

Friends of Iffley Village

website: www.friendsofiffley.org



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Chair: Martin Reed
Newsletter Editor: Juliette Gammon

Autumn Newsletter 2026

Chair's introduction

This newsletter looks at a range of practical concerns shaping village life, from road safety and speeding e-bikes to sewerage investigations and the replacement street lanterns. Following our joint event with the Church, we report on a subsequent meeting with Anneliese Dodds MP about the climate and nature crises. There's an update on efforts to protect our local ecology on the Horse Fields.

There's also news of our end-of-summer party which brought together 150 neighbours for live music, refreshments and fun. Looking ahead, the village diary is full of opportunities to meet, learn and enjoy performances, films, talks, and a joint games afternoon with FOSM. We hope you'll find something to look forward to—and join us in making Iffley a safer, greener and more connected community.

Martin Reed chair@friendsofiffley.org

Nature Notes

At the time of writing, the first misty autumn mornings have arrived, and after the long hot summer, the chill in the air is welcome and refreshing. The bats in and around the village (including the rare barbastelle) are still active though and will welcome the new softer lighting that has been agreed (p3).

It is interesting to see how this summer's heat has affected the fecundity of the autumn crops – apples certainly seem to be down, but pears not so much. For those that have them, figs and grapes have ripened earlier than ever and the berry burden on the wilder hedgerows looks good. I wonder if this might herald a 'waxwing year' when we get these supremely exotic-looking visitors from Scandinavia in our gardens in the deep winter to take advantage of the glut. It always seems as if Pyracantha berries are the last to be taken – perhaps they need repeated frosts to soften them up.

Any day now and an evening walk under the stars will be punctuated by faint 'tseeps', high overhead, signalling the first winter thrushes arriving – the redwings.

Dominic Woodfield

Notice of FOIV Annual General Meeting

Monday 26 October 2026, 7pm (doors open 6.30pm), Church Hall, Church Way, Iffley Village

Formal business will include: election of committee; presentation of annual accounts; review of the year; nominations for election to Committee are welcomed. Please ensure these are received by the Chair at least one week before the AGM, together with the names of a proposer and seconder.

FOR YOUR 2026/27 DIARY

Tues, 20 Oct	7.30pm	Church Hall	History	AGM followed by <i>Yellow Jack and the Worm: The Sailing Navy's Last Base</i> John Harris, Maritime Historian, Emeritus Fellow of Christ Church College
Mon, 26 Oct	7pm	Church Hall	**FOIV	AGM – see box p1
Sun, 8 Nov	3pm	Church Hall	Music	Georgie Malcolm & Paul St-Georges, soprano & piano; Women Poets in Song: settings by Copland, Prokofiev, Poulenc and others.
Tues, 10 Nov	7.30pm	Church Hall	Film	<i>Force Majeure</i>
Tues, 17 Nov	7.30pm	Church Hall	History	<i>Circulating Libraries</i> : Prof. Graham Falconer Emeritus Professor of 19thC French literature, University of Toronto <i>How the BBC Gained its Independence</i> : Michael Starks, Associate of Oxford University's Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy
Sun, 22 Nov	3pm	Church Hall	**FOIV/ *FOSM	Games afternoon
Sun, 6 Dec	3pm	Church Hall	Music	Trio Farben - works for flute, viola and harp by Debussy, Dubois, Beamish, Bax, Tann & Mathias
Tues, 8 Dec	7.30pm	Church Hall	Film	<i>I Swear</i>
Tues, 15 Dec	7.30pm	Church Hall	History	<i>St Giles' Fair and other Seasonal Sprees</i> : Tim Healey, author, musician and broadcaster
Sun, 10 Jan	3pm	Church Hall	Music	Oxford Waits – Winter Concert and Party Playford dance tunes, rounds and street ballads
Tues, 16 Feb	7.30pm	Church Hall	History	<i>Early Links Between Iffley, Cowley and Littlemore</i> : Dr Elizabeth McClelland local historian, late medieval and early modern history
Sun, 28 Feb	3pm	Church Hall	Music	Leo Appel & Miles Walter – violin & piano. Music by J.S. Bach, Mozart, Stravinsky, Janáček, Bacewicz, Lutosławski, Baltzar and Dubugnon

*Friends of St Mary's Iffley ** Friends of Iffley Village

Highways

Iffley Turn Following the public meeting FOIV hosted in the Spring, we wrote to councillors in July expressing concern over the failure to address the necessary safety measures to make our SRET (side road entry treatment) safer for cyclists and pedestrians. Four cyclists have been injured there in the last 5 years. They have acknowledged but as yet there has been no response to suggest appropriate action. Cyclox kindly reviewed the junction again with Brad Baines our Councillor and agreed it was dangerous for cyclists and needed the suggested modifications.

E-bikes The fast illegal e-bikes have continued. See below re a recent change in national law. We have told the Council that we need monitoring to demonstrate the seriousness of our problem and suggested they support the acquisition of TELRAAM device(s). These are put into a upstairs window to monitor the road and pavement below and quantify the speed and nature (car, bike, lorry pedestrian etc) of moving objects against time. There is no video.



People on the towpath Due to the complaints concerning the illegal bikes, and a critical coroner's report after a fatal accident involving a bike at the lock, the Council have put "Pedestrians Priority" signs on the pavement. Do you think they are working?

Christine Collin

Street Lighting

FOIV met with Brad Baines and the County Council Highways team last year about over-bright new street lighting in Iffley. This has borne fruit. The new street lanterns that are currently replacing existing lighting in the village are 'heritage' Muirfield lanterns with frosted light-diffusing glass. They have LED lamps (28W in Church Way, 14W in Tree Lane, Mill Lane, Eastchurch, Tudor Close and Meadow Lane) and are all a warm white colour temperature of 2700K. Hopefully, this will keep us well-lit whilst respecting our conservation heritage.

