



# *The Fields*

Iffley Fields Residents Association

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

September 2024

## **Community Group aims to revitalise Riverside**

The Riverside land next to the Riverside Centre has long been neglected, and of late, has been primarily used as overflow parking since the confusion around the Meadow Lane car park. There is now a proposal to revitalise the Riverside area through the help of a local community group, the Oxford Amateur Rowing Club (OARC).

OARC was founded in 2004 and is open to all adult members of the Oxford community. They have recently been required to vacate their previous premises due to a change of ownership and are now proposing to work with our community to revitalise the Riverside area while also building a new base for their operations there. In the short term, OARC will cut back the overgrowth, remove rubbish, and erect temporary boat storage. The additional green space unlocked by cleaning up Riverside will be available for all to use.



OARC fully understands the importance of a thriving and open river community and are looking forward to making Riverside the hub of activity for the whole community as it once was in the past. Please get in touch with them if you have any questions at [oarcpresident@gmail.com](mailto:oarcpresident@gmail.com).

## New Oxford Rivers Portal

River pollution is all over the news, but it's difficult to get clear, up-to-date information about river water quality and conditions locally. Environmental charity Thames21 and research institute UKCEH have developed a one-stop shop for local river information: the Oxford Rivers Portal. It can be accessed online at <https://oxfordrivers.ceh.ac.uk/portal>. On a single map, you can discover the current river level, flood alerts, and whether there has been a recent sewage spill in your local river or stream. The team behind the portal will also be release "case studies" each month to help people use the data to push for river improvements in and around Oxford. If you see pollution to a river, stream or other waterway, report it *immediately* to the Environment Agency using their 24-hour hotline: 0800 80 70 60 and directly to **Thames Water** using their online 'report a problem' tool. Signs of pollution include: dead fish or fish gasping for air or other river wildlife in distress, large amounts of oil or foam, bad or chemical odour, discoloured water, large amounts of litter or sewage debris.

## Longbridges Pool

Work parties at Longbridges with Oxford Conservation Volunteers have been successful in clearing much of the Himalayan Balsam, but it will take several years of work until it is completely eradicated. The collapsing bank is currently being replaced by ODS and we look forward to seeing the results when the works are completed at the start of October. Please contact Adam



[friendsoflongbridges@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoflongbridges@gmail.com) if you would like to be added to our WhatsApp group.

## The Guerilla Garden and planting on the Rec

We are sad that Denise Cullington is moving to Stroud. We wish her well. She has done a fantastic job in helping to replant Meadow Lane Recreation Ground with bulbs at the back and trees that don't interfere with sports. We will greatly miss her. Let us know if you can help in continuing the regeneration of the Recreation Ground and maintaining the Guerilla Garden.

Denise writes:

*"I first began the GG outside my back yard going on 20 years ago, pulling back the nettles and trying things out. Then I slowly moved up the stretch planting some trees with the euphorbia and other shrubs providing lower cover. The most successful annual has been the wonderful oriental poppy, helped by a couple of neighbours who throw seed out at the best time.*



*The joy of the garden is that despite the losses and hassle – the slugs ate the lovely lupins I planted in a hopeful moment; the badgers churned up an area – flowers survive the neglect and emerge in their loveliness, like the hollyhocks which go from strength to strength. The GG has been an outdoor gym for me (so much more fun than doing press-ups); it is a meditative exercise, watering and paying attention to the plants and weeds emerging; and I love that it is out in the world, where passers-by can appreciate, and stop and chat.*

*Some things I will try to do before I leave, and you might want to do is:*

- *Pruning the trees – or branches sticking out that get bashed by lorries; cutting out the lower branches allows light in to plants underneath.*
- *Watering*
- *Spreading compost from the hot-bin*
- *Weeding*
- *Staking, when a plant gets too heavy.*
- *Cutting back after flowering.*
- *And planting in the gaps.*

*It will be what it will be. You will do what you can or have the time or inclination for. I hope you continue to enjoy it as much as I have done".*

## **The Kidneys**

.....awash with mud in winter, remember? We hope that will be remedied this autumn. Other changes could make the space better, and there is a proposal to work under the guidance of Friends of Astons Eyot to bring those about. Ideas are- logs for sitting, perhaps a small clump of rowan trees and a boardwalk over the 'creek' leading into the Oxford Preservation Trust field.

