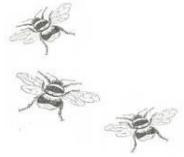


The Fields



Iffley Fields Residents Association
February 2021

IFRA - Iffley Fields Residents Association Annual General Meeting

7pm Monday 15 March 2021

By Zoom. You will find the link on the IFRA Facebook page
or email iffleyfields@gmail.com

Message from Jon Rees, Chair



It has been gratifying to see that neighbours have been helping neighbours via the new Street WhatsApp groups during the pandemic.

IFRA has also been changing with the times, adopting a new Constitution in 2020, which now includes a focus on tolerance and diversity within IFRA Committee's meetings and interactions. IFRA would like to hear from you if your voice is unheard

whether homeowner or tenant. It is sociable and fun, and you get to influence your environment. If you'd like to put yourself forward, let us know by email or join the Annual General Meeting by Zoom on March 15th at 19:00.

Finally, IFRA thanks our Councillors for the time, discretion and effort they have invested in supporting our community over the last year.

Jon Rees

Helping each other in the pandemic

We live in two realities in Oxford today: the world of people now relieved that the end of the pandemic may be in sight, and the world of people who have been thrown into crisis. "Mutual Aid" is the redistribution of resources from people who have more than they need, to people who have less than they need.

Oxford Mutual Aid (OMA) did not exist until March 2020, but was created by people drawn from religious groups, trade unions and immigrant communities who realised that COVID-19 was going to make worse already strained access-to-food, the poverty crisis in Oxford, and the pandemic would further stress badly overstretched social services.

OMA focuses on people who have fallen through the cracks in the existing aid infrastructure, including people forgotten somewhere in bureaucracy. As of January, OMA is now probably supporting over 1500 people in Oxford.

- Regular food parcel and supply support to 223 households, comprising of 672 people (378 adults, 258 children, and 36 babies)
- Supporting 65 households with new and expectant mothers, supplying them with formula milk, nappies, rash cream and more.
- Over 216 emergency food parcels a month, going to an average household of at least 2 people
- Ongoing support to 25 households who require support collecting prescriptions, doing shopping, etc
- The Kitchen Collective is providing re-heatable meals to a minimum of 145 households each week

All of these efforts represent people organising together to achieve what is needed, and have shown this "direct democracy" is especially effective in crisis. Those of us who currently have more than we need might consider contributing via OMA to people who have less than they need.

If you need help, call 07310 160 595, 10am – 5pm.

If you would like to contribute or volunteer you can contact OMA to get involved directly or donate via <https://oxfordmutualaid.org/>

Iffley Fields under Lock down

The new normal: A collective poem

(Extract)

Getting to know neighbours
Familiar faces
Now counting them
As friends.
Revealing connections
And layers, a network
With roots like the trees, where birds
Have sung relishing the silence
Sharing our resources
Wondering if the silence will come
again

The new normal
won't be the old normal – will it?

Fairacres, Writing for Wellness Group
© Deborah Humphrey

From the beginning of lockdown streets organised WhatsApp groups and identified Street Co-ordinators to offer help to any vulnerable or isolated people in our community. Many streets organised distanced concerts and social events, when allowed.

Baking cakes for JR staff- thanks to Jeanie Fawcett and her bakers.

Writing for Wellbeing Group in Fairacres, thanks to Deborah Humphrey

Virtual Open Gardens – June -This year we were due to have Open Gardens in June. As this could not happen, many posted photos and tours of their gardens on Facebook. Thanks to the team for organising this.

Safe Space Event – August - This was a fun afternoon on the Recreation Ground with wellie throwing, music, ball games and children's competitions, all carefully arranged to be safe for everyone. Thanks to Ben Pinches for organising this.

Advent Calendar –
December - In the run up to Christmas our street were brightened with displays in front windows for each day of Advent. Thanks to Abigail Fisher for organising this.

And many more.....



Improving our environment

The River, the Kidneys and Astons Eyot have been a life-line for many during lockdown and led to heavy use. We identified the need for more bins and a bench.

Bench for the Recreation Ground



A number of residents have pointed out there's not anywhere to sit down at the Meadow Lane Rec, with options being sitting on the grass or balancing on a rotting tree trunk. In a poll carried out last year, many residents indicated they would like to see a park bench in the Rec. If we install a bench, we can make a difference for people

who are mobility disabled, post-surgery, recovering from illness, or just plain tired and want to sit and daydream. The Council do not have the funds for this, but will arrange for a bench if IFRA can pay for this.

We have a good start. IFRA can provide up to £300, thanks to the Open Gardens donation and IFRA is grateful to Property Care for their £200 donation towards the bench.

If you would like to support this go to: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/a-park-bench-for-meadow-lane-recreation-ground>

You can also write a cheque to “IFRA” and post it through the letter box at 53 Stratford Street, mark the envelope “IFRA Bench”.

Field next to the Scout Hut

This was heavily used during lockdown, resulting in a litter problem. The owners have put notices up restricting use. The field is owned by the Oxford Preservation Trust and leased to the Scouts. IFRA is in discussion with the Trust about how access to the river for local people can be maintained without impeding the Scouts.

Bins in Meadow Lane

We have a costing from the Council, who do not have the funds to pay for them. IFRA hopes to raise £450 for them through crowdfunding.

