



The Fields

Iffley Fields Residents Association

September 2022

Email: iffleyfields@gmail.com, www.ifra.uk

Table tennis on Meadow Lane Recreation Ground

Last year we asked residents and users of the Rec about how it might be improved. People wanted to keep the open and informal use of the space but with better facilities for younger people.

IFRA decided to invest in table tennis table. A grant towards this has been received from the Oxford University Community Support Fund and £1000 from Cllr Jarvis' fund. As it is Council land, we are working with Oxford Direct Services. As a previous table was vandalised, it must have a concrete base and will be near the new benches. ODS have quoted us £5,500 for the purchase and installation. Though this seems high, as it is to be sited on Council land we have to go with ODS.

We have raised £2,250, including IFR's share from Open Gardens, but this will not be enough and we have set up a crowd funding page to raise the additional funds we need.



<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/meadow-lane-recreation-ground-table-tennis-table>

You can also find the link on www.ifra.uk

Please help.

Longbridges

We have received promises from Michael Woods, the Oxford Waterways Coordinator, for a picnic bench and metal ladder for getting in and out of the water. These will be gratefully received, when they arrive, and should replace the items that the Waterways Subgroup purchased and subsequently donated to ODS. The improvement in site accessibility has been noted.



Shire Lake Ditch

Thames Water have been testing the water regularly at the outflow at the Jackdaw Lane bridge since correcting 7 misconnected properties including a restaurant on Cowley Rd which had been pouring fat down the surface water drains. They now think the inflow is running clear, and the water is clear and smell free and there is much less sewage fungus than there was. However, our water testing shows pollution levels remain high in the ditch here – it remains to be seen whether this is due to lack of rain to flush it clear, plus accumulated pollution in the silt – or whether the problem is not fully fixed. Friends of Aston's Eyt will continue regular water testing to monitor it.

Why are we losing access to the river?

Since the pandemic traditional access points for the public to the river have been lost. A few years ago, the entire riverfront from Donnington Bridge to the Cherwell was accessible.

First, the Scouts restricted access to the field they lease from Oxford Preservation Trust, even though the footpath goes through it. Many locals used to swim there. Then the Falcon fenced across a wild-life corridor, using their new fencing adjacent to the Ferry path to take over a few more metres of accessible riverfront.



The 'new' private car park

Now the public car park has been transferred for the exclusive use of the private Falcon Club. This was used by the Sea Scouts and people using the river and for parents to drop off children for the school, avoiding pollution in Bedford and Chester Streets.

The impact on residents has been serious. River users and others now park on both sides of Meadow Lane, blocking access and a danger to pedestrians. The picnic area by Donnington Bridge is now a carpark, preventing enjoyment of the river. There used to be a barrier to stop unauthorised cars, which is no longer used. So it has become an overflow car park, with the Falcon encouraging members to park there when 'their' car park is full. Commuters are now also using it daily as a car park.

Why have the Council transferred a public resource to a private organisation? We have been trying to find out. It is a curious and confusing story

The Council resurfaced the car park in 2019, but didn't get planning permission. The retrospective permission required the size of the car park to be reduced (as it was at risk of flooding) and for the car park to be exclusively for the use of the Falcon with the gate closed outside of

Falcon's opening times. Planning permission for the construction of the new clubhouse included a condition that 37 parking spaces be made available to the Falcon and 10 for other users. Falcon had not asked for this.

The Council tells us it is considering the future of the car park.



The 'new' riverside car park

The options seem to be:

1. Give the Falcon Rowing Club exclusive use, with the requirement that other local community groups have access; or
2. For the Council to operate it as a paid car park. This would require an amendment to the planning condition requiring exclusive use by Falcon.

What do you think? Our initial thoughts are that:

- The car park be reinstated as a public car park.
- The CPZ extended to Meadow Lane as soon as possible;
- The barrier reinstated on the picnic field to prevent it becoming a car park.
- The Ferry Path be regularly maintained by the Council so it is not overgrown in the summer months when it would be most used. IFRA would be happy to replant this and raise funds for a bench.

