

FOIV AGM

8th December 2025, 7.00-9.00pm, Church Hall Iffley

1. Welcome to members, city and county councilors (David Henwood, Ed Turner and Brad Baines)

Apologies: Cecilia McCabe, Eike Brazier, Rachel Falconer, Dominic Woodfield, Peggy Seeger, Caroline Mason, Andrew Shacknove

Present: approx. 25 attendees plus committee: Martin Reed (Chair), Paul Castell (Treasurer), Celia Palmer, Nick Hewlett, Dave Broughton, Anna di Stefano, Bill Beaver, Katrina Robinson, Laura Schnurr, Bill Beaver, Helena Newsom, Juliette Gammon, Caroline Mason.

All reports were shared on FOIV website with link via e-newsletter before the AGM. 30 copies printed off and available at the meeting

2. Minutes of AGM 2024

No corrections or matters arising; minutes approved.

3. Election of committee members

AS, BB, DB are all ending their term and not seeking re-election.

New nominations, proposed and seconded as per summary circulated:

Christine Collin

Cecilia McCabe

Laura Schnurr (coopted in 2025)

Standing for re-election

Dominic Woodfield

All were unanimously voted onto the committee, and those standing down were thanked for all their work.

4. Presentation of Accounts

Treasurers' reports

MR reported **2024: Accounts and report for the calendar year**

Net outflow of funds £1,362

Funds stood at £6,793 as at end Dec 2024

A report was provided in the handouts

PC reported **2025: Management accounts for year to date**

Net inflow of funds £6,172

Funds stood at £12,965 as at Nov 2025

This included a legacy from the late Marianne Puxley, a former member of the committee

5. Purpose of FOIV

The Chair reminded those present that the purposes of the organisation are:

- conservation of the essential character of Iffley village and its Conservation Area for the benefit of its residents, businesses and visitors;
- to monitor and guide plans proposed for the future of the Village, and
- to foster community spirit.

6. Reports

The Chair introduced the review of the year which will cover:

Planning
Highways
Community Events
Communications
Membership

PLANNING

The Chair outlined the main planning issues in the year together with an indication of the external parties that FOIV had liaised with on behalf of residents:

1. Horse Fields 2. Iffley Mead 3. Court Place 4. Sewage infrastructure Other village planning Trees	City Planning Policy, County, Councillors, OxPlace, FOI DTRA, Donnington Football Club Homes for Students, OUD, Church Barhale/ Thames Water City, DTRA, FOSM City Tree Officer
--	--

1. Horse Fields

The Chair reported as follows:

The 2.5 acres meadow lies in the Conservation Area between Church Way and Meadow Lane which are designated as a Principal Quiet Route for active travel.

There were many assessments of the site by Oxford City Council in the years up to 2022 - these all conclude it is unable to accommodate development without giving rise to harm to the Conservation Area and/or plays an important function in terms of rural aesthetic, Green infrastructure network and character. The site was removed from Local Plans at the time. There is an absence of transparency in the City Council's change in judgement and the subsequent decision to allocate the site for construction in Local Plan 2036. The Horse Fields were bought by the Council via their housing company Oxplace in 2021. They put in a planning application in early 2023.

An expert report to FOIV in 2023 stated "The impact on landscape and the visual effects [of the proposed plans] are considered to be significantly harmful and do not comply with the key requirements of City Council's Policy SP42 and the overarching guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework".

The planning application attracted an unprecedented 1028 formal responses from Oxford residents and visitors, of which 1008 (over 98%) were objections. Organisations that objected included the EA, BBOWT, Buglife, Cyclox, and OxPa. FOIV's expert technical assessments were critical to the robustness of the objections.

None of the objections have been addressed by the Council.

A second planning application in March 2024 was dropped by the Council after 3 days. The Environment Agency then objected for a second time in November 2024 when revised flooding plans were submitted by Oxplace.

Recent actions by FOIV

The meadows are again allocated to the current draft of the new Local Plan 2042, which if adopted would come into force early in 2027.

