

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM HELD AT SOUTH OXFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE

TUESDAY 23RD OCTOBER AT 7.30 PM

1. Our Parks and Green Spaces

Rob Clare, Fusion's Operations Manager at Hinksey Pool, said that it had been a good summer with record breaking attendance. Question was raised as to whether profits made by the pool could be ring fenced for improvements there. Fusion is a not for profit organisation and funds are spent according to the needs of any of its settings. Two years ago Hinksey Pool lost as much money as it made this year. There is pool user group email HOHPUsers@gmail.com to join. RC addressed the complaints which had arisen as a result of noise and nuisance from a private event organised by a language school. This had not gone well and such bookings were unlikely to be repeated as a consequence although events such as the outdoor cinema would continue. Cllr Marie Tidball expressed thanks to Fusion for supporting the Family Triathlon which raised valuable funds for the Children's Centre. The concrete area in front of the cafe was raised and RC said that they were looking into ways of providing shade to make it more usable.

A complaint was made about the quantity of goose droppings in the park. Would the geese be discouraged by a feeding ban? This was thought unlikely but signage to discourage feeding water birds bread had been raised before as it was generally agreed to be unhealthy and encourage vermin. Also the non-native terrapins which live in the pond/lake were brought up – they could be responsible for the loss of ducklings. Cllr MT agreed to take these points up with the Parks Dept at OCC.

Cllr MT also asked for suggestions for spending her ward budget of £1500 – wild flower planting, play schemes etc. A local resident, Clair Barnes said that where she came from in the US there was a scheme whereby people dedicate a 1m sq of land to planting wild flowers to attract bees and other insects and she would like to replicate this. Anyone interested please email her clairbarnes@gmail.com. It was suggested that CB might like to contact local schools and the Allotments.

2. Footbridge Marlborough Road to Hinksey Park – Steve Smith Senior Bridge and River Engineer OCC

Bridge replacement work was about to start. The railings from the old bridge were being renovated and would be reused and the new bridge would have a metal frame below the decking for strength and whilst the work was in progress there would be a temporary bridge to Hinksey Park from Deans Ham. Concerns were raised about cycle safety and there would be appropriate 'no cycling' signs. The double park gates next to the bridge would be left open to allow cyclists to rejoin the cycle route. The barrier to Deans Ham would have to be left open but there would be fencing to prevent vehicle access. Although not part of the bridge works OCC were also looking at replacing the trees at the end of Marlborough Rd with indigenous trees.

The condition of the bridge at the other end of Marlborough Rd was raised. New lighting has been paid for by Pembroke College and ward councillors. The bridge which is an important link to the city is being surveyed to assess repair works needed and agreement needs to be reached with the County Council as to funding since the County are only accepting responsibility for the surface and not the structure.

3. SOFAG and Environment Agency Update

The EA had provided a written update, see attached.

SOFAG – Brian Durham said that the Community Association management had agreed to front a grant application to SSE to fund a permanent electric pump which would be placed under the pavement in front of the Vicarage at the end of Vicarage Rd and a pipe laid which would take water to the lake. The approximate cost is £30,000 to be funded with a grant, if successful, of £20,000 and the balance from the EA and OCC.

The Environment Agency would be holding meetings with the Allotment Associations to discuss work which would be carried out as part of the Flood Alleviation Scheme. It was agreed that a representative from the EA should be invited to the next Forum to discuss what specific works would be carried out in South Oxford.

4. Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

A written update had been provided, see attached.

5. Other Matters

- Abingdon Road Post Office – the people who had been running it had been commuting from London and had not found this viable hence the closure. Cllr MT had written to the Post Office for clarification of the position but had not received a response; she will follow this up.
- Anne Lawrence informed the meeting about a book launch. ‘The 37 Men of New and South Hinskey’ had been researched and written by a group of local women, mostly members of South Oxford WI. The launch would take place at St John’s Church at 5pm on 11th November. Copies of the book are available price £5.
- Brasenose College development – there has been no news about this.
- The lack of a proper pedestrian crossing at the Abingdon Rd Tesco was brought up. Cllr MT said that County Council had not accepted the need but she will continue to press the case for one.

Forum Follow Up

OCC have erected notices deterring feeding ducks bread at Cutteslowe Park and will price these up for Hinksey Park.

As a rule terrapins eating ducklings doesn’t happen. Adult Red-eared slider turtles (*Chrysemys scripta elegans*) are predominantly herbivorous. Approximately 90% of their diet consists on aquatic vegetation and filamentous algae. The remainder of their diet is comprised of insect larvae, insects, (small) fish, aquatic snails, small amphibians and carrion. They do not attack live birds.

Red-eared sliders are water-feeders. They feed while submerged. They do not “strike”. They drift gently up to their food item, and take the item with a very slow, delicate movement, rather like a goldfish feeding. They do not attack with anything that could be described as a “sudden strike”: that description fits the behaviour of a Snapping turtle, or much more likely, a large Pike.

As things stand at the moment we have no plans to try trapping. This would be reviewed if any evidence of the two having a detrimental impact on the wildlife.