

# Friends of Iffley Village

website: [www.friendsofiffley.org](http://www.friendsofiffley.org)



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**Chair: Martin Reed**  
**Newsletter Editor: Juliette Gammon**

## Winter Newsletter 2026

### **Chair's report - HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026!**

At our December AGM in the Church Hall we looked back on the work of the committee over the past year (see pps 2&3). We were joined by City Councillors, (Henwood and Turner) and our County Councillor (Baines), and shared our thanks with retiring committee members Bill Beaver, Anna Di Stefano and Dave Broughton. We welcomed three new committee members from different corners of the village. We will post minutes of our monthly meetings on the website - currently being refreshed.

As always, our work is guided by our constitution: conservation of the essential character of Iffley village and its Conservation Area, guiding plans proposed for the future of the Village, and fostering community spirit. **Please join or renew your £5 membership for 2026** (see back page). It gives the committee a mandate to pursue these aims.

Looking ahead we expect another busy year. One of the most pressing recent issues is the safety of the new Iffley Turn/Henley Avenue junction. We've already met with County Council traffic officers, and we're now arranging a public meeting.

The final stage of consultation on the new Oxford Local Plan is due, and we'll be offering guidance once details are available. At the time of writing the Horse Fields have been re-allocated to the draft plan, but with a housing requirement of Zero (reduced from 30). It's not sound (using planning terms) to pursue harmful development on a site with proven heritage and ecological value; and it makes no sense to hold the threat of development over a site that has no certainty of delivering any housing. We invite your comments on a better plan for the Horse Fields, outlined below.

Meanwhile, Court Place has now opened, bringing many new neighbours to welcome into the village.

**Martin Reed** [chair@friendsofiffley.org](mailto:chair@friendsofiffley.org) (Chair and Planning lead)

**The new committee:** Secretary Eike Brazier, Treasurer Paul Castell, Highways lead Christine Collin, Events: lead Laura Schnurr, Membership lead Caroline Mason, committee members: Celia Palmer (trees), Katrina Robinson, Helena Newsom, Cecilia McCabe, Dominic Woodfield, Rachel Falconer, Nick Hewlett, Peggy Seeger, Juliette Gammon (newsletter).

**Nature Notes:** Winter dormancy is the current theme for Iffley's wildlife and natural spaces, but that doesn't mean there's no activity or there aren't exciting wildlife encounters to be had! It's been an exceptional year for fruit, and the hawthorn in the hedges are still laden with red berries ('haws') which the visiting fieldfares and redwings are subsisting on. In gardens, much the same thing can be said about firethorn (*Pyracantha*) bushes. It's always worth looking up and listening when outdoors. In recent days there've been large flocks of lapwing high over the village moving southwards. Most days there are skylarks and meadow pipits from the open countryside beyond the city. **Dominic Woodfield**

## FOR YOUR 2026 DIARY

Tues 10 Feb	7.30pm	Church Hall	Film	<i>Darling with Julie Christie</i>
Tues 17 Feb	7.30pm	Church Hall	History	<i>Edmund Gray: A Brilliant Circle of Arts and Crafts Designers</i>
Sun 22 Feb	3pm	Church Hall	Music	Jordan Brooks and Kumi Matsuo, violin and piano. <i>Schubert Fantasy, Debussy Violin Sonata, Enescu Impressions d'enfance.</i>
Tues, 3 Mar	7.30pm	Church Hall	*FOSM	Poetry and Puddings
Tues 10 Mar	7.30pm	Church Hall	Film	<i>Ninotchka</i> , 1939 romantic comedy with Garbo
Tues 17 Mar	7.30pm	Church Hall	History	Liz Woolley: <i>Leisure and Entertainment in Victorian and Edwardian Oxford</i>
Sat 14 Mar	3-4.30 pm	Church Hall	Living Stones	Tea party for all interested in the Church, esp volunteers past, present & future. No need to book.
Sun 22 Mar	3pm	Church Hall	Music	Kleio Quartet. <i>Works for String Quartet by Bach, Beethoven (Serioso Quartet, Op 95), Saariaho &amp; Felix Mendelssohn</i>
Sun 5 April	2.30-4.30pm	Iffley Church	Living Stones	Living Stones volunteer guides welcome visitors Sunday afternoons until 13 September. Free
Sun 12 April	3pm	Church Hall	Music	Ewan Millar & Tomos Boyles, oboe and piano. <i>Musgrave, Finzi, Bach, Ravel, Coleridge-Taylor, Barber, Boulanger &amp; Schumann</i>
Tues 14 April	7.30pm	Church Hall	Film	To be confirmed
Tues 21 April	7.30pm	Church Hall	History	Christina Hardymt: <i>Alyce Chaucer: the facts and the fictions</i>
Tues 12 May	7.30pm	Church Hall	Film	To be confirmed
Sun 16 May	10.30-5pm	Iffley Church	Living Stones	Drawing Iffley Church, a day's guided drawing workshop with artist Micah Hayns. Booking essential: <a href="https://livingstonesiffley.org.uk/events">https://livingstonesiffley.org.uk/events</a>
Tues 19 May	7.30pm	Church Hall	History	Malcolm Graham: <i>Removing Nuisances, Creating Vistas: The Work of the Oxford Paving Commissioners 1771-1800</i>
Sun 24 May	3pm	Church Hall	Music	Bute Wind Quintet. <i>Ravel arr. Jones, Vaska, Puccini arr. Emerson, Ligeti, Tomasi, Kvandal &amp; Coleman</i>