We put in a technical response to the City's Planning Policy dept demonstrating that construction on the meadow is "unsustainable" (8 red flags on the City's own scoring basis) and that the City's own assessment includes multiple errors. We also spoke to the head of the City's Planning Policy dept explaining why it is an error to include Local Plan2042.

On this basis our local Cllr Henwood advocated for the site's removal in his own recent meeting with City Planning Policy and we are grateful for his continued support.

In addition we asked members to request that Horse Fields are designated " Local Green Space" in the Local Plan2042. We continue to press for a response from the City.

In Dec 2024 many members also responded to the County's Local Nature Recovery Network consultation:

We are delighted to report that the Horse Fields have recently been recognised on the County Council's Nature Recovery map.

This brings the number of local Government designations that should be protecting the Horse Fields from construction to three (Conservation Area, Quiet Route, LNRS). In addition it qualifies as an Oxford City Wildlife Site and for Local Plan status as Local Green Space a total of 5 designations in all. Conservation Area status means that the Horse Fields are a Heritage Asset.

To bring this all together

Given the Council's knowledge of the unsuitability of this site for construction, their continued intransigence makes no sense in planning terms and looks increasingly irrational. The City has also recently said they will allow housing on some sites previously reserved for employment. Not before time, this should bring alternative sites to the market which are necessary for affordable housing.

There is a mounting body of evidence that the allocation of the Horse Fields to the new local plan is fundamentally flawed and fails to maximise public benefit in terms of achieving the right

balance between housing and green spaces in the City, in particular to protect a piece of the City vital green infrastructure along an active travel route.

Two approaches are being taken to get our decision-makers to act on this -

1. As a positive alternative we are liaising with Friends of the Fields Iffley on a use for the meadow that will deliver sustainable public benefit. A dedicated "meadow school" would ensure that both nature and children can flourish into the future, building community and connection with place. We understand from the local schools that there is an urgent need for local facilities such as this. FOI are gaining momentum with recent letters of support for Meadow School from local charities BBOWT (the Wildlife Trust) and Oxford City Farm.
2. In October this year we arranged a meeting Cllr Turner standing on the meadow. Cllr Turner remains a leading proponent of this major construction project in the Conservation Area. He has told us that we have "very clearly expressed" why the site is not developable for housing but "nothing has changed on his side".

We will alert members when they can take actions to continue to defend the Conservation Area from unsustainable development, and advocate for an alternative use for the land to ensure that both nature and children can flourish here into the future.

2. Iffley Mead

The Chair reported as follows:

Iffley Mead is owned by the County Council. This is the large field that lies between the Iffley Academy Special Needs school and the Donnington Recreation Ground. It is a green field site within Iffley but not in the conservation area. The County recently made an outline planning application for c.90 houses (50% affordable) on the site.

Actions by FOIV

We had been asking the County via Cllr Baines for a community engagement exercise in advance of the planning application but this request was ignored by the County's planning dept. On receipt of the planning application we liaised with residents including on Cavill Road, Augustine Way, DTRA (Donnington residents), and the football club.

FOIV's technical submission highlighted numerous technical issues with the County's planning application, and addressed road access, flooding, ecology etc. The County's own Highways and Flooding experts objected to their own application(!).

Sport England objected on the basis that there is high demand for football pitches in the City. Donnington Football Club is now considering its position on the development of the Mead. The Planning application will be re-consulted by OCC planners "if issues are addressed".

Is a "compromise proposal" more sustainable?

A site allocated 50% for football and 50% for affordable home could (a) meet the affordable homes required of the site (b) give the football club much needed additional space and alleviate the traffic issues which remain unresolved.

We will let you know what actions you can take in respect of Iffley Mead as part of the next Local Plan consultation and/or the next planning application by the County.

3. Court Place

BB reported as follows:

As you know, FOIV, virtually your parish council, does much of our work behind the scenes. One clear example of this was brought to fruition this year with the successful culmination of the 14 year FOIV-led crusade to open up the greensward from the Isis to the West Door of St Mary's Iffley from dawn to dusk daily for the residents of Iffley, Rose Hill and our many visitors. In bringing this major contribution to the village, FOIV's gratitude goes to OUD, OUD's chief consultant, the University Estates and the clergy and Church Wardens of St Mary's, all under the gentle leadership of FOIV's on-site representative, Phil Hart. All deserve Iffley's thanks.

