

Minutes of the Special General Meeting of the Iffley Fields Residents Association held on Monday 15 June 2020 by Zoom.

Present

Acting Chair – Jon Rees

Acting Vice Chair – Simon Fisher

Treasurer - Ben Pinches

Secretary- Christine Hogg

Committee members- Barbara Ashworth, Janet Hall, Samantha Robertson, Chris Terry, Sarah Wild, Mari Girling, Luke Bolton,

Resident members: James Rogers, Lilli, Jane Fisher, Susan Hale, Rosemary Southworth, Janey Carline, Tom Green, Punan Behl, Ned Wells, Danielle, Darren Clahane.

Observer: Cllr Damian Heywood.

The following residents also expressed views via an online ballot: Alison Vickers, Amy Glee (Argyle Street), and a further two residents who did not agree to have their names appear in the minutes.

A total of 27 stakeholders participated in the decision making process.

1 Chair's introduction

Jon Rees welcomed everyone and explained that he was acting chair as Thelma had decided to step back for a few months for personal reasons. Appreciation was expressed for the enormous contribution she had made to IFRA over the last few years and everyone looked forward to welcoming her back. IFRA under Thelma's chairmanship had achieved much in helping make Iffley Fields a pleasant place to live. IFRA's historic achievements are listed in the Appendix A, which reflects a list we are building to share with residents.

The purpose of the special meeting was to:

- look at ways of increasing the involvement of residents in IFRA
- amend the Constitution.

2 Widening involvement in IFRA

The lock down had led to the development of community networks and WhatsApp groups within streets and IFRA wanted to look at ways that these could be built on to ensure that the IFRA committee was able to reflect and take up concerns of residents in future.

It was agreed to have one or more residents from each street who would liaise with residents in their street and pass information to and from the committee. The Acting Chair agreed with the officers to identify contacts or 'connectors' and look at lines of communication between them and with the Committee. More precise proposals would be brought to the IFRA committee meeting on 13th July.

The following members offered to be Street Contacts or Connectors during the meeting:

Argyle Street- Sue Hale, Simon Fisher
Bedford Street - Janet Hall
Chester Street –Luke Bolton
Fairacres Road – Janey Carline, Barbara Ashworth
Stratford Street - Ben Pinches
Warwick Street - Darren Clahane

3 Changes to the Constitution

Adoption of preamble text: To be appended at the start of Section 3 Membership:

'IFRA would like to broaden its participation. IFRA reflects Iffley Fields as a tolerant community of people from diverse backgrounds of different countries, cultures, colours, religions, genders, ages, classes and interests. IFRA recognises that in order to best represent the interests of the community to external participants, including elected representatives, and to broaden participation our interactions should be free of discrimination and our behaviour must be courteous, respectful and non-discriminatory. IFRA also recognises the value of informed debate, which may at times include vigorous debate, which these rules do not seek to stifle.

This was agreed unanimously (26 out of 26 eligible voters).

Ceasing to be a Committee Member To be appended at the end of Section 3 Membership.

*'Members may resign at any time in writing to the secretary.
Any member who has not been re-elected at the AGM will be deemed to have ceased being a member.
Any member who has not attended any meetings for 6 months will be contacted by the committee, who will then decide whether that member is deemed to have resigned.'*

This was agreed by a simple majority (24 out of 26 eligible members)

Code of Conduct for Committee Members and Breach Procedure to be appended by the end of Section3.

'Members should be prepared to listen to other people, and they should be listened to. Members talking over others whose turn it is to speak may be censured by the person chairing the meeting.

Any member engaging making racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, hate speech or behaviours will not be tolerated and may be subject to the Breach Procedure. Racism includes anti-semitism and Islamophobia. Discriminating includes discriminating on the basis of age, class or formal education.

Any member who behaves obstructively, including frustrating the carrying out of decisions already agreed by the Committee, or who refuses to accept decisions already agreed may be subject to the Breach Procedure.

Any member who repeatedly raises their voice, shouts or whose behaviour is intimidating to others present may be subject to the Breach Procedure.

Any member engaging in offensive behaviour, or otherwise abusive or inflammatory remarks, or who repeatedly fails to behave with courtesy and respect toward others, or who fails to treat all people fairly may be subject to the Breach Procedure. Anyone behaving in an offensive way, or making personal attacks, may be subject to the Breach Procedure.

Any member engaging in any of the breach behaviours towards other Committee members within or outside of formal IFRA proceedings, or who behaves in this way towards IFRA participants or members of the community either within or outside of the course of IFRA business may be subject to the Breach Procedure.

Any member failing to disclose conflicts of interest in a transparent or timely manner, may be subject to the Breach Procedure.

Any resident, invited speaker, councillor or other person participating in IFRA business is subject to the same code of conduct.

Breach Procedure

The Officers may ask the Member not to attend one, two or all further meetings ("suspension") or to resign from the Committee if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. If the Officers deem a single instance of a breach of the code of conduct sufficiently serious the Member may be suspended with immediate effect. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Officers, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made. The Officers will decide whether a Member suspended from the Committee is allowed to participate in subgroups during the period of suspension. The Officers will decide whether a Member can stand for appointment at future AGMs.'

