

**Friends of South Hinksey
Chairman's Annual Review 2007
Annual General Meeting Tuesday 7th November 2007**

The Friends of South Hinksey are a local group of people dedicated to preserve the distinctive character of the Parish, to promote the provision of suitable amenities and to encourage a community spirit amongst it's populace. It is non-political, non-religious, non-racial and non-profit making and all parishioners are deemed to be members. So welcome to you all.

The Friends group was reconstituted in 2003 after a period of dormancy since its last Chairman John Philipppson died. The new steering committee, comprising six members, set about the task of preparing a Parish Plan for South Hinksey and this document was published in February 2005 listing 21 actions as desirable by the parish residents. Since this time we have been pursuing a three-year programme to bring about improvements to the Parish environs. We see our role either as encouraging other authorities, councils and private land owners to meet parishioners needs and as project managers, identifying site potential, planning and designing schemes, obtaining funding and overseeing the completion of projects.

The successes achieved so far include setting up a website and communication network for Shinfo resulting from enormous personal efforts of Linda Slater our secretary and Dave and Anne Markham our computer whizzes for which we are most grateful. Recently many additions have been made to the website under the Nature Conservation section and the Parish Council is soon going to be expanding their contributions.

Progress on the Community Land project has been slow due to difficulties in getting the Oxford City Council to agree to a land exchange. It may still be possible to obtain permission to use an area of village land for community events on a rental basis and we are currently looking into this. The good news is that the OCC Countryside managers are keen to add our land to their nature reserve. The Community Woodland project at Chilswell Path is poised to proceed soon and funding application decisions are awaited next month. If we are successful planting will take place in

January and all parishioners are encouraged to support this scheme either with monetary donations or with practical help. We plan to co-opt assistance from the Northmoor Trust teenagers from Piers School and the North Hinksey CE schoolchildren. Forms are available on the table if you wish to get contribute.

The more accessible bicycle wheelie ramp over the railway bridge has still not been achieved and we have now co-opted the assistance of local District Councillors to get this project completed..

A proposed new cycle and walking trail link between the Hill and the village still requires private owners approval. It has recently been discovered that there is an original hard surface extension of Chilswell Lane near the Garden Centre that still exists under the grass field so this is encouraging news.

Surveys of the natural environment conducted for birds over the last four years have now been compiled into a report on the Chilswell Environs published through the Oxford Ornithological Society and we hope you will take a copy home for a knockdown price of £1.50. A Nature Conservation Strategy for the Parish has now been placed in the website so please inspect and feedback any views to us. We have recently joined a Group organised by the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum ONCF and BBOWT which is studying nature conservation opportunities in Oxford Heights West--an area that extends from our parish as far as Cumnor, Cothill and Shotover. The idea is to encourage as many landowners as possible to create habitats that can connect up as wildlife corridors. The planting of new woodlands at Hinksey Hill, Redbridge and our own at Chilswell are beneficial projects to meet these objectives.

During the year new sound deadening surfacing has been provided to the main carriageways of the A34 and we are still making representations to reduce speed limits and improve slip road safety through the Botley committee which Linda Goodhead attends for us. Recent news received from the Oxford County Council confirm that a redesign of the Hinksey Hill Interchange and Redbridge roundabouts similar to a format used on the London Road at Headington. This latter scheme has been very successful in increasing traffic flow through the junction and we need similar improvements to exiting traffic off the A34 in the southern direction

down Hinksey Hill especially in the mornings. The Parish Council has requested the need to provide an alternative road access out of the village to this roundabout or Redbridge to avoid total reliance on using the A34. The Friends fully support this initiative as we are probably the only village throughout the entire length of the road that is trapped in with no alternative escape route.

Our events group is liaising with the new pub, the church and the Village Hall committee to coordinate events and hopefully to increase their variety and number. This year Richard organized a successful Canal evenings of story telling and music and a carol evening is planned for Tuesday 18th December at the General Elliott. We are most grateful to him for raising funds through these events for the Friends.

Barbara has spent some considerable time getting the design of new notelets together to the satisfaction of the committee and these are likely to be available for sale in packs of six in a week or so. We thank her most sincerely for her efforts. They depict scenes of familiar locations in the Parish all taken by parishioners. Please support this project as the Friends have limited income.

Other planning issues arising this year which the Friends took action on either by writing to the paper or to various authorities were the proposed minerals extraction on the meadow and a new University Book Depository building overlooking the meadows. The latter was approved by a majority of 6-5 councillors of the Oxford City Council recently but there is now talk of this application being called in for future consideration. We have liaised closely with the Oxford Preservation Trust and the Oxford Green Belt Network on these objections.

Repairs to roads and pavements have been recently carried out in the village due to the efforts of June Ellis and we are making further representations for similar urgent repair and clearance work to be undertaken in Betty Lane and Hinksey Hill.

Last but by no means least are the floods of this year which caught us all unawares occurring in July rather than the normal winter period and Peter Rawcliffe and his flood group have been very active in making representations to the authorities for assistance. We are grateful to the Environment Agency's presence tonight to tell us what can be done to alleviate any future flood. Good news

during the year on this topic was the completion of substantial alteration works to the Towles Mill sluice at Redbridge. We await with interest news of any further shorter term alleviation schemes.

Clive Briffett Chairman of the Friends of South Hinksey