But as many of you will know it was not all plain sailing. The other actor in this equation is the co-owner of the Court Place scheme, Legal & General, who on the eve of completion with no prior notice, put up brusque no trespassing signs on the ancient greensward and ordered the gates to be locked.

Once discovered by the militant mothers of Rose Hill, it took about five seconds for FOIV, the University and the Church to respond in perfect unity making it clear to L&G that their lawyer-driven nonsense was just that. Signs came down, gates are daily unlocked and now this FOIV-led initiative is another gem in Iffley's diadem.

In fact, we estimate that, based on previous surveys, we can expect some 21,000 people to visit Court Place and the Church this coming year. And to accommodate that influx the Church is relaying its paths as we speak, again valuing FOIV's consultancy.

We asked OUD to demonstrate how and where it will deliver the statutory biodiversity net gain. We believe that it is important for developers to stand by promises made to obtain planning consent. We have technical doubts that the gain is achievable and have communicated this in detail to their MD. She confirmed that her staff are on notice.

However the statutory timeline is 15 years for the gain to be achieved, so be prepared for this matter to be noted in future years!

4. Sewage infrastructure

BB reported as follows:

Now I said we usually work behind the scenes or in the case of sewerage, below our very feet. As we all know by now there is a sewer pipeline from Christ Church to Littlemore and by 2024 it was almost blocked by a monstrous fatburger right here.

Thames Water hired Barhale to unblock it and they chose Oriel Fields, at the bottom of Meadow Lane as their headquarters, infirmary and motor pool. Your FOIV reps immediately liaised with them schooled them in our best practice guidelines for contractors in our village and forged a cooperative partnership based on frequent communications with us.

Barhale, for its part, was responsive to FOIV's leadership, headed by Phil Hart, and, for example, they made regular calls on the Mill Lane households most affected and provided trained traffic marshals for every movement of heavy equipment up and down Meadow Lane along with noise abatement measures.

At FOIV's suggestion Barhale put on two exhibitions for the community, the last one in September attracting almost a hundred visitors from Iffley, Rose Hill and Donnington. Thames Water were amazed.

There were no questions from the floor on Planning.

HIGHWAYS

The Chair introduced the Highways issues and some of the parties that FOIV had liaised with, as follows:

1. CPZ and 4 hour bays 2. Iffley Turn junction with Henley Ave 3. No motor vehicle signs 4. Speeding 5. Towpath 6. Street Lighting 7. Ring road	County, Church, public meeting in 2024 County County County County, IFRA, MP County County
---	--

1. CPZ and 4 hour bays
The Chair reported as follows:

Main scheme for Controlled Parking Zone

The CPZ was implemented by the County in February 2024, following a public meeting setup by FOIV in late 2024 and FOIV's summary of members' issues provided to the County.

4-hour bays

We liaised with the Church and the County then agreed to consult on new 4-hour bays at the top of Church Way.

Overall the CPZ has been considered to be a success.

Actions taken by FOIV

Post implementation issues are being monitored. We worked with the County to minimize the visual impact of signage as far as permitted by traffic regulations. We obtained agreement to a 12-month review by the County.

Members should email the Chair with any CPZ issues prior to 31 Jan 2026.

2. Iffley Turn junction with Henley Ave
NH reported as follows:

The recent so-called "safer streets" changes to the entry to Iffley Turn are considered to make the junction more dangerous by every member that we have spoken to.

Contractor Barhale independently instructed its lorries not to use the junction on safety grounds.

Actions taken by FOIV

We met with the County highways officers and Cllr Baines at the junction on 5 Dec. Officers took away a number of points to be considered as part of post construction tasks. These included consideration for;

- Temporary signs advising of New Road Layout
- Alterations to some of the junction road markings
- Removal/ relocation of the bolt down wand orcas
- Concerns about the tracking of left turning vehicles entering Iffley Turn
- Construction defects work need to be picked up including a review of the heights and gradients on ramps

Next steps:

FOIV will host a public meeting with Council Officers early in the New Year to discuss further.

