oxfordhighfield.org

HRA Incident Log

Read on to find out or refresh your memory about what this is and how it works. It is organized by HRA to enable residents to send in information about incidents or situations that detract from our enjoyment of Highfield, such as anti-social behaviour, speeding cars, break-ins. When the Incident Log enables HRA to detect a pattern of untoward behaviour, we contact the authorities and demonstrate that such incidents are not a one-off. If you have contacted the police about the issue that you report to us, it is helpful to include the Police Reference Number.

Reporting incidents is quick and easy; just email IncidentLog@oxfordhighfield.org

However, if the problem concerns failing street lighting, blocked drains, graffiti, potholes etc., the best way of getting action is to send a report (preferably with a photo) to Fix My Street. Go to: <https://www.fixmystreet.com>

Hilary Rollin

Useful contacts: [oxfordhighfield.org/contacts](https://www.oxfordhighfield.org/contacts) will give you most local contacts you need:

- **HRA Contacts** for Committee Members and Street Reps
- **Other Contacts** for Local Politicians, Councils, Police and Oxford Brookes
- **Local Links** for other useful organisations in the Headington area