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**NOTE of a meeting of the Committee of Iffley Fields Residents' Association, held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 by Zoom**

Present: Christine Hogg, in the Chair  
Simon Fisher, Jon Rees, Ben Pinches, Samantha Robertson, Janet Hall, Barbara Ashcroft, Thelma Martin, Luke Bolton.  
Punam Behl, Sarah Murray, Cllr Richard Tarver.

**1 Apologies** were received from Cllr Damien Haywood, Cllr Steve Curran and Mari Girling

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November** were accepted as a correct record.

**3 Matters Arising:**

The Fields – Following an email from Jon to Mari enquiring about progress re publication of this newsletter Mari has written to confirm that she will be handing over material prepared so far to Christine and Janet so that they can finish it off. The Committee expressed huge gratitude to Mari for all her work on this over the years.

Bins outside the Kidneys- Cost estimate has come back from the Council at £450.

Traffic management in East Oxford – no update has been received.

Bench for Meadow Lane Rec. Punam queried the cost of the bench, having seen it advertised as being £319 plus VAT. Jon confirmed that the true cost was closer to £500 once VAT and concrete fittings had been considered, and the cost of labour may take it up to £1500.

Jon had asked the Council to provide a breakdown of costs in the estimate, but has not received one. Jon put it that if one expects local public services, one accepts that provision is bound to carry significant overheads. In any case, as we had not received permission from the Council to install a bench ourselves - there was little choice but to either accept the quote or abandon the project. If we raise significantly more than target, we should request a cost for the installation of two benches as Punam suggested.

It was agreed: that £300 from Open Gardens would provide the basis and the remainder through crowd funding. Jon will work with Ben as Treasurer to activate the crowdfunding. Richard still to follow up with council officer to make sure they were happy for the bench if it was of no cost to the Council. He will also find out what the cost for two benches might be.

Flooding Chester Street. It was reported that there had been no significant flooding since the previous meeting in November.

Access to Sea Scouts Field. The public footpath is reported as being accessible, although Simon reported that a new notice has gone up. Ben will speak to Juliet from the Sea Scouts about their perception of the current situation and Jon will write to the Falcon Rowing Club in a bid to understand their position re public access to the RiverOPT, owner of the Sea Scouts land, had suggested a zoom meeting to specifically address this issue and come up with a plan.

Signs for Kidneys and Astons Eyot. Jon has obtained a quote for this which is around £100. It is intended that this could be funded out of the crowd funding once it is up and running.

#### **4 Application for Cold Calling Zone**

Thelma reported that she had submitted the application and that Neighbourhood Watch had given IFRA 100 packs and stickers to help deal with the situation of 'Nottingham Knockers'. Sam requested that she have a pack.

#### **5 Wood burning stoves and the Smoke Control Zone**

Jon and Janet both reported breathing difficulties resulting from wood burning domestic fires. Simon explained the risk around wood burning stoves and open fires inside. Christine will highlight this issue in the Fields and the Committee will consider whether or not to have this subject as an agenda item at the AGM in March.

#### **6 Sub Groups Reports**

Access to Waterways Sub Group. Ben reported that Eleanor Blyth and Susanne Schmidt were leading on a local survey to be distributed in February. The survey will identify priorities for the community regarding access and safety of the river for recreational use and the intention is to present the findings to the Council once it has been shared at the IFRA AGM in March.

Planning Sub Group. Thelma was confirmed as the planning contact for this group and was welcomed back as an IFRA Committee officer. Sarah Murray reported on the situation with an HMO at 67 Argyle Street. An update from Council Officer MK was received via Cllr Tarver after the meeting confirming the house had been inspected Nov 2020 and was found fit for 6 persons in 6 households, and that the license was amended in Dec 2020 to permit this. In addition, the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team had been informed about the situation and had been made aware of the HMO license condition (to require that planning permission is obtained before October 2020). Planning Enforcement (CC) were also currently investigating the breach of planning for the use of the house as an HMO.

The meeting was asked to support a **drafted policy on HMOs**:

"IFRA recognises that for many young people renting a room in a shared house is their only option and welcomes them to our community.

The IFRA planning subgroup views a number of planning applications each year for change of use from C3 (a 'dwelling house' i.e. family house) to C4 (House in Multiple Occupation -HMO). HMOs require planning consent and a renewable license from the Council, though there are few realistic grounds to oppose the license or its renewal.

Frequently planning applications for change of status are sought retrospectively, which may be a way of forcing the Council's hand. IFRA will oppose such retrospective applications and urges the Council to introduce sanctions to discourage this behaviour.

Each application for HMO status will be considered by IFRA on its merits. Our main concerns are to:

- Ensure the accommodation is an acceptable standard, in particular we have concerns about overcrowding and lack of shared space.

- Take account of the impact on the area if too many houses become HMOs. The City Council has a policy that no area should have more than 20% of houses as HMOs and we support this.”

#### **Iffley Village Fields Development**

Jon updated on this and it was agreed to wait until March when a common position might be taken across multiple interested groups in the area.

### **7 Arrangements for AGM 15 March**

It was agreed that the Committee would work on agenda items via email.

### **8 Street Connectors - Reports**

**Fairacres Road** – Barbara reported that traffic wardens had been spotted which is reassuring. She also noted that there had been a number of car break-ins (no connection).

**Argyle Street** – Luke reported that some residents had Covid and emphasised the need for safety precautions.

**Stratford Street** – Ben reported that there had been a Christmas sing-a-long in the street and that more musical happenings would be scheduled throughout 2021.

**The meeting finished at 8.20.**

#### **Dates for meetings 2021:**

Monday March 15<sup>th</sup> (AGM)  
Monday May 10th  
Monday July 12th  
Monday September 13th  
Monday December 13th