



The Fields

Iffley Fields Residents Association

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

March 2026

The 2026 AGM will be held on Monday 9th March at 8 PM at the Falcon Boat Club

There will be a report back on the heat loss survey with a speaker from Low Carbon East Oxford, Pro guard installers and a Low Carbon Hub Hinksey Park who are helping to make home-made radiator reflector panels and draught excluders. It will also be a chance to see pictures of others neighbouring properties.

This will be followed by AGM business. The Agenda can be found on www.ifra.uk.

Heat Loss Survey

In November a survey of heat loss was undertaken using a thermal imaging camera from the Low Carbon Hub. These images show the sources of heat loss (or gain in a property) and where it could be good to add draughtproofing to help with energy saving, reducing bills.

In two nights in November Sam Alston with assistance from Peta and Michael imaged over 45 houses in Iffley Fields and has now shared these with most households. We found a wide variety of strange heat losses across a neighbour as you would expect in an area with such diverse construction. There will be a report back on the heat loss survey with a speaker from Low Carbon East Oxford.

The towpath - update

The moorings

At the moment the sunken boats are dangerous and polluting. Concerted actions have been difficult because of the unregistered landowners and the different agencies involved. Without registered landowners, there is no way of controlling the moorings along the river. Friends of Aston Eyot are concerned that if boats lost their moorings on the Thames they might go to the Cherwell cut, which the Environment Agency says is not their responsibility.

The Hartley Trust which owns some of the land is keen to get things moving. The Trust is an ancient trust (formerly Donnington Hospitals). Their land is registered and they will be able to serve notice on boats. Brasenose, Hertford and University College all own some of the towpath and after some reluctance, as registration might lead to liabilities, some have also applied to register their land. The City Council also owns some of the towpath and have signs restricting mooring to 48 hours, they are not enforcing this.

Tow path safety

A meeting with the MP Annelise Dodds and Rob Freshwater, Transport Planner, Oxfordshire Council was held in September, attended by about 30 people from Iffley Fields and our neighbours. The County Council's primary interest is the towpath as a public right of way and improving safety. They have been monitoring use and speed of cycles, and improving the signs. New signs and markings on the footpath itself will make it clear that pedestrians have priority over cyclists, as well as lines to separate pedestrians and cyclists where possible.

Speed of cyclists and especially e bikes is a big concern. For legal cycles (including e-bikes) on footpaths, enforcement is a civil matter between landowners and the user under various trespass laws. Speed limits of E-bikes that might be classed as motor vehicles might be enforced by the Police via Section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 which makes it illegal for a mechanically-propelled motor vehicle to be driven on a public footpath.

Incidents and near miss accidents are frequent on the tow path but these are generally unreported. The County Council do not receive accident

reports from the police for public rights of way like the towpath. Incidents reported to the police will still be logged on police files

There are still problems with overgrowing vegetation and clutter on the towpath. Oxfordshire County Council clears the vegetation once a year in winter using volunteers with funding from Natural England. We felt that this was not enough. The Falcon Boat Club recently coordinated a vegetation cut back with 40-50 people, a fantastic effort which has made a huge difference.

The Kidneys- new logs coming



For the first time for many years, we can now walk beside the river in the Kidneys. The path is kept open due to frequent use, but we need to keep down the nettles and brambles on the bank. Thanks to Margaret Thompson and Ruth Ashcroft and the volunteers who have helped achieve this. With Friends of Astons Eyot , who work with the City Council in maintaining the Kidneys, we have produced a planting plan for its improvement (see www.ifra.uk). Do you have any snowdrops to spare after flowering? If so we would love them.

The City Council have agreed to give us four logs for benches; IFRA will pay for transport from Shotover (£400) and installation costs (£120 each log). The total cost will be £1034 (including VAT). Cllr Brad Baines has promised £200. If you would like to contribute, here are the details. Iffley Fields Residents Association – Account No. 24751634, Sort Code 54-21-23 or visit www.ifra.uk

The next Kidneys working group is on **Saturday 21st March at 10 am**. Meet by the river. To join the WhatsApp group, email Margaret on

margthompson01@gmail.com.

