

Friends of South Hinksey
Chairmans Annual Review 2006
Annual General Meeting 7th November 2006

The Friends of South Hinksey is 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 membership is open to all members of the parish.

During the last year the Friends Group committee comprising seven members have met six times and discussed many issues particularly those relating to actions arising out of the Parish Plan. This document was published in February 2005 and listed 21 actions as desirable by the parish residents. We have been pursuing a three-year programme to bring about improvements to the environment of the Parish. We see our role either as encouraging other authorities, councils and private land owners to contribute to meeting parishioners needs or as project managers which can involve identifying site potential, planning and designing schemes, obtaining funding and overseeing the completion of the project. *(I can't quite follow this sentence)* In cases where the work is carried out on other councils or private owners land we feel it most appropriate to leave future management of the resources to the owners. *(You are skirting round controversy here. Might it be better simply to leave it out? Your decision)*

Some successes have been achieved including new lighting on Hinksey Hill with the kind assistance of the parish council, removal of noisy cats eyes thanks to the efforts of Linda Goodhead and a new website and communication network for Shinfo thanks to the enormous personal efforts of Linda Slater our secretary. Recent proposals for the flood alleviation scheme are highlighted by Peter Rawcliffe on the poster board and we thank him for running a flood group in the parish to monitor what is happening on this most important issue. Other more complex proposals include the Community Woodland at Chilswell Path, the Community Land project to the rear of this Hall . A more accessible bicycle ramp and access points to Hinksey Meadow are also being pursued. *(Do you mean the proposed ramp over the railway?)* None of these

have been completed to date as funding and permissions are required before this can happen.

Other projects being investigated include the creation of a new water meadow nature reserve, which has been held up by the insecurity created by developers interested in forming an n Olympic size rowing lake between the village and North Hinksey. A proposal, which we believe, will never happen but we have made efforts to represent parishioner's views at several meetings held. A new cycle and walking trail link between the Hill and the village still requires private owners approval and further maintenance is required to the roads and pavements throughout the parish.

As discovered from the questionnaires issued in the Parish Plan exercise the overwhelming concern of our parishioners is for something to be done about reducing the dangers of the slip roads accessing the A34 and the noise, air pollution and litter emanating from this road. The Parish Council have made representations to the Highways Authority on all these matters through their Chairman and we fully support the efforts made. Increasing traffic and accidents and deteriorating road surface conditions have been observed during the year and it is hoped that in the near future some efforts to improve and quieter road surfaces and to reduce speeds of passing traffic will be effected.

With the more inclement wet weather season now upon us we are reminded of the disastrous flooding suffered by village residents in 2002 and 2004. Good news just received last week from the Environment Agency confirms that clearance and reconstruction work is to be undertaken at Towells Mill downstream during the next few weeks. Previous clearance work of blockages under the road bridges by the railway authorities since the last major flooding has also been completed. Progress on the possible large-scale flood alleviation scheme to include a by-pass canal from Binsey to South Hinksey and Kennington has been temporarily postponed due to cost implications.

In the natural environment more surveys were conducted for birds, butterflies and mammals throughout the year although the number of participants was very low. Interesting records submitted include grass snakes at Chilswell Reserve, an Otter traversing the Devils Backbone, a Polecat found dead on the pavement to the slip road and regular sightings of kingfisher, reed warblers and common

blue butterflies in the vicinity of the Hinksey Stream. More data is also being collected from nature groups who have visited the parish and it is planned to publish a Nature Conservation strategy for the Parish early next year 2007.

An exciting recent proposal made by the Oxford City Council and supported by the Forest of Oxford is to plant a new woodland on two areas of land straddling the access road to Kennington from Redbridge. One field is located in our Parish. The Kennington Parish has confirmed their support for the project and we hope the South Hinksey Parish Council will also do this at their next meeting. It is proposed to plant out the trees this winter. The Oxford City Council who still owns much of the land around the village is also interested in planting a woodland on the large field adjoining Barleycott Lane. Our own woodland proposal at Chilswell Path will complement this, as will others throughout the Green Belt of Oxford. Providing access for walking and cycling through these woodland areas is a long-term proposal that the Forest of Oxford want to achieve. There is a lot of work to be done in obtaining grants, persuading owners and physically planting trees so if you are interested in improving and protecting our natural environment please let us know. The local primary school at North Hinksey have already expressed an interest in getting the children involved when we are ready to plant. Any future working parties will be advertised on the web.

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 two very successful evenings of music and acting and another is planned for February. We are most grateful to him for raising funds through these events for the Friends.

Finally we confirm that we have re-affiliated our group with the Oxford Preservation Trust and plan to apply for and obtain Charity status in the next few months. It is therefore with great pleasure I welcome you this evening to Debbie Dance Director of the OPT to deliver a presentation on how she views the future for our local environment.

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