Comments from the floor:

Several residents agreed that the junction is quite dangerous, particularly for drivers and cyclists. Specifically:

- Some drivers are doing U turns when they see that the entrance/exit which is dangerous
- The lane from Rose Hill is very narrow.
- It's a sharp turn to enter from Henley Ave so one needs to virtually stop to get in the right position, which causes traffic to back up and risks an accident.
- As we consider how to make it safer for cyclists and cars turning left into Iffley, it's important to remember that the wider access was designed for wheelchairs and pedestrians. How can these safety and accessibility concerns be balanced?

3. "No motor vehicle" signs

The Chair reported as follows:

Motor bikes and scooters driving across pedestrian entry points to the village is highly dangerous. Although there was a "blue" no motor sign at the Meadow Lane, the entry points are not enforceable by police.

Actions taken by FOIV

We requested "red" i.e. enforceable signage at Meadow Lane, East Church and Tree Lane.

The County recently closed their public consultation, having also ensured that the pathways have the correct highways status so that prosecutions could be brought in future. They will implement the new signage shortly.

There was a question from the floor about what the red signs will say.

4. Speeding

HN reported as follows:

There is concern about cars habitually speeding, particular from members on Abberbury Road and Avenue and Church Way.

Actions taken by FOIV

We agreed with the County for speed surveys to be done at 2 locations. These showed that over 1/3 of all journeys are over the 20mph limit.

We met with County officers on the lanes. We found the meeting inconclusive, although there may be money for an intervention at one site in the next year.

We have also been reminded by a longstanding member that speeding was an unresolved controversy about 25 years ago. The vibrations from speed bumps proposed at that time would have an adverse effect on the villages many listed buildings.

The way forward (if at all) appears be more signage.

5. Towpath KR reported as follows:

Following a fatal accident at the lock in December 2022, the coroner issued a report in November 2024 that criticized a number of aspects of towpath safety. Many members have pointed out that the towpath is dangerous for pedestrians.

Actions taken by FOIV

We met with County Officers at the lock in June. They explained the policy constraints that they need to apply and took input on our views. There are practical issues with multiple landowners and several use requirements including rowing clubs on the towpath between Iffley and Folly Bridge.

Their proposed solution at that time was to write the words "pedestrian priority" into the tarmac.

We have continued to attend meetings at IFRA with A Dodds MP who has now taken an interest in this issue.

The County promised the coroner that they would take action on signage in Summer 2025. Nothing has yet been done and we are very concerned at the continued lack of meaningful action by the County.

Members should urgently write to A Dodds MP copying Cllr B Baines.

6. Street Lighting HN reported as follows:

The historic yellow lamps in the village's street lighting are being replaced as and when they fail by the County with very bright LED lamps.

Not only are these detrimental to the village's wildlife, but several members have said that the lighting is highly intrusive on their homes.

Action taken by FOIV

We recently met with the County's head of street lighting and walked the Iffley Lanes. The County's policy is to use LEDs, however they agreed to immediately replace any of the extremely bright 4000k lamps that they identify on a visit.

They also referred to their recent projects in Park Town and Headington where they have diffused their standard 3000k LED lamps, resulting in much less intrusive lighting. The County offered to consult on this in Iffley.

Based on our visit to view the lighting in Park Town, we will ask the County to proceed with a consultation. We will encourage members to make their views known at that time.

7. Ring road
HN reported as follows:

The County recently consulted about 30 and 50mph zones on the Ring Road.

Actions taken by FOIV

In addition to safety benefits, we believe this will alleviate the persistent noise nuisance across the village, and reduce pollution.

The County's decision meeting is 10am on 11 Dec, concerned members can attend.

EVENTS

The Chair introduced the following events:

1. Film Launch 2. Peggy Seeger Album Launch	FOFI, guest speakers, members
--	-------------------------------

1. Film Launch
PS reported as follows:

In March a full Village Hall was entertained and challenged by the premiere of a short film based on Peggy Seeger's ecological song "The Mother" followed by a Q&A.

