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AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2011

WINTER MEETING

This meeting will be held at the Parish Hall, Dunstan Road, at 8 p.m. on Friday 18th November when Clive Hurst, a member of the Friends, has kindly agreed to talk to us about *Early Children's Books: an Illustrated History*. Clive is Head of Rare Books and Printed Ephemera at the Bodleian Library. There will be time for discussion after the talk which will be followed by drinks and nibbles. Donations towards the cost of the evening will be very welcome.

IMPORTANT PLANNING CHANGES IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

There have been some important changes recently in Planning Law, and more are on the way. They will have a big impact on the Conservation Area, and we hope that you will think carefully about them as we hope to raise them at the forthcoming Winter Meeting. We are delighted that Robert Lloyd-Sweet, the Conservation Officer responsible for writing the Conservation Area Appraisal - recently endorsed by the Council - has agreed to come to the meeting to talk us about them.

You may know that the Government is introducing new planning regulations under the title National Planning Policy Framework. This will involve a loosening of planning restrictions and a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". It may have an adverse impact on villages and on the Green Belt. This comes on top of the recent loosening of the law around Permitted Development Rights.

Householders can normally make minor alterations to their houses without having to get planning permission. This is "Permitted Development". However, in some places, particularly Conservation Areas, residents are concerned that some of these changes can seriously erode the character of the district. It is possible for the Council to remove permitted development rights by making an Article 4 Direction. This is made under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. (There are full details on Wikipedia). It is important to note that an Article 4 Direction does not in itself prohibit such development. It just means that a landowner is required to seek planning consent for those particular items before doing work.

The changes that have worried people in Old Headington are the replacement of traditional wooden windows by modern UPVC windows which lack traditional glazing bars, the removal of antique ridge tiles, and the installation of large solar panels on the roofs of traditional houses.

Oxford City Council is prepared to support residents in this matter. For instance, it has imposed, with effect from 24 February 2012, an Article 4 Direction on the change of use of a dwelling house to a house in multiple occupation in the entire Oxford City Council area. This



was in response to concerns that some roads were getting taken over by student housing, to the detriment of conditions for other residents.

Your committee is keen to apply for an Article 4 Direction to control the sort of things listed above in order to protect the conservation area. They wish to raise this with members at the Winter Meeting. Rob Lloyd-Sweet, the Conservation Officer, will be available to outline the procedure for us. It is an important step to take, so the Council wants to know what the residents think about it.

If there is support for the proposal, preparations will move forward and it will be voted on at next year's Annual General Meeting.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2012

It was agreed at the Annual General Meeting this year that subscriptions of **£5 per person** will be payable in future rather than **£5 per household**. A form for the payment of your new subscription is attached so please complete this form and send it with your payment to the Membership Secretary, (Veronica Hurst at 9 Stoke Place). If you pay by standing order please get in touch with your bank to change it if you want to add extra members at £5 per adult (under 18s are included free of charge). If you would like in future to pay by standing order, please ask the Membership Secretary for the appropriate form. We are always ready to welcome new members, so if you enjoy the Friends' events or benefit from our efforts to solve problems in the village, or are interested in the balance of conservation with local progress, please fill in the form and become a Friend.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2011

Several payments for 2011 are still outstanding; we would be grateful if regular members could check to see whether they have a current membership card, and if not, to contact the Membership Secretary, Veronica Hurst. It's not too late to renew your membership for this year!

HEADINGTON CAR PARK

The future of the car park is still uncertain and the campaign against its closure for the building of student accommodation on stilts with limited parking is ongoing. We dare not be complacent although the councillors have rejected the plans to build on the St. Clement's car park as we don't know yet how the developers will respond to that rejection, and we must keep the momentum going in our efforts to keep the car park up here. The petition which has been available for signature in a number of shops, at the Headington Ward Focus meetings and in the car park resulted in over 3,300 signatures. Members of the Friends have been active with this, and we have written to the *Oxford Mail* and the *Oxford Times* (see 'Planning Corner' on the website foh.org.uk) and are encouraging others to write to both papers and to the city council.

RUSKIN FIELDS GROUP

In July the Council released their analysis of the Barton Area Action Plan questionnaires, and the responses to the two questions about developing the Ruskin Fields showed opposition to any development at all on the fields running at two to one. The Ruskin Fields Group also submitted a detailed objection to the proposal backed by a petition with 400 plus signatures.



(Of the 400 completed questionnaires received by the Council nearly half were accounted for by responses from Barton (24%) and Old Headington (23%), which is a result we can be very proud of, considering that there are only 300 households in the conservation area.)

In August Ruskin College invited City Councillors to consider a new development proposal for the fields. This new plan would see 150 homes built on the two fields nearest Northway, leaving the field next to Stoke Place bridleway undeveloped.

The proposal is now being presented as an extension of Northway and would include a 4-storey block of flats in the north-west corner, to mirror the existing tower blocks nearby. All access would be via Foxwell Drive. The local impact of the traffic was described as 'negligible', and Ruskin have also said that there would be "absolutely no vehicular access through to Old Headington from the proposed development under any circumstances" which would clearly not be the case.

The Ruskin Fields Group has written to all Councillors pointing out that the College's proposals remain unacceptable, that access for vehicles depends entirely on the City Council agreeing to give up one of Northway's prized green spaces in order to provide it, and that there would be a disastrous increase in vulnerability for all of Oxford's conservation areas if this development is allowed to go ahead.