Best of all would be a stretch of grassy bank alongside the river, free of scrub and brambles. Access to the river is a concern, yet the Kidneys potentially offers very good access. IFRA would like to form a small working party to pursue these ideas. Join us, contact us [iffleyfields@gmail.com](mailto:iffleyfields@gmail.com).

## **Oxbox Art Trail**

Following the success of Flower Lane and Co-op Corner, the OxBox art trail is a new local art project that will create a wonderful street gallery running from Iffley Road to Cowley Road and along to Donnington Bridge, taking in all the streets in between including Boundary Brook Road and the traffic lights at Donnington Bridge. This initiative will transform neglected, graffitied and fly postered utility boxes, transforming them into individual unique stunning murals and creative illustrations. For more information go to; [www.boundarybrookcommunityprojects.co.uk](http://www.boundarybrookcommunityprojects.co.uk)

## **Defibrillator - we need your help!**

Unfortunately, the Chester are now unwilling to place our community defibrillator on the pub, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church have not replied to our enquiries about hosting it on their building. We have been advised that a lamp post mount is not possible and solar charged units are very expensive. The defibrillator cabinet contains a small 60W heater only used in Winter, and so it needs to be connected to a standard power supply. We are appealing to residents on Stratford Street, Argyle Street or Eyot Place with rear access onto Meadow Lane who might be willing to site the cabinet on their rear wall to get in touch. The cabinet would be connected to their electricity supply via a standard 32A plug which includes a separate electricity meter. IFRA will pay installation and all ongoing electricity costs (less than £20 a year). Please get in touch with IFRA if you might be willing to help!

## School traffic

The School Streets scheme has been broadly considered a success, with hundreds of children benefiting from safer routes to work. There has been some traffic displacement to the top of Bedford St, but overall, the situation has significantly improved and a majority of children, parents, and residents are supportive of the scheme's aims. The County Council is currently consulting on next steps and possible revisions to the scheme, there's likely to be a camera installed in the autumn and further announcements will be made (do check the IFRA Facebook page for updates).

## Meadow Lane Playground

The Council have replaced the monkey bars, installed new fencing and resurfaced around the swings. Replacements for the wobbly bridge are still awaited. With support from the council, a group of local residents are drawing up plans to transform the playground into a natural play area with plants, stepping stones, logs, a mural on the back fence etc. Volunteers are welcome to help with ideas and project planning, please get in touch.



Community Play Mornings over the Summer have included sand play, music sing alongs and water play. The next play morning is Sunday 15th September starting with some Family Yoga 10-10:30 followed by some playground fun together until 12 (any donations for the yoga to go to Asylum Welcome).

Working Party and Pizza evenings are also taking place at the playground to focus on clearing rubbish and tidying up the space, from 5-7pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, kids welcome (next ones are 18 Sept, 2nd and 16th Oct).

Please get in touch if you would like to help with the natural play project, or be added to our event mailing list.

## **Vigilantes and Vandals**

Pavements are for people and those with buggies and disabled people need to be able to use them. Unfortunately, our streets are so narrow that cars have to park on the pavement so that lorries and emergency vehicles can get past. While pavement parking is illegal, it is not enforced.

However, we can do somethings to help:

- Park carefully, leaving as much space as possible for pedestrians
- Keep hedges trimmed
- Put in wing mirrors

The Streets have been subject to many night time incidents in the summer. Some leave notes about wing mirrors or even half trim hedges in the middle of the night to make their point. However, others are causing real damage, distress and expense. The Tyre Extinguishers have been letting down the tyres of SUVs, leaving a leaflet (<https://tyreextinguishers.com>). Many residents have had wing mirrors ripped off or damaged regardless of the age or size of their car.

**If your car is damaged, please make sure you report it to the Police**

## **IFRA Finances**

Due to generous support from local residents, we have been able to recover our financial position from difficulties of last winter. Currently, our unrestricted funds stand at £539.87 we have a regular monthly income of around £50 from local donations. This should be sufficient for our needs for the coming year. Our only financial outgoings are printing 2 editions of the newsletter each year and maintenance of the website. However, IFRA will need fund the defibrillator when it is installed and we may run into a shortfall in the following years. To continue momentum and support the scale of our ambitions for area we still need to increase our income. If you are able to contribute, here are the details. Iffley Fields Residents Association – Account No. 24751634, Sort Code 54-21-23 or visit [www.ifra.uk](http://www.ifra.uk)

## **Meadow Lane Car Park**

Still no news on the future of the Car Park. It will be coming to the Planning Committee for a decision but we still do not have a date. IFRA wants it brought back into public use.