Planning

This sub group monitors planning applications submitted to the Council that affect the area and picks up problems where planning regulations are broken. This year we have supported residents with problems with the Convent redevelopment and issues arising with houses in multiple occupancy (HMOs) and related antisocial behaviour. We will also be closely monitoring the proposals for housing development on the river meadows in Iffley Village. Email iffleyplanning@gmail.com. Members: Thelma Martin, Christine Hogg.

Noise and antisocial behaviour

Lockdown has been stressful for all of us, occasional loud music or noise we can expect and tolerate but regular noise and parties can cause great distress to the neighbours. If talking to your neighbours does not work, you can contact the Out of Hours Noise service in the City Council - 01865 249811 or email saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk describing the noise nuisance.

You can download The Noise App free from your Apple and Android app store. Your noise recording is sent directly to the City Council to investigate during office hours.

No Cold Calling Zone

Thames Valley Police and Neighbourhood Watch have had many reports of dubious and occasionally threatening salespeople, often known as Nottingham Knockers. They seem to target vulnerable people living alone. It is possible to request a No Cold Calling zone to try and prevent such activities. After a discussion on Facebook, most people welcomed the idea, though there were concerns that this might affect legitimate fundraising by charities.

IFRA has put in an application for Iffley Fields to be a No Cold Calling Zone. Trading Standards will look at the scale of the problem and canvass residents' views before action is taken.

If you have any concerns about a caller, report them to the Police on 101.

If you would like a sticker saying you do not buy at the door, please email iffleyfields@gmail.com.

Access to the River

The new IFRA Waterways subgroup was set up in June to look at how we can improve access to the waterways, balancing the need for recreation and protecting wildlife.

Lockdown has highlighted the need for safe swimming areas. There has been particular concern about the pollution from Shire Lake Ditch (alongside Aston's Eyot from the Cherwell to the River). IFRA has contributed to some wins in joint working this year. The IFRA Waterways Subgroup are supporting the Swimmers against Sewage group, and Friends of Aston's Eyot and other residents to persuade the City Council to support a campaign to make the Thames and the Cherwell within the City to have designated "bathing water" status, thus safeguarding it from sewerage pollution.

We are delighted that the City Council has applied for safe swimming status for the Thames and the Government has just announced that all water companies are to provide year-round, real-time data on sewage discharge. This should help us know if the water is safe.

Tell us your views

Please complete the on-line questionnaire <https://forms.gle/4vTEBtz4bH2gbUtr8>

The results of the survey of residents will be presented at the AGM.



Wood burning stoves and our health

Many residents have reported breathing difficulties as a result of wood burning domestic fires in our streets. Iffley Fields is in a Smoke Control Area. This means that only authorised fuel can be used, except in some wood burning stoves which meet Government standards and are exempt. Contravention can lead to a maximum fine of £1000. More information can be found on the City Council website.

Recent research has shown the damage to health of pollutants such as particulate matter. In the UK, the single biggest source of this type of air pollution is domestic coal and wood-burning. This issue will be discussed at the AGM.

Trialling a kids' football pitch at Meadow Lane Rec

IFRA first submitted a proposal to the Council for chalking up the football pitch in 2019 as a part of a strategy for regenerating the area, including possibly an outdoor gym and a fenced-off dog-free area for younger children to run around. Communication with local clubs revealed unmet demand for informal pitches when lower lying pitches are flooded or waterlogged,

In spite of the support of Councillors, the proposal met with resistance from Council. Our original proposal has shrunk to a 3-month trial of a 55 x 36.5m pitch without goal storage for general use. But this has fared no better at the Council, which does not think the site is appropriate for "formalised" football nor a priority for them.

If you would like to see the pitch trialled, you are encouraged to write a letter of support your City Councillors expressing support for this project, referencing a "Meadow Lane Football Pitch". Councillor Richard Tarver's email address is cllrrtarver@oxford.gov.uk

IFRA Finances

IFRA's funds come from donations, such as from Open Gardens and the Chester. In 2020-21 we spent £66 on printing the newsletter and flyers and £76 on flyers and safety equipment for the Safe Space Event. The balance on 31 January 2020 was £810. In addition, we hold £700 on behalf of the wildlife trust.

IFRA

IFRA welcomes involvement of residents. If you have any issues you want to raise contact any of the IFRA management committee or your street connector. We meet every two months.

The Committee

Jon Rees (Chair), Simon Fisher (Vice Chair), Ben Pinches (Treasurer), Christine Hogg (Secretary), Thelma Martin (Planning Contact)

Barbara Ashcroft (Fairacres Road), Luke Bolton (Argyle Street), Mari Girling (Warwick Street), Janet Hall (Bedford Street), Samantha Robertson (Chester Street), Chris Terry (Stratford Street).

Email: iffleyfields@gmail.com

Street Connectors

Street Connectors have volunteered to act as a conduit and bring forward issues in their street and serve as a channel to communicate what the community thinks about IFRA, and wants from it.

Argyle Street - Simon Fisher - simonfishershous@gmail.com

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

Bedford Street - 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 Street - Darren Clahane 07445 887597, darren.clahane@gmail.com

Parker St, Eyot Place/Meadow Lane: no volunteers yet.

IFRA on Facebook

IFRA has a Facebook page, only open to people living here, where you can find out what is happening in our streets, get recommendations and offers as well as news about IFRA. To join you need a Facebook account and go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ifrafb/>

Notification will be sent to the administrators who will then accept anyone into the group if they look as if they are local.

We are looking for a volunteer to help run the page or assist us in setting up a website. Let us know if you can help.