\*Friends of St Mary's

### Report of the Annual General Meeting 2025

**1. Planning** As members know there are several projects and proposals that have had, or could have the potential for, very significant impact on the future of the village. Planning is the responsibility of the City Council. **Horse Fields:** This 2.5-acre meadow in the Conservation Area faces an ongoing threat from proposed housing development despite strong opposition from residents and environmental groups, and a nonsensical allocation in the current draft Local Plan (see above). FOIV continues to challenge the City Council plans most recently by speaking at Council meetings, advocating for the meadow's protection and proposing a sustainable alternative use as a 'meadow school' to benefit nature and local children (see Consultation below). **Iffley Mead:** The County Council's plan (as landowner) for 90 houses (50% 'affordable') on this green field site has met with many technical objections, including flooding and road access, loss of football pitches, and impact on the school (from FOIV, Sport England, and bizarrely the Council's own specialists). We are exploring a proposal that suggests splitting the site between affordable housing and football facilities. **Court Place:** After many years of discussions, FOIV helped secure daily public access to the greensward from the Isis to St Mary's Church. The area is now open and can be enjoyed by the thousands who visit the Church annually. FOIV continues to monitor biodiversity commitments by the developers which may take 15 years to come to fruition. FOIV continues community engagement with Court Place. As part of this,

through the Homes for Students management team, we provide current information of interest to its residents, and look forward to meeting many of them at forthcoming events. **Sewage Infrastructure:** FOIV worked closely with Thames Water and contractors to manage sewer pipeline repairs with minimal disruption to the community, ensuring communication and cooperation throughout the process. The contractors are currently making good and leaving Oriel Field. FOIV has for the most part been impressed by Barhale's engagement and diligence throughout this project. It's great to have the chance to be positive!

**2. Highways** is a responsibility of the County Council. We have made steady progress across several local transport and safety issues with input from Cllr Baines. To venture a bold statement - the **Controlled Parking Zone** introduced in early 2025 is generally viewed as successful. We agreed a 12-month review with the County. Members were encouraged to share any CPZ concerns with the Chair before 31 January 2026. Many have raised strong concerns about the redesigned **Iffley Turn junction**, which we all feel has become more hazardous for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. FOIV has already made these points in a meeting on site with County officers, and a public meeting is being scheduled to discuss possible improvements. To address the danger posed by **motorbikes and scooters using pedestrian entry points**,

FOIV requested enforceable 'red' no-motor-vehicle signs at key village paths. The County has completed its consultation and the new signage is being installed. **Speeding** remains a persistent issue on the lanes, with surveys showing over a third of vehicles exceeding 20mph. While structural measures



FOIV sends many congratulations to our Iffley neighbour, **Peggy Seeger** who received a lifetime achievement award from Catherine Connolly, Irish president, at Dublin's Tradfest. It honoured the 90-year-old's 70 year singing and composing career including the feminist anthem of the 70s, *Gonna be an Engineer*. Peggy is a FOIV Committee member

remain difficult due to heritage concerns, FOIV is exploring **improved signage** as the most viable next step. **Towpath safety** continues to be a major concern following a coroner's report in 2024. Despite commitments from the County, on this issue no action has yet been taken. FOIV is pressing for progress and urges members to write to [anneliese.dodds.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:anneliese.dodds.mp@parliament.uk). Our **street lighting** has prompted worries about wildlife and intrusive brightness. FOIV met with the County officers responsible and secured agreement for some excessively bright lamps to be replaced. Following a field trip all the way to Park Town (!) we are pushing for a consultation in Iffley by the County on using diffused LEDs. Finally, we supported the County's consultation on reduced **speed limits for the Southern Bypass** road noting potential benefits for safety, noise reduction in the village, and air quality; the speed reductions have recently been voted into force by the County.