Caroline Mason

Underground News

Who would have thought Iffley would still be concerned with sewerage matters, but we are and on several fronts. The latest:

- Barhale confirmed the wedge block tunnel is in good condition and is now fully cleaned. Tracing dye was used in the manholes on the road leading to the lock. This showed which manholes are part of the storm system and which form part of the old 'Victorian' system that discharges directly to Littlemore Pumping Station and has no interface with the wedge block tunnel.
- Thames Water has asked Barhale to thoroughly investigate the smells around Mill Lane to hopefully ascertain the cause. Barhale investigated the shaft that was recently found in No 26's garden on 22 and 23 September. A trial venting arrangement to the shafts in no 26 and 30's garden/drive is to be installed. The results of this trial will inform the design of a permanent solution. Barhale apologised for any inconvenience this caused.
- Following completion of the Barhale work on Oriel field, Oriel College listened to our request to retain the original gate at the corner of Meadow Lane, rather than install a large industrial gate. Planning permission would be required for any change.

Phil Hart and Bill Beaver

A Wonderful End of Summer Party



Our End of Summer Party at Hawkwell House was a great success, with an excellent turnout of approximately 150 people and a wonderfully warm and relaxed atmosphere. Guests enjoyed fabulous live music from committee member Helena Newsom and Emma Lowe, delicious afternoon refreshments, and plenty of fun for children, including the ever-popular bouncy castle.

It was lovely to see people of all ages coming together, catching up with familiar faces, meeting neighbours they had not met before and making new connections within the community. A huge thank

you to everyone who attended, to our performers and volunteers, to the local network groups who joined us and shared information about their work, and to Hawkwell House for its generous support in helping us create such a happy and memorable community event.

People's Emergency Briefing and meeting with Anneliese Dodds

You may have attended the People's Emergency Briefing (PEB) screening on 30th June hosted by FOIV with St Mary's Church which drew a full house at Iffley Church Hall. The film sets out the UK's growing risks of climate and nature breakdown, from extreme weather to economic disruption and national security threats. The main 'ask' of the film is for a COVID style government-led national briefing from independent experts to give people clear, trusted guidance on what these risks mean in practice (e.g. to our health and food supply) and what we can do at every level of society to prepare and respond. Representatives of FOIV came together with many of the organisers of the 22 public screenings of the PEB film across the city over the last six months to share public feedback and plan for a meeting with Anneliese Dodds MP. A small subgroup (representatives from FOIV, Florence Park, East Oxford and Headington, as well as experts in climate psychology and communication) had a constructive meeting with Anneliese on 25th September. We asked her to support a government-led emergency briefing on the climate and nature crises.

Anneliese acknowledged the urgent need for action and was keen to explore, in further discussions with our group, how such a briefing could build wider public understanding and support. As a next step, Anneliese agreed to watch the PEB film and to continue the conversation at a follow-up meeting. The group is now liaising with her office to make the necessary arrangements.

If you haven't yet seen the PEB film, please check out the map on the National Emergency Briefing



website, nebriefing.org, for ongoing screenings across Oxford and nationally. The website also gives information on how to set up your own screening event with tailored support for public, workplace or school screenings. Please consider supporting the call for a government-led emergency briefing by writing to Anneliese, signing the petition and spreading the word. petition.parliament.uk/petitions/767687#main-content

Stronger laws and enforcement powers for dangerous cycling, e-bike and e-scooter use

Section 7 of The Crime and Policing Act 29 June 2026 states that causing death or serious injury by cycling as above in ANY PUBLIC PLACE is an offence. An amendment to The Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 states that this is 'ANY OTHER PUBLIC SPACE' not just on roads, and regardless of whether publicly or privately owned.

This means that all Iffley routes - roads, bridleways, footpaths, Donnington Rec. Ground and Thames Towpath are covered by stronger enforcement powers by Police and other agencies and that due care and attention, awareness, knowledge of circumstances and competence are required of these groups of route users. Offences and sentences are also clarified, the latter comprising fines and/or imprisonment up to life terms (variable in UK nations). Find details on gov.uk. Thames Valley Police should now have a wider range of enforcement and other actions to implement (to be confirmed), increasing both legal route use and travel safety for all, and especially pedestrians.

Horse Fields update and public hearings

We continue to support the opportunities available to protect the Horse Fields. Most recently, the City Council's procedural errors around taking into account the results of Local Plan consultation were challenged by Friends of the Fields Iffley. Although this did not result in removal of the Horse Fields from the Local Plan, the Council are refunding legal costs, and these will be available to fund representation at the forthcoming "Examination in Public" by central government inspectors (you may recall that the inspectors failed the plan outright last time around!). Residents can attend these hearings: Stage 1 (October 20 - 23) deals with overarching policy, Stage 2 deals with specific sites including the Horse Fields and is expected in late November - early December. Webpage:

www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1903/oxford-local-plan-2045-public-hearings-announced

Games Afternoon: Come and play!

Sunday, 22 November 3-6pm, Church Hall

FOIV is teaming up with Friends of St. Mary's for an afternoon of board games, tea, snacks and good company. Whatever your age, come along to play a favourite game, discover a new one, or simply spend a relaxed afternoon with neighbours. You don't need to come with a team or know how to play anything in advance – just turn up and join in!

Tickets: £5 for adults; free for under-16s. Available in due course from the Iffley Community Shop or at the door. We're still looking for a few volunteers to host a game table – if interested, please email David Wiles (D.Wiles@exeter.ac.uk) or FOIV committee member Laura Schnurr (lauraschnurr1@gmail.com).