It takes a Community to Celebrate Winter!

First came requests for people to turn their front windows into an advent calendar – thank you Olivia and all who sprinkled magic onto our streets. Next a call to meet to play music and sing carols and call door to door. Thank you, Mark and the huge numbers who followed him to sing and play just like the Pied Piper.

Party anyone? Thank you to Becky at The Chester for calling all party- goers! Then there came an ‘after the feast’ call for games of football attracting different age ranges to run off the excess of Christmas. Thank you, Emily and family, and all who turned up.

Then Friends of Aston Eyot who organised a Quiz Night with the support of Becky at the Chester Pub and a famous Quizzer – money raised for enhancing the work of FOAE. Our local Gardening, Book and Walking groups who played their parts in adding to a magical and community celebratory time. Finally, of course our wonderful committee and street connectors who keep us all going

Thank you to you all!

Sue Hale, Chair

Planning

Each week the City Council posts new applications for St Mary’s ward. Thelma Martin monitors these and comments on behalf of IFRA if there are wider issues that affect the area and where appropriate work with the Oxford Civic Society. Most of the applications we see are to register, often retrospectively, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and applications from householders for permission to build rear extensions which do not intrude into the public domain. We comment on HMOs if they seem overcrowded. At present Iffley Fields has less than 20% of houses registered as HMOs.

We do not generally comment on applications for single houses. However, as next-door neighbours are no longer informed directly and some residents have been unaware of plans until the builders move in, we now alert the street connectors to any new applications in their streets.

The Playground - Join our community mornings



You may have noticed the new open space in the Playground. In December, the Council removed the hedge that separated the sandpit from the zip line and took out the remaining steel fence posts behind the sandpit, opening up the space beautifully. The first community morning of

2026 at end of February focused on beginning to shape that newly opened area into forest-school play zones and nature nooks - alongside time for shared play and simply being together in the space. It's about rolling up our sleeves, imagining what's possible, and using the space together as a community.

Future community mornings will include hands-on workshops to build a mud kitchen, bird boxes, bug hotels, and more! We'd love for you to come along - whether to lend a hand, share ideas, or simply enjoy the playground together with us. Parents, grandparents, carers, friends, local residents - and of course kids - are all welcome! If you'd like to stay updated on future playground events, email Usha & Tom at iffleyfields.naturescape@gmail.com

Longbridges Pool

Last year two new swimming ladders were installed. The Friends of Longbridges have done a fantastic job in improving the site through litter picking and general maintenance. In the autumn volunteers worked to open up the south end of Longbridges, making it more accessible and welcoming for all visitors. If you'd like to get involved or have some suggestions, contact Adam at friendsoflongbridges@gmail.com.

The Field by Donnington Bridge and the Ferry Path

The field by Donnington Bridge used to be a great community area for families all over East Oxford to have access to the river for picnics and games. It even used to have a public BBQ. Since Covid it has deteriorated and become a carpark and a boatyard. Given the few places we can access the river, we would like to see it back in public use.

We had a site visit with councillors to discuss this. Oxford Amateur Rowing Club is using it temporarily but hope to find a new home soon. On the visit the Council agreed to prioritise limiting parking to the side area and for use of boaters. We also discussed the opening up of the path to the Carpark and the wooded area in front to the Falcon that joins up with the top end of the old Path that went to the Ferry for Longbridges before the bridges were built.

Access from the river end of the path was cut off by the new Falcon Building and without much use it has become overgrown. Though the City Council put up a footpath sign 2 years ago, they are reluctant to have it designated as a footpath because of risks of drowning in 'isolated locations' and because it provides habitat and a green corridor for wildlife.

Picnic Tables now installed!

