

## **...AUTUMN NEWSLETTER**

September 2010

### **FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY PARTY**

A reminder that the date of our celebration party is Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> October: 8 p.m. at the Parish Hall, Dunstan Road, to which all are welcome. Donations on the night towards the cost of the event will be very welcome.

The results of the Photographic Competition will be announced at the party, so if you plan to enter the competition this is also to remind you that entries must be submitted by Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September. The rules for entry were sent out with the Extra Summer Newsletter in July so if you have lost your copy the Secretary or Tim Toomey (phone: 741035) will let you have another. The judges for the competition will be Joe Winkelman, Chris Belson, Ed Hart who is Digital Photography Tutor at Ruskin College, and Tim Toomey, a member of the committee of the Friends. The committee plans to include the winning photographs as part of a calendar which will be available for sale at the Winter meeting.

Sets of notelets will be on sale which have been reprinted from the drawings by Rosemarie Deepwell. These have been out of print for many years and we are very grateful to her for allowing us to reprint them.

There will also be an exhibition about the history of the village with photographs and documents from the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies and from the Friends' archives. Penny Fox, a member of the Friends and Chairman of the Parish Hall committee, has kindly agreed to mastermind this exhibition

### **WINTER MEETING**

This meeting will be held at the Parish Hall, Dunstan Road, at 8 p.m. on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> November, when Henry Kim, a member of the Friends, has kindly agreed to talk to us about the redevelopment of the Ashmolean Museum for which he was Project Manager. We have all had an opportunity to visit the Ashmolean since it was re-opened by the Queen and will be able to appreciate all that has been done to make the exhibits so much more accessible.

### **BARTON AREA ACTION PLAN**

As you doubtless know by now, the city council is intending to build approximately 1000 houses on the open space to the west of Barton, to the north of the ring road. It is called the "Barton AAP" and if you put that into the city website:

(<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/BartonAAP.htm> and [http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/Barton AAPScopingReport.pdf](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/BartonAAPScopingReport.pdf)) you will come up with information. After years of delay, the city planners are suddenly forcing the pace. The advantage for them is that they already own the land, and it is not in the Green Belt. It is adjacent to our Conservation Area, but not in it.

A city document called "Barton Area Action Plan - Issues Document" was widely distributed around Old Headington, and there is a longer publication called "Barton AAP Scoping Report" which is also on the web site. There has been a period of general consultation.

The site is a difficult one to develop. It has an electricity substation in the middle, it has a recreation ground (on contaminated land) and allotments at the east end. It has the Bayswater Brook along its north side, with a flood risk problem. And it has the A40 as its southern boundary, causing significant noise (new housing has to be set back from a noisy road). This limits the amount of usable land to about two thirds of the whole.

Access is a significant issue. Obviously it can connect to Barton, but to form a continuous area of housing, the existing recreation area would have to be re-located. The city planners want to connect the new development to the Northway estate, so that all three areas could share community facilities. They need to arrange a bus route (Northway/BartonAAP/Barton) without opening Northway to Barton car traffic.

Furthermore the west end of the new development would need access to both carriageways of the ring road. Currently they are intending to use light-controlled crossings for this.

They would like to connect the end of Stoke Place to the footpath on the far side of the by-pass by a bridge. It would be handy for JR hospital staff to live there and walk or cycle to work. The Friends are, however concerned that by the time a footbridge is made usable by prams and wheelchairs it would be likely to be used by motorcycles etc. so the effect on Stoke Place could be disastrous.

The Friends' committee met Rachel Williams of the city planning department on 30 June. After the meeting it sent a letter to the planners, which included the following points:

- If a new road junction is to be built the opportunity should be taken to form a direct access from the A40 to the JR hospital site. The JR is a county-wide facility with a very heavy traffic load, and it is not sensible that it has no direct main road access. It already has an access to Saxon Way. (Whether a new access should be limited to buses and ambulances, or that and staff cars, or to everyone, would obviously be open to discussion.)
- It is necessary to ensure that the new development does not cause increased traffic problems in Old Headington
- If a new footbridge is built at Stoke Place, it would be necessary to ensure that it was not usable by motorcycles. It is the last country footpath in the area and should be kept as such.

- As there are currently no pubs in either Barton or Northway it would be very desirable to put one in the new development - or else the pubs in Old Headington might get over-run. It would also be very desirable to include a doctor's surgery and a pharmacy.
- No new secondary school is proposed. School-run traffic to existing Oxford secondary schools would need to be considered.
- Ruskin College has offered the city the use of its fields down to the by-pass as an extension of the new development. This is totally unacceptable to the residents of Old Headington.

Two further points may be of interest:

- The distance that houses in the new development have to be set back from the road depends on the speed of the traffic. It is very likely that a speed limit would therefore be put on the A40 there for the full length of the site. This would reduce the traffic noise that we can hear from the village.
- Nothing has yet been said about who would pay for the new development. The cost has to be in the hundreds of millions of pounds. There has been muttering about developers. It seems unlikely that developers would make money out of a site needing extensive road works and de-contamination, and then including 50% affordable housing. However, there is a lot we don't know about this.

So - we don't know what will happen. We will try to keep you informed.

## **THE OLD HIGH STREET CAR PARK**

The Old High Street car park of course belongs to the city council - not to Waitrose. There have been several long-running sagas there.

- Two new tickets machines have been installed, both of which are placed low down (too low for aged people with bad backs) because the city says that they have to be at that height so that people in wheelchairs can access them. The fact that disabled people don't have to pay for parking (except for stays of over four hours) had passed them by. So just in case an unaccompanied wheelchair user should decide to leave their car there all day all the rest of us have to bend right down or kneel on the ground to use the machines.
- The long and unhelpful notices at the entrance to the car park have now been replaced. The design of these has been going on for about two years. The new notices are much shorter and use a lot of icons. A lot of thought has gone into these, but some of the more arcane ones - such as for parking a car slightly out of line, or paying by card - may be unfamiliar.
- A note appeared in the city's investment schedule saying that the car park is to have houses built on it. The timing of this seemed to be the same as for the Barton AAP (inside the next five years).

We have mentioned this to Waitrose, and they are thinking about it - after all, it would be logical for Waitrose to buy the car park. Now the city says that nothing is to happen before 2015. This gives everyone a lot of time to discuss it.

The car park is well used and it seems the city is happy with the amount of money it gets from it, so it is unlikely that it will suddenly close. But we need to constantly press them on maintenance issues.

## **POLICE**

In view of the number of attempted burglaries which have been experienced recently you might like to make a note of the following numbers:

If you see anyone acting suspiciously contact the Police on the Non Emergency Number – 0845 8 505 505

If you see a crime in action dial 999

We have also been told that homes and business premises are being targeted for lead.