We have also written to Michael Crofton-Briggs (Head of City Development) asking that the Ruskin proposals be excluded from the Barton Area Action plan with immediate effect, since the revised version was submitted after the public consultation period closed, and therefore belongs – if anywhere – within the normal planning process.

If you would like to see the outline plan for "Headington Meads" as Ruskin is calling this development, please look at the Friends' website (www.foh.org.uk).

The decision on whether the Ruskin proposal will go forward as part of the BAAP is still scheduled for the Full Council meeting on 19th December; but we are awaiting confirmation of the date. The scheme is under consideration now, however, so once again, please make your views known to Council officers, Councillors, or the *Oxford Times*. We are happy to help provide addresses and other details.

TRAFFIC SUB-COMMITTEE

The resurfacing of Dunstan Road has caused problems relating to the height of speed humps and council officers are investigating this matter. It seems that speeding has increased near the junction with Osler Road and St Andrew's Road, so please let us know if this has been a problem, particularly for cyclists.

The possible development of Old High Street car park has led to a petition against this plan, signed by several thousand local people. The increased pressure on parking would only add to the difficult situation that already exists in parts of Old Headington

In both instances, the Traffic Subcommittee is extremely grateful for the help and support of our LibDem councillors, Ruth Wilkinson and David Rundle.

HEADINGTON WARD FOCUS MEETINGS



Our excellent councillors, David Rundle and Ruth Wilkinson, are now, since the demise of the North East Area Committees, holding Ward Focus meetings usually on the third Tuesday of alternate months. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 20th December at the Baptist church in Old High Street. These meetings are held at different locations and give us the opportunity to discuss local concerns with them at the surgeries which at 6 p.m. precede more specific topics for discussion. Agendas are distributed throughout the Headington area and we, through the FOH email list, also make people aware of the meetings.

NEW SECRETARY FOR THE FRIENDS

We need to recruit a new Secretary as Stella Welford will be retiring at the AGM next year and we would like to co-opt her replacement on to the committee as soon as possible. The committee is discussing the future management of the Friends and it has been suggested that the Secretary's job should be divided into two with one person running the day to day affairs of the Friends and that there should be an additional Minute Secretary taking responsibility for committee and other meetings. We therefore ask you to consider one of these roles and to get in touch if you feel you could offer to take over some responsibility for the work we do to preserve the Conservation Area.

FOH EMAIL LIST

Many of you are on the Friends' email list and you will receive messages at intervals about various matters. If anyone would like to be added to the list, or to the 'non-email' hard copy list, do please get in touch. This gives us the opportunity to bring you up-to-date news rather than wait for the regular newsletters.

BURY KNOWLE PARK PLAY AREA

We are delighted to report that the new play area has been completed and that it was opened on Friday, 23rd September by Andrew Smith MP and has been very well used and appreciated since then. We are aware that some people think that the refurbishment was financed by the City Council using Oxford tax payers money, and we wish to point out that this was not the case. The cost was borne by Groundwork which is a national organisation working on many aspects of regenerating open spaces and they have an interesting website: google - Groundwork.

ART EXHIBITION AND SALE

Ian and Elizabeth Duncan have asked us to let you know that they are holding an exhibition and a sale of their watercolours and pastels over the weekends of 22/23 and 29/30 October, from 11 a.m to 5 p.m. at 9 St. Andrew's Road: % of sales to charity. All are welcome.

STREET LIGHTS

Just a reminder about street lights now that the evenings are drawing in: during the winter the lights are checked on a regular basis but anyone who notices a faulty lamp should ring a freephone number, or send an email, to report the fault. You will need to give the number on the lamp post (usually between one and three metres up) and/or the location of the lamp. The Freephone number is 0800 317 802 and the email address streetlighting@oxfordshire.gov.uk. The office is manned during working hours, i.e. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays, and



9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays. At other times you will get an answerphone message in which case leave your name and number and ask for a call back. The contractors have five days during which to repair normal faults.

1911 CENSUS

Stephanie Jenkins, who many of you will know through the main Headington website which covers a lot of the history of the area, and through articles in the parish magazine *The Norman Arch*, has offered to look up your houses (email only) on the 1911 Census. She has been working through the returns for Old Headington and has found our book *Within Living Memory* very helpful indeed in identifying the houses. Stephanie's email address is stephanie.jenkins@gmail.com

OXFORD IN BLOOM

Headington won the Bronze Award for Best Small Commercial Display at the Oxford in Bloom Awards this year for its hanging baskets. They were funded by local businesses as there was no funding from the council this year outside the immediate city centre. We would like to congratulate them on gaining this award.



FRIENDS OF OLD HEADINGTON SUBSCRIPTION FORM 2012

please tick appropriate box

Renewal of existing membership @ £5 per adult for 2012: payment enclosed

Renewal of existing membership by standing order: please contact your bank if you need to increase your standing order from £5 to £10 (or more) to include other adult members

New membership @ £5 per adult for 2012: completed standing order form attached

New membership @ £5 per adult for 2012: cash/cheque enclosed

Name: Tel. no.

Name(s) of other member(s):

Address:

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Postcode:

Email address(es):

I/we do not object to these details being held in the Friends' electronic or paper files

Please note that your email address will only be used to keep you informed of important events or significant development proposals which are likely to affect the Conservation Area.

Please return this form plus cash/standing order form to the Membership Secretary: Veronica Hurst
(9 Stoke Place, OX3 9BX; tel. 01865 750484)