Thanks to everyone who helped us raise funds for two round tables. When we surveyed users of the Recreation ground, young girls in particular wanted round tables where they could chat. They are now in place.

Meadow Lane Carpark to become public again

Great news! The City Council have decided in September that it will return as a public carpark. This should happen within 6 months of the decision.

Cycle racks

Thanks to the City Council cycle racks have been installed on Meadow Lane.

The new trees along Meadow Lane

Last year the new fruit trees were planted and carefully nurtured by residents (tree warriors), bringing them water in the hot summer months. The trees would have died without the intervention! We unfortunately lost one of our old trees due to drought. IFRA will fund the mulching of the trees this Spring. Our tree warriors did an amazing job – Thank you!

Anyone interested in adopting a tree and joining the Tree Warrior WhatsApp Group, please contact Emily: cllrekerr@oxford.gov.uk.

Guerilla Gardens

The Guerilla Gardens (at the bottom of Fairacres by the allotments and opposite the playground in Meadow Lane) continue to provide interest and pleasure to passers-by and need a "regular tidy up", including occasional planting which is provided by willing volunteer gardeners from Iffley Fields.

The daffodils planted late last year are just peeping through and will give a display of brightness, that is as long as the wildlife don't munch them before then or vehicle wheels crush them. Gardening has gains and losses.

The gardens are funded by donations of plants so don't hold back if in the year ahead you have a surplus of something or are looking for a new home for a plant - we can see if they can be accommodated! Text 07845119346 if you want to donate

We look forward to arranging some Saturday morning Gardening Gangs in the year and will put a message on the Street WhatsApp groups to say when we have a date fixed – this may be short notice due to weather conditions! Perhaps you know someone who does not get the street WhatsApp messages but might like to join in? - Please do spread the word as the more people involved the less the workload. Susan @ 115 Fairacres Rd

IFRA's application to become a charity

IFRA applied to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, but has not been successful. Apparently our objects were charitable but our means were not! Worth a try!

IFRA

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 - find out what is happening, get recommendations and offers. To join you need a Facebook account and search for IFRA. Administrators will accept anyone if they look as if they are local.

Committee: Sue Hale (Chair), Janet Hall (Vice Chair), Sam Alston (Treasurer), Christine Hogg (Secretary), Jon Rees, Thelma Martin, Barbara Ashcroft, Susan Bedford, Luke Bolton, Simon Fisher, Peter Sidgwick, Tom Green..

If you have any issues you want to raise, contact any of the IFRA committee or your street connector, we meet every other month, alternating in person and Zoom.

Agenda and minutes are on www.ifra.uk.

Street Connectors

Street Connectors offer a point of contact for residents. If you would like to be a Street Connector, please contact Sue at sue_hale@btinternet.com.

We need additional connectors in Fairacres and Stratford Street.

Argyle: Sue: sue_hale@btinternet.com, Sylvia, seades@hotmail.co.uk, Simon: simonfishershuse@gmail.com.

Stratford: Tom, tomgreen77@gmail.com; Rosemary, rosemarycameron2@gmail.com

Fairacres: Barbara, barbara.ashcroft@btinternet.com; Margaret, margthompson01@gmail.com,

Chester Luke, boltonluke@gmail.com, Sarah, s.r.beattie@gmail.com

Bedford : Janet, janetmwhall@gmail.com,

Bannister Close: Jo, jo.burch@rocketmail.com

Eyot Place: Margaret, margarettthorogood@btinternet.com

Parker: Louise, randall.louise@gmail.com

Warwick Street: Darren, darren.clahane@gmail.com, Melissa, clix70@hotmail.com

Interest groups

Book Group, (text Sue 07780 697691); **Walking Group** (text: Margie; 07879 440937); **Gardening Group** (email susanbedford7@btinternet.com);

Poetry Group (text Melissa 07549416346).

Suggestions for new interest groups, text Sue 07780697691

Thanks to the Falcon Boat Club for generously allowing us to use their delightful facilities for our meetings.