**3. Finances** The Treasurer reported that the year-to-date management accounts show total funds of nearly £13k. This figure includes a legacy of £5k received from the late Marianne Puxley, a former member of the committee. Members are asked to suggest suitable uses for the legacy.

**4. Sharing ideas** Members took part in a lively session led by Laura, discussing what strengthens community life in Iffley. Suggestions included creating an annual village event, organising joint activities with Rose Hill, and finding ways to welcome new Court Place residents. Many favoured simple, enjoyable social events. We will take this on board!

### **FOIV consultation on the Horse Fields and Memorial Field**

The broad aim is to develop a better plan for the Horse Fields and Memorial Field that balances human needs with the needs of wildlife and heritage, supported by strong evidence and community engagement. Local schools have already expressed very strong support for a local resource for outdoor education to address disadvantage, improve children's mental and physical health, support learning skills and careers, and build stronger connections between diverse communities and the local landscape. At just under one hectare, the Horse Fields are just large enough to support managed educational access, while safeguarding and enhancing its ecological and heritage significance. The

Council recognises that children's mental and physical health needs are becoming more acute, and that there is a lack of equitable access to nature in the city. The BBOWT Wildlife Trust is keen to co-design a proposal with local schools, and wishes to put Meadow School Iffley into its major regional Heritage National Lottery bid later this year. **Question (1)** At this initial stage, what are your views on the alternative plan for the Horse Fields as a dedicated outdoor-education site to address local need? **Question (2)** As regards Memorial Field, what are your views on public pedestrian access at the Church Way entrance, and reinstatement of the community orchard that once grew on the lower part of the field? [chair@friendsofiffley.org](mailto:chair@friendsofiffley.org)

## 2026 - the National Year of Reading ...

... and at Cowley Library we have many exciting events starting soon. **Menopause cafés** will run on Saturday 7 February and 7 March from 2-3.30pm. We provide an informal space to drink, eat and discuss menopause in a relaxed environment. Open to everyone there is no agenda, no experts and no pressure. Check out the menopause café website for more information, <https://menopausecafe.net>. A new **Tea Books** reading group run by Age UK starts Monday 9 February at 11am and then every second Monday of the month. Contact Age UK Oxfordshire on 01235 849434 or email [teabooks@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:teabooks@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk) to book a space. Mondays are also our day for **Baby Club**, a friendly drop-in session at 11am in the children's library. If you are the parent or carer of a baby under one do come along for socialising, a warm welcome and lots of new baby toys and **Clubs** are held on the second Tuesday of each month. Our youth group begins at 3.30pm and the adult group starts at 5.15pm. Silent Book Clubs are for those who don't want the pressure of a set text but enjoy reading in 'quiet company' and sharing their love of books with others. Shy or neurodiverse teenagers may find this atmosphere enjoyable.



And don't forget we have lots of books and other resources at Cowley library to support everyone's wellbeing. See you at the library!

**Cowley Library Manager**

## Membership of Friends of Iffley Village

Membership of FOIV is via an annual subscription due each January. This gives the committee a mandate to act on FOIV's two founding aims, namely to conserve Iffley's unique character and to foster community spirit.

Our newsletters and events are for everyone, member or not.

Membership allows you to vote for committee members at the AGM. Significantly it lets you help build our sense of community.

Our collective influence matters in this time of threats to the local environment and we would love to welcome you as a member.

**How do I pay my annual subscription?** The subscription for calendar year 2026 is £5 per person. You have a choice of four ways to pay:

1. Debit or credit card either by scanning this QR code or by following the link on our website ([www.friendsofiffley.org](http://www.friendsofiffley.org)).
2. Standing order to our HSBC community account 'The Friends of Iffley Village' sort code 40-35-34, account 52056216. If possible, please set this up for payment in January. This method is the most streamlined for our admin.
3. Bank transfer (with your address for reference) to the same bank account (above).
4. Cash in an envelope with your name and address on it marked 'Membership FOIV'. Please hand it in at the village shop and ask for it to be put in the box marked 'FOIV membership' under the desk at the till. **Any questions?** Please email [membership@friendsofiffley.org](mailto:membership@friendsofiffley.org)



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