

### **Faringdon Dragon Country** - 27/8/03

There is an audiobook called Faringdon Dragon Country that tells 82 minutes of stories about the Faringdon area.

The Writers Forum have featured the audiobook in the September issue of the magazine.

The audiobook is also available through the Faringdon library; it is also on sale at the top of the Folly Tower on the 1st Sunday of the month (April to October)

Cleve Gibson, local writer

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### **Pump House- Extraordinary Council Meeting** 31/7/03

This meeting was to put before the Council the preferred option of the Pump House Working Group.

De Facto had put forward 4 options

A Repair and handback

B Residential

C Residential and meeting rooms, demolish theatre

D As C, plus theatre

Amazingly, the working group had made up a new option which they were recommending. (This is option C, but instead of demolishing the theatre, it is mothballed for up to 5 years, in case money can be found to do it)

So this uncosted, undocumented option was agreed by all but 2 of the 9 councillors present, even though the need for more meeting rooms in the town has not been proven.

It was my understanding from earlier meetings that if this was the outcome of the DeFacto investigation, FTC would listen and act accordingly.

The problem seemed to be that a decision was essential that day, in order that preparations/conversations with Lord Faringdon's solicitors can be started in readiness to go to court on 15th August.

I wonder why FTC agreed that De Facto provide the report by end of July - they have known since April that a court hearing would happen in August?

These deadlines meant that the working party was presented with a 46 page report and at the same meeting had to digest it and come to a decision.

Still I don't expect more time would have made a difference - it is clear from FTC's recent newsletter that they had already made the decision to retain the building.

Councillor Don Moorhouse said that while he felt that the council would like to hand back the building to Lord Faringdon they are unable to do this because the costs of repairs (estimated at £149k ex vat by De Facto) could increase to £300k or £400k if Lord Faringdon insisted on this (that this could happen has been suggested by FTC's solicitor).

An additional problem is that FTC have been advised that the loan they took out to repair the building can only be used to turn the building into a community facility. It cannot be used to repair and hand back.

Another instance of FTC actually deciding to keep this building no matter what - otherwise the loan requirement would have been specified in a more flexible way.

Who knows whether this is the complete situation/only option.

At no time at the full council meeting was the subject of ongoing costs and income discussed.

The costs under discussion were wholly about the upfront/one off costs.

The full report indicates that for option C the negative running costs are £21.7k but this excludes interest on the loan and I feel realistic maintenance costs.

So to summarise FTC have agreed to retain the Pump House, initially refurbish the front rooms, turn 2 floors into residential accommodation (if Lord Faringdon agrees - and presumably VWHDC agree to change of use), mothball the theatre, all at a cost of somewhere between £700k and £800k.

It appears to be FTCs view that the De Facto's cost estimates are worst case- I hope so - but the building projects I have been involved with always go over estimates!

FTC have yet to persuade Lord Faringdon's solicitors that they will do it, properly and within agreed timescales.

De Facto have as good as said that there are no significant grants available to fund the work. I have since heard that there may be a possibility of getting about 10%.

We were told originally that their fees would be paid on a percentage of grant monies they achieved - this is not wholly so - they are being paid £2.5k per month min.

FTC appear to have no intention of consulting with residents of Faringdon - who will be paying for all this.

The net annual impact for (the original) option C is minus £21.7k per annum- but this relies on £13k income from rent of the flats, and includes only £3k pa maintenance and £3.5 pa centre management( £300 month = 2 days per month? - surely not!!).

Insurance, light, heat is estimated at £2.5 k pa - not clear if this includes rates.

Estimated annual income from letting meeting rooms is £7k based on £10 per letting.

Feels to me that the minus £21k could become minus £80k without too much difficulty(interest on capital of £820 @ 5% is £41k, £3k pa maintenance must be inadequate- just think about the cost of external painting!)

With around 2500 households in Faringdon, and based on the above, my conservative estimate is that the cost to residents will range from £8 to £32 per household for the next 32 years( remaining lease).

FTC employs 2 part time office workers and a parks superintendent. Is this an organisation of sufficient size to properly manage this building? All councillors are volunteers and could change every 4 years. In my view most of the existing councillors are likely to stand down over the next 5-15 years.

More than £90k has already been spent on the the Pump House - this I believe, includes legal fees, consultancy fees and the asbestos removal

Gene Webb

August 2003

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### **Pump House Comment**- 29/7/03

The recent Press Release by De Facto effectively skirts the important issues, as perhaps might be expected by an organisation selected (carefully) by the Town Council so as to be far away from the town as possible, and obviously completely ignorant of the goings on in Faringdon over the past ten or so years.