This was agreed by 25 out of 26 eligible voters.

4 Pollution in Shire Ditch

Enquiries by Cllr Tarver had revealed that sewage from Bullingdon Road was seeping into the ditch and this was causing the smell. This had been caused by builders linking the sewage to drainage pipes. It was the responsibility of the City Council to ensure that builders complied with building Regulations, in which duty it had failed. It was the responsibility of Thames Water to remedy the problem. The Environment Agency was involved in monitoring the situation. The advice from the Environment Agency was very clear that it was only safe to swim in designated areas.

It was agreed:

1. Residents and other rivers users should be warned of the problem. The officers agreed to do this as soon a further update was received by Cllr Tarver.
2. Consider what follow up action IFRA might take to ensure that remedial work was urgently undertaken.
3. Refer the issue to the new Waterways subgroup that was being set up in July.

5 IFRA Waterways Subgroup

Discussions on the waterway's pollution led the Chair to invite interest in participants. During and shortly following the meeting, Darren Clahane, Sam Robertson, Tom Green and potentially Dave (a hydrologist) in Stratford Street would be interested in participating in the group.

IFRA Waterways is a new subgroup on access to the rivers and waterways under the umbrella of IFRA, and respecting the Community Nature Plan. The IFRA Waterways subgroup will look at the issues of humans having more access to the river. And once it has looked at the issues (including the importance of biodiversity and protection of wildlife), then it will develop a plan in consultation with the IFRA committee and wider community.

The IFRA Waterways Subgroup will look at the issues of humans having more access to the IFRA is considering asking those interested to participate in the IFRA Quarterly meetings in July 2020, after which time it can become self organising, potentially reporting back through the IFRA Committee when there are updates.

The meeting ended at 20.10.

Appendix A. A Brief Summary of IFRA's Achievements

This is a copy of a living document which begins to chart the history of IFRA since its establishment in 1997, and it is not exhaustive. Any input to increase coverage and accuracy very welcome. Last update 18th June 2020.

1. Community building: Preserving the Chester Arms as our local pub, by registering it as a site of community value, and arguing the case at planning meetings.
2. Parking: The Establishment of the CPZ. IFRA fought hard through several public meetings to reject the first CPZ proposed, subsequently achieving a much improved CPZ through communication with councillors and others.
3. Planning: Balance of Dwellings policy – this prevents more than 20% HMOs in any one area, achieving in partnership with others.
4. Planning: Student accommodation only to be on a main road. In the past student accommodation could be in the middle of a residential street.
5. Securing the removal of graffiti from several retail premises on the Iffley Road parade of shops, and street furniture to address pavement parking.
6. Online Open Gardens on IFRA's Facebook in which several residents shared photographs of their gardens.
7. Community building: The 'Big Lunches' IFRA held at SS Mary and John
8. The Publication of "The Fields" newsletter and "the Iffley Fields Yellow pages" keeping residents informed about local happenings, small businesses
9. Preventing Exeter College building over the gardens of the Iffley Rd houses they owned behind Warwick Street. Exeter subsequently developed the other side of the Iffley Rd instead (to which IFRA also inputted) and the houses on the Warwick St side have become private housing again.
10. Prevented the owner/developer knocking down the Arts and Crafts style properties at 190 Iffley Rd and erecting a very large building instead.
11. Iffley Fields Open Gardens
12. Facilitated the redevelopment of the playground at Meadow Lane (twice - the first one was burnt down) (the work with the playground and Wheels was done by the East Oxford Adventure Playground Association, but we worked with them and them with us.
13. Facilitated extensively the arrival of Wheels skateboard park at Meadow Lane (although not altogether happy with it becoming the only city skateboard park - the council has let us and skateboarders down by not providing any other facility) and prevented the building of a hard surface floodlit Oxsports site on the Wheels site.

14. Dog shows

15. Millennium Bash - took over Isis school and ran an enormous party with massive screen, disco lights, music, kids creche etc. for Jan 1st 2000.

16. Established the CNP -: included in that: two big community activity days at Isis school (as it was then); planted a horse chestnut at the school, and a golden willow in the playground. Ensured that the 'pond' at the school was kept when they did work on the school grounds to reflect the original level of the land; successfully discouraged Christ church from putting highland cattle onto Astons Eyot (and fencing most of it off) (it would have been a terrible idea anyway because of the pottery and glass, so it was quite easy to discourage them); we haven't succeeded in getting that walking route through to the Plain/Chch meadow despite really pushing it, but live in hope - the route could be created). IFRA got hedgerows added to the environment section of the Local Plan, argued for allotments to have more protection, liaised extensively with the Donnington Riverside project plans.

17. Got the cycle track on this side of Iffley Rd widened when they redid the road (complained, they repainted it).

18. Holding a number of Bonfire Nights for the community on the 5th aimed at early evening/sparklers/younger children.

19. Co-hosting of the IFRA Facebook page bringing the community together online with over 500 members.

Note: Planning wins working in partnership with other residents groups with substantial leadership from IFRA.