Interest groups

Many residents have suggested that they would like some local interest groups. Suggestions so far received are: book group, walking, babysitting, music, singing, film and theatre, knitting and swing, art appreciation, local history, gardening, wildlife and nature, and board and card games..

If you are interested in any of the groups. Either fill in a form on the website or email iffleyfields@gmail.com. Once we receive the names of 5 people or more, we will put you in contact so an initial meeting can be arranged.

School traffic

The school drop-offs cause traffic and pollution in Bedford and Chester Streets. We are waiting for agreed 'School Streets' funding from central government to Oxfordshire County Council. Once received, we will proceed. The head teacher has been standing outside in a Hi Viz to discourage parents in cars, and the local traffic wardens have also been really helpful. Many residents have noticed fewer cars as a result.

Iffley Fields Car-Sharing: IFCAR

One year ago, we set up a local car-sharing initiative called IFCAR. Neighbours make their cars available to registered and approved drivers who live in Iffley Fields for an hourly fee when the cars aren't being used. It's supported by a commercial firm called Hiyacar who sort out the insurance, the scheduling (via their app) and checking and verifying all the registered drivers.

One year in, it's going well. We've got 7 cars, and 20 registered drivers and there's not been any problems. Other people have copied the idea and launched similar community car-shares elsewhere, including Florence Park, Oatlands, Cumnor and Kennington.

We've set up a website with more info on it, www.shareourcars.com, or you can email Emily Kerr greenemilykerr@gmail.com or shareourcars@gmail.com

Jubilee Party



There was a street party on 4 June with Chester and Argyle Street closed. Thanks to the Chester for letting up set up outside the pub. People brought stuff for the BBQ, cakes and bhajis. There were games for children, and chalk for road artistry for adults & children, quizzes. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet new friends and neighbours.

Blocking in Argyle Street.

Our streets are narrow and a badly parked car can prevent important vehicles getting through. A fire engine and the rubbish collection were recently blocked. You can phone and report obstructions to the traffic wardens on 0345 3371138, option 4.

Fix My Street

You can report abandoned bikes, graffiti, potholes or other concerns directly on this App and see reports which have been made in our area.

<https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

Meadow Lane Recreation Ground

Following last year's survey, it was agreed that we would like better planting and trees as long as they don't interfere with the informal use of the area.

Two new benches have been installed on Meadow Lane opposite the Ground. There are also plans for another bench and a big tree trunk on the Jackdaw Lane end (with thanks to a donation from former Councillor Dick Wolff's funds). These should help make that end of the Lane more attractive.



Three crab apple trees will be planted along the Jackdaw Lane end of Meadow Lane in the autumn. More bulbs' especially wild daffodils' will be planted this autumn along the back strip of the Rec, and this time we hope it really will be the wild type.



The guerrilla garden has been the best ever with magnificent poppies all the way along but now (as everywhere) it's suffering with the scorching heat and dry. Many plants will survive and come back, but happily there is some funds remaining for some new salvias, which seem to have disappeared.

There are plans to extend the garden along Meadow Lane and by the allotments.

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 the second Monday of every other month: Agenda and minutes are on www.ifra.uk. The meetings for this year are 12 September and 14 November.

The Committee

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

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,

Sign up for email updates –Email us: iffleyfields@gmail.com

Join your street WhatsApp group, ask your street connector.

Join Facebook -On IFRA's Facebook page, find out what is happening, 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 to IFRA.

Argyle Street- Simon Fisher- simonfishershouse@gmail.com

Sue Hale, No 38, 07780 697691, sue_hale@btinternet.com

Bedford Street, Eyot Place/Meadow Lane: Janet Hall, No. 39, 07587590039, janetmwhall@gmail.com

Chester Street –Luke Bolton, No. 42, 07961 351443, boltonluke@gmail.com

Fairacres Road – Barbara Ashcroft, barbaraashcroft@btinternet.com

Janey Carline, No 106, 07748966403, janey.carline@ntlworld.com

Stratford Street - Ben Pinches, No. 53, ben@pinches.biz

Warwick and Parker Street - Darren Clahane 07445 887597,

darren.clahane@gmail.com