The film presents a global perspective of the mounting threats to nature, showing how acting locally to save the ancient meadows in Iffley is part of the urgent global need for action. We were entertained and informed by local ecologist and standup comic Hugh Warwick, in conversation with Peggy, local and international filmmaker Nicolas Brown, and our own expert ecologist Dominic Woodfield.

The event also raised c.£400 for FOIV and we are grateful for the donation of everyone's time for free.

Friends of the Fields has subsequently shown the film at community engagement events in Florence Park, The Confluence Collective at Canning Crescent, and Oxfordshire Badger Group AGM, with other screening and events planned to promote the campaign and co-create the vision for Meadow School on the Horse Fields.

2. Peggy Seeger Album Launch

In May a full village hall was entertained by our own Peggy Seeger who launched her latest and final album called "Teleology" in advance of her tour of the UK and Ireland.

Peggy has recently been shortlisted for the "Folk Album of the Year" award and we wish her luck. To quote from the citation: Teleology is a "philosophical, spirited and characteristically bold album. Peggy remains a monumental folk icon on both sides of the Atlantic, with countless international awards to her name."

If anyone is looking for Christmas present ideas, you can purchase a CD in the Village Shop and at the usual retailers, or download it from a your streaming service.

Her launch event also raised nearly £300 for FOIV's funds and we are very grateful for her donation of time for free.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair introduced the following

Newsletters, printed and E-news WhatsApps Posters Community Nature Updates Noticeboards	Age UK, Home Library Service, Public Health and Communities, all village societies
---	--

The Chair reported as follows:

During the year we have delivered 3 print Newsletters to the whole village and emailed E-news. We are grateful to JG for editing the newsletters.

Two innovations this year are:

Use of village WhatsApp channels

Quarterly Community Nature Updates for which we have our expert DW to thank

Our noticeboards are maintained by KR. The woodwork is in need of renovation and we have had a local offer by the family of Andy Oakley a former postman in the village, and who are looking to fund an appropriate memorial.

MEMBERSHIP

CM's report had been circulated in advance.

Comments from the floor:

A resident asked how many members FOIV has compared to 2024. It was shared that FOIV currently has approximately 250 members.

There was a suggestion that the new village WhatsApp group be leveraged for FOIV's benefit, noting that there's currently little about FOIV shared on the "Iffley Village" WhatsApp.

Next steps: the Chair to talk to Martin L about whether that channel can be used for FOIV issues or if another should be set up.

SHARING IDEAS

LS led an interactive section on the following:

Questions for small groups of 4-6 people – write on post-its
Many people value the community in Iffley

Capture of ideas for fostering community spirit:

In small groups, residents brainstormed a number of ideas for strengthening community spirit in the village including:

- Hosting an annual village event in the Horse Field or another local field/venue with funding from FOIV.
- Connect with Rose Hill and organize joint events with residents there.
- Explore opportunities to include new Court Place residents.
- Provide more regular FOIV communication. Ensure a good combination of online (e.g. WhatsApp, email) and face-to-face communication. Important not to lose face-to-face contact.
- Consider joint events between FOIV and Friends of St. Mary's which has a membership of ~200.
- Organizing events that are focused on enjoyment and socializing.
- There was a question about where the village's boundaries are/what actually constitutes 'Iffley village'.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

The Chair summarized the AGM in terms of actions that members can take to support the aims of FOIV as follows:

1. **Planning** – we will advertise details at the relevant time

The City will shortly consult again on the "Local Plan 2042"

- Horse Fields – ask for them to be removed from sites for development
- Iffley Mead – ask for a sustainable proposal for 50% football 50% affordable housing

2. **Highways**

Towpath – write to Anneliese Dodds MP cc Cllr B Baines asking for long overdue action to improve safety

CPZ – feedback any issues prior to end 2026 to Chair@friendsofiffley.org

- 3 **IT and website**

We urgently need offers of IT support: please send to Chair@friendsofiffley.org

4. **Membership**

Renew your membership for 2026

Talk to 3 neighbours and encourage them to join

Volunteer to deliver newsletters

AOB

None raised.

Close of meeting at 8.30pm