



# The Fields

Iffley Fields Residents Association

March 2022

Email: [iffleyfields@gmail.com](mailto:iffleyfields@gmail.com), [www.ifra.uk](http://www.ifra.uk)

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## IFRA AGM Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 8pm by Zoom.

Find the agenda and link at [www.ifra.uk](http://www.ifra.uk) and Facebook

Sign up for regular email updates [iffleyfields@gmail.com](mailto:iffleyfields@gmail.com)

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### The Copper beech



We were all shocked by the loss of the beautiful copper beech outside Ladbrokes. It was cut down by Oxford Direct Services (ODS), without consultation even with councillors. It appears that there was no loss to the tree's structural integrity, so it presented no immediate danger at the time of felling. As a privatised arm of the Council, ODS is not subject to the same rules on

Freedom of Information or accountability as the Council.

IFRA issued a press release, asking for an explanation and for a semi-mature replacement tree. The replacement, a purple tulip, is inadequate and does not improve the area that looks increasingly forlorn.



A meeting is being arranged with the City Council cabinet member for Parks, Lubna Arshad. We will raise the possibility of crowdfunding for a replacement tree, and also of planting more trees along the Iffley Road. IFRA will be discussing what we can do next at the AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> March.

Let us know what you think: [iffleyfields@gmail.com](mailto:iffleyfields@gmail.com)

## Social events

In spite of Covid, there were some community events: the river art club and the Jumble trail in June, the Argyle and Chester Party in September, the carol singing and the advent calendar in December.

Is there scope for other activities? Finding out what was already going is where we would like to start. What are you interested in? What sort of activities would you like in Iffley Fields?

Can you help? Will you join a group helping arrange a jubilee street party?

## Open Gardens 2022

After a 3-year break, we hope to run an Open Gardens this year. We need one or two people to work with a group of gardeners who have been involved in previous years and to help get things going.

It is a fun and collaborative community event that raises money for local charities and IFRA, as well as allowing us to admire each other's gardens. Please get in touch if you can help [iffleyfields@gmail.com](mailto:iffleyfields@gmail.com).



## Planning

IFRA monitors local planning applications and ones from further afield which have an impact on our area. We alert neighbours to local planning applications and, where there is a wider interest, comment formally on applications or consultations. Membership of Oxford Civic Society gives access to expertise on wider issues, such as the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and large "greater Oxford" proposals. There is currently much pressure for post-graduate housing and expansion in research facilities.

Recent concerns are the exact status of the Rec as common land and identifying who is responsible for Meadow Lane. Our Councillors are investigating this. It is important to ensure it is registered to safeguard its future from developers.

## Meadow Lane Rec: Survey results

In October an online survey was carried out to find out how residents and other users saw the Rec and any changes they might like. Households in Iffley Fields were leafleted. 157 people responded.

People liked the openness and the multiple, informal, and flexible uses of the Rec. Any changes should not interfere with this. Given this, there is support for more benches, better planting, additional sports facilities, as well as better maintenance of the worn and uneven patches of ground. (The draft report is available on [www.ifra.uk](http://www.ifra.uk), and full results on request).

## Plantings on the Rec

Overall, there was support for 6 new trees. Anxieties were that trees should not get in the way of any informal sports areas, nor be planted in such a way that anyone felt closed in or unsafe. But many wanted more trees, that they could soften the Rec in a good way and provide helpful shade in the summer. The IFRA Parks Group is discussing with the Council the species and placement of the trees. Thanks to the Lottery Fund, in addition to the 6 trees



and bench to be placed along the railings in Meadow Lane, we have plans for spring bulbs further planting extending the Guerrilla Garden.

A proposal has been put forward to the councillors that they might support one or two, benches along that stretch by the sports pitch and the new trees.

## Sports activities

Providing better facilities for younger people was also considered important. A grant of £500 towards a table tennis table was received from the Oxford University Community Support Fund. Another priority is for basketball that is increasingly popular. A group is beginning to look at what we can do to encourage the informal use by young people. Please join us if you are interested. [iffleyfields@gmail.com](mailto:iffleyfields@gmail.com).

## Car-sharing trial

IFCAR, the car sharing trial which started last year from a chat on the IFRA Facebook, has been extended. There are new groups in Florence Park and Botley and 8 more groups planned across East Oxford in March/April. Blenheim Palace are getting involved - sharing their electric vehicles (EV) with the Woodstock community. We'd love to get more people using the system in Iffley Fields, it involves easily renting cars from neighbours with insurance and booking made very easy by using the Hiyacar app (Airbnb for cars). EVs are particularly in demand so if you've got one, we'd love to hear from you. More details on [www.shareourcars.com](http://www.shareourcars.com) or message Emily Kerr on [shareourcars@gmail.com](mailto:shareourcars@gmail.com).



## Speed along Meadow Lane

There was increasing concern about the traffic, both vehicles whose Sat Nav indicated a short cut, mopeds and delivery drivers. Before plans for installing a speed bump between Eyot Place and the Play Park can be considered, the status of Meadow Lane needs to be clarified.

## Secure Bike Parking

Would you be interested in secure bike parking in the street? If you are, let us know on [iffleyfields@gmail.com](mailto:iffleyfields@gmail.com).

## **School traffic**

The school drop-offs cause traffic and pollution in Bedford and Chester Streets. In April funding for the “School Streets” programme will be available and the County Council will have new powers to put in cameras. Working with the School it is hoped that volunteers wearing Hi-Viz will stand in the road and politely ask people not to go down Bedford Street at the same time as the new LTNs are introduced.

Can you help? We need volunteers to come and join in from 08.30-09.00 and 15.00-15.30.