So far away in fact that they appear to be completely ignorant of the fact that the Pump House lacks even a rudimentary car parking facility - an essential to any present-day public facility whether social, commercial or administrative.

Without such a facility the idea of the Pump House becoming a public facility is dead in the water.

Furthermore if only 71% of the groups consulted said they 'might' use the new facility I assume that means that 29% said that they wouldn't use the facility. Of the 71% who might use it I suppose that some of that group would require performance or rehearsal space which at an additional cost of £500,000 makes the existing bill of nearly £300,000 pale into insignificance.

In Consolation Prize Councillor Illots style of bookkeeping this would mean an extra 4 or 5 bottles of beer in addition to the 3 or so he reckons we will have to fork out every year for the next 20 - 25 years.

We can assume that such funding is unlikely to materialise and that the aforementioned 71% who might use the centre will be appropriately reduced.

All in all there seems to be very little enthusiasm in Faringdon for the resurrection of the Community Centre. Perhaps this is just as well. Faringdonians seem to have very little interest in Council inspired projects or indeed in the Town Council itself.

In the recent local elections the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties couldn't even be bothered to put up candidates to fight the election, with the result that there were insufficient candidates to warrant an election and those candidates who had stood were all returned unopposed. Put more bluntly this means that Faringdon has no elected representatives and the present Councillors have no electoral mandate to do anything.

To add insult to injury three Labour candidates who stood for the District Council elections were thoroughly defeated but still had the gall to claim seats (presumably as some sort of consolation prize) on the Faringdon Town Council.

This is not a new development, the same problem arose in the previous election and at a guess the town has not had any elected representatives for eight or more years. While this might not be a matter of any importance if the Town Council's responsibilities were limited to managing the emptying of the dog poo bins it was probably during the last ten or so years that the gross mismanagement of the Community Centre/Pump House came to a head.

There is no point in raking over the whole sorry story but it is worth recalling that Trustees, presumably appointed by the Council, appear to have resigned before there was any mismanagement - although there seems to be no trace of their resignation letters.

Naturally the Management Committee, who I understand would have reported to the Trustees, had nobody to report to, and sadly the Town Council appears not to have noticed this. To add to the misery the bar manager went missing and is now living, so I understand, in Spain, presumably on the Costa de los Escondidos, and at about the same time a largish sum of money also went missing.

Somebody also sub-let part of the building as a residential flat, but so far I have been unable to find out what tenancy agreement (if any) there was, how much rent was paid, and whom it was paid to - I don't even know if the sub-letting was allowed within the terms of the lease.

I was told by a Councillor that all this would have been the responsibility of the Management Committee but they appear to have had nobody to report so their actions could not be monitored. In the midst of all this the roof was leaking and the water that leaked in, apart from doing the normal sort of damage to the decorative state of the building, also got at the asbestos used earlier in the building, creating a major health hazard that has been very expensive to remedy.

As I have said there is no point in raking over the whole sorry story but I have tried to put in a nutshell the problems of the building which look as if they are going to cost the Council Tax payers of Faringdon something of the order of £300,000.

All of this happened under the noses of the Town Councillors, many of whom have recently been returned unopposed. It is difficult to believe that in a small town such as Faringdon they were unaware of what was going on. However, despite having no electoral mandate, and despite appearing to be guilty of gross mismanagement they now seem to want to continue the lease on this white elephant of a building for a further 20/25 years.

We can only hope that the Trustees of the Faringdon Collection Trust will give very serious consideration to the suitability or otherwise of the Faringdon Town Council as a lessee.  
Norman Snelling.

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### **Pump House - comment** - 27/7/03

3/4 years ago when FTC decided to keep the Pump House, this was on the basis that the necessary repair costs would be £70k and by keeping it there would be grant funding to turn the building into a place with flexible community space. Both these points have changed - the repair cost is now £250k and from your press release there is unlikelihood of grant funding.

FTC also believed that there was a real need for the possible facilities. From the Press release it is apparent that a substantial need for meeting room accommodation has not been identified - existing groups already have meeting places.

It is imperative that FTC review the situation in the light of current knowledge and not simply carry on because of a decision made 3/4 years ago. This might be difficult for them as it could involve an element of impression of 'we were wrong' - but as we all know, decisions are made in the light of current knowledge - as information changes then decisions should be reviewed.

Performance space is desirable. I'm sure the Drama group would want this. It seems unlikely to me that that refurbishing of the existing theatre (Poss £500k) together with other repair and maintenance costs could be supported, even if there was someone employed who could energetically find other hirers for the space.