## Fairacres House



Fairacres House, a large neoclassical villa (now the Convent) was built in the 1830s. Fairacres House still stands, unlike the other big houses in the area: Donnington Lodge and Frelands House. (The gate piers of Donnington Lodge can still be seen near the corner of Iffley Road and Donnington Bridge

Road).

Fairacres House was approached from Iffley Road by a track running along the line of the present-day Daubeny Road. This track continued past the house and into a meadow, and is marked today by two stone gateposts in the convent grounds.

The land was owned by a local farmer and sold to William Bull, a prosperous Grocer, who built the House around 1834. He opposed the Proposal from Brunel to run the Didcot to Oxford railway line on the Eastern side of the river. Fortunately for us the Bill failed. After 1840 the House was rented out. In 1896 a 16ft strip of land was purchased to give access to the House from Fairacres Road.

An Anglican Convent had been established at Leopold Street by the Sisters of the Love of God in 1906 and shortly afterwards the community moved to its present home in Fairacres House. The original nineteenth century house: with a small chapel and more living accommodation, and most recently a purpose-built area where elderly and infirm sisters can be cared for.

The surrounding Fairacres Estate, (10 acres including Parker Street, Daubeny Street and Fairacres Road to number 90) was assigned to Magdalen College when the fields were enclosed and later sold to the Oxford Industrial and Provident Land and Building Society in 1888 for development.

# IFRA

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 other month, alternately on Zoom and in person currently at the Gladiators Club. Agenda and minutes are on [www.ifra.uk](http://www.ifra.uk).

Committee: Sue Hale (Chair), Ben Pinches, Jon Rees (Vice Chairs), Sam Alston (Treasurer), Christine Hogg (Secretary), Thelma Martin (Planning), Barbara Ashcroft, Susan Bedford, Luke Bolton, Denise Cullington, Simon Fisher, Janet Hall, Samantha Robertson, Peter Sidgwick.

## 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](mailto: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 offer a point of contact for residents. IFRA is looking for further Street Connectors particularly for Fairacres Road, Parker and Warwick Street. Please contact Sue at [sue\\_hale@btinternet.com](mailto:sue_hale@btinternet.com).

**Argyle:** Sue Hale: [sue\\_hale@btinternet.com](mailto:sue_hale@btinternet.com), Sylvia Eades, [seades@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:seades@hotmail.co.uk), Simon Fisher: [simonfishershose@gmail.com](mailto:simonfishershose@gmail.com).

**Stratford:** Ben Pinches, [ben@pinches.biz](mailto:ben@pinches.biz); Tom Green, [tomgreen77@gmail.com](mailto:tomgreen77@gmail.com); Rosemary Cameron, [rosemarycameron2@gmail.com](mailto:rosemarycameron2@gmail.com)

**Fairacres:** Barbara Ashcroft, [barbara.ashcroft@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.ashcroft@btinternet.com); Margaret Thompson, [margthompson01@gmail.com](mailto:margthompson01@gmail.com),

**Chester Street:** Luke Bolton, [boltonluke@gmail.com](mailto:boltonluke@gmail.com)

**Chester/ Warwick:** Sam Robertson, [sr24667@gmail.com](mailto:sr24667@gmail.com)

**Bedford Street:** Janet Hall, [janetmvhall@gmail.com](mailto:janetmvhall@gmail.com),

**Bannister Close:** Jo Burch, [jo.burch@rocketmail.com](mailto:jo.burch@rocketmail.com)

**Eyot Place:** Margaret Thoroughgood, [margaretthoroughgood@btinternet.com](mailto:margaretthoroughgood@btinternet.com) **Parker**

**Street:** Louise Perkins, [randall.louise@gmail.com](mailto:randall.louise@gmail.com)

**Warwick Street:** Darren Clahane, [darren.clahane@gmail.com](mailto:darren.clahane@gmail.com)

## Interest groups

**Book Group**, (to join text Sue 07780 697691); **Walking Group** (To join text: Margie 07879 440937); **Gardening Group** (To join email [susanbedford7@btinternet.com](mailto:susanbedford7@btinternet.com));

**History Group** (To join email: [joanna.innes@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:joanna.innes@history.ox.ac.uk)

Suggestions for new interest groups, text Sue 0778069769