## **Improving air quality**

Several of us walked the streets with a handheld monitor, in the early evening once a week over the autumn, to get an idea of general levels of smoke or particulate matter in the air round here. Numbers were mostly very low and therefore good, but on a few occasions, they shot up and that coincided with a smoky smell and moist conditions. The city council and the local Friends of the Earth group are working together on an app to show local pollution levels at all times. Purpleair produce real-time air quality monitoring. We hope to have an outdoor monitor in Iffley Fields shortly.

## **Financial report**

We have had a fantastic year on the financial front. This has been partially due to the generosity of those who gave for our crowdfunding appeal (many thanks!) and partially due to our successful application for grants such as the National Lottery Fund. As a result, we have funded benches, and improved the aesthetics of Meadow Lane Rec and Longbridges. Special thanks go to the Clanchy family for the gift of a bench in memory of Joan and Michael Clanchy.

Opening balance:	£1,190.98
Paid in:	£8534.61
Paid out:	£5,150.14
Closing balance	£4575.45

The Waterways Group has a remaining budget of £813 and the Meadow Lane Rec Group has a remaining budget of £3,121.



## **Our waterways**

The IFRA Waterways Group was set up to make the river-side in our area of Oxford more accessible: to improve its environment for nature and humans, and make them safer.

### **Renewing Longbridges**

In particular, we are focussing on the Longbridges area. We received £2,500 from the Lottery for the 'combating loneliness'. The funders recognise that one way of combating loneliness is to have beautiful places to walk, where you feel welcome outside of your own house, by yourself or with others. The river provides a focus: it is beautiful, you can hear the birdsong and experience nature. Indeed, during peak hours through the summer, we have seen over 200 people enjoying this area. We spent the funding on some more picnic benches and buying some equipment for our working parties. We are currently working with the Oxford City Council Waterways Officer to see where to put the picnic benches.



**Clearing Longbridges**

We had a working party at Longbridges in November to open up areas that had overgrown, to make nicer seating areas. Apart from the committee, we only had one extra person - but we enjoyed our cold and very productive day. Go and have a look at what we've achieved!

## Celebrating the river

As the IFRA Waterways committee, we want to communicate, celebrate and share cultural and social aspects of the river that runs through our neighbourhood. We have been running an Art Club that celebrates the river. We are hosting an Arts Week event to display all our art on May 7th and 8th, 14th and 15th at the Oxford City Rowing Club. See <https://www.artweeks.org/festival/guide> for more details.

In addition, members of the IFRA Waterways committee are giving a talk at the Oxford Civic Society on March 10th, talking about swimming in the river. All are welcome. More information. <https://www.oxcivicsoc.org.uk/programme/>

## Bathing Status for Oxford's Port Meadow

Meanwhile, there is continuing concern about sewage pollution that makes the water quality in Oxford unpleasant and potentially unsafe. A campaign to combat this has focussed on getting Port Meadow to be accepted as a 'Designated Bathing Place'. The good news around this issue is that the



campaign has got past the first hurdle. A survey around this issue (end date March 2nd) can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3rFewRL>

## The ferry path

The path beside the Falcon rowing club is the old path to the ferry that took people to Longbridges. It is neglected and overgrown but if the brambles were cleared and with better planting and perhaps a bench, it could become a way to access the water for people who do not belong to any clubs.

## Astons Eyot

Does anyone have any photos from the 1980's and 90's - the peak of the bottle digging era? It's a gap in the historical record for the Aston's Eyot website and would be useful when explaining just how bad it was!

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# IFRA

www.ifra.uk

IFRA welcomes involvement of residents. If you have any issues you want to raise contact any of the IFRA committee or your street connector. We meet every two months: Agenda and minutes are on [www.ifra.uk](http://www.ifra.uk)

## The Committee

Jon Rees (Chair), Simon Fisher (Vice Chair), Ben Pinches (Treasurer), Christine Hogg (Secretary), Thelma Martin (Planning Contact), Barbara Ashcroft Luke Bolton, Denise Cullington, Emily Kerr, Sue Hale, Janet Hall, Samantha Robertson.

## IFRA sub groups

We have sub groups on planning, waterways, air quality, parks and IFCAR (car sharing). Let us know if you are interested in being involved.

## Keep in touch

If you want to keep up to date with what is happening in Iffley Fields,

**Email updates** –Email us: [iffleyfields@gmail.com](mailto:iffleyfields@gmail.com)

**WhatsApp groups** – join the WhatsApp group for your street, ask your street connector.

**Facebook** -IFRA has a Facebook page, where you can find out what is happening in our streets, get recommendations and offers. To join you need a Facebook account and search for IFRA. Administrators will accept anyone into the group if they look as if they are local.

## Street Connectors

Street Connectors welcome newcomers and bring forward issues in their street to IFRA.

Argyle Street- Simon Fisher- [simonfishershouse@gmail.com](mailto:simonfishershouse@gmail.com)

Sue Hale, No 38, 07780 697691, [sue\\_hale@btinternet.com](mailto:sue_hale@btinternet.com)

Bedford Street, Eyot Place/Meadow Lane: Janet Hall, No. 39, 07587590039, [janetmwhall@gmail.com](mailto:janetmwhall@gmail.com)

Chester Street –Luke Bolton, No. 42, 07961 351443, [boltonluke@gmail.com](mailto:boltonluke@gmail.com)

Fairacres Road – Barbara Ashcroft, [barbaraashcroft@btinternet.com](mailto:barbaraashcroft@btinternet.com)

Janey Carline, No 106, 07748966403, [janey.carline@ntlworld.com](mailto:janey.carline@ntlworld.com)

Stratford Street - Ben Pinches, No. 53, [ben@pinches.biz](mailto:ben@pinches.biz)

Warwick and Parker Street - Darren Clahane 07445 887597,

[darren.clahane@gmail.com](mailto:darren.clahane@gmail.com)

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