Alternatives are needed - maybe

-flexible foldaway seating/stage in the Corn Exchange. Dorking Halls have this so the room can be used for

cinema, theatre and dancing/social occasions etc. VWHDC would need to be involved as owners of the building  
- upgrade an existing school hall/stage- a bit tricky as it involves Oxon County and access issues  
-campaign to add a theatre to the leisure centre- VWHDC cooperation needed.

In the past FTC have given assurances that they will involve the town in making the final decision. It seems to me that they and residents will not be able to do this until the facts from your investigations are made known ie initial and running costs, and income projections for each option- for at least 5 years where appropriate.

Options

Repair and hand back,  
Repair and keep all of it for use, including the theatre,  
Repair and keep in use, excluding the theatre,  
Repair and keep, but with just a few rooms suitable for use

Residents have not been given information about the landlords views of the situation - I suspect, understandably, his concern will be about the state of the building. Maybe there is a possibility of negotiating a payment to cover repairs and terminating the lease. The landlord can then carry out the repairs. Arguing with the landlord will just cost more money in legal fees  
Gene Webb.

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### **Pump House - comment** - 26/7/03

Just some comments/observations- random order!!

There is much concern that the Pump House will continue to be a drain on local resources. It has been empty for at least 3 years, maybe longer. We were assured 2 years ago that it had been made weather proof. Evidently this was not the case. The original money FTC estimated (or told us about) was £70k- more than this has already been spent on non fundamental repairs, legal fees and I expect your fees. We can't afford this.

The building is very unsuitable - for the aged and disabled, for small children (except I suppose at significant costs for lifts and ramps), and has no parking.

The theatre is probably attractive to the Drama Group - but for 3/4 productions a year cannot, I feel be sustainable. I would prefer to see money spent on enhancement of an existing facility - say at one of the schools, so wider / more use will be made of it.

The Corn Exchange does not cover its costs - and thats with VWHDC paying for repairs.

Do Community facilities such as this ever?? Many District Councils have outsourced the running of community/leisure facilities!!

Faringdon TC have a very poor track record for managing venues (or anything!!). They were part of the original Trustees for the old Community Centre - and look what happened!! All are volunteers, so who would manage a venue manager - there is no one there to do it!!

There will be more facilities available for hire soon - new Bowling Club(this year), Tennis Club (year or 2 away I guess), United Church(when not known)

At no time have we been shown real information about the income and expenditure projections. What was called a business plan is not. We need realistic projections of income and expenditure for say 5 years, plus some sort of extension into the future and be able to compare this with repair/hand back costs.

Some people believe, that as the lease expires in about 20 years time, we will simply be funding refurbishment on behalf of the landlord- or I guess have prohibitive rent set.

We have been so long without such a facility, that groups have made other arrangements I think we should bite the bullet, get the building repaired - to the conditions only of the lease - and hand it back.

I understand you will be reporting to FTC at the end of July. It is important that the townspeople has the opportunity to see all your findings BEFORE the Council makes a decision.

Please let me know how and when this will happen.

Gene Webb  
resident

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### **Pump House - comment - 26/7/03**

I was surprised to hear about the idea to knock down the theatre at the back of the pump house. Surely we need to increase facilities in Faringdon not demolish those we have and the theatre is potentially a marvellous facility for many users.

As to the cost apart from the fact that £500,000 seems extraordinarily high, although the place has been left to moulder for six years, can we not look at the facilities which many other towns and villages seem to have, such as Lechlade Memorial Hall, which cost the local rate payers not a penny!

I will certainly be attending the Council meeting on Thursday 31st July at 7.15pm to express my views and hope you can ensure as many people as possible are aware of the meeting to enable them to do the same.

Carolyn Taylor

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### **Pump House - comment - 23/7/03**

As you are probably aware, there is a lot of controversy surrounding the Pump House here in Faringdon. The Town Council did not oversee properly the running of the facilities and have been slow in taking responsibility back.

Therefore, the Town Council have allowed this nice example of a Georgian building to deteriorate. It is now probably beyond the means of the Council to repair and refurbish the building.

This is very sad as the building could have been a real asset here in Faringdon, especially since there are no purpose-built meeting rooms/theatre/ social club/youth club in town.

It is in a very good location in the town centre, near parking and the main bus stop, also restaurants and pubs. It could be a very useful and vibrant centre for the town providing the Council was not the managing authority

I would like to see it refurbished and I feel the funding could be found if a properly constituted Managing Committee drew up a viable business plan. Obviously, the Management Committee would need to include Lord Faringdon (or his representative), local groups and businesses and preferably only one Councillor.

I believe the loss of the Pump House would, literally and figuratively, create a large dead space in Faringdon. It would also be a black mark against the town when further funding for our historic buildings was required.

Debra L Keasal

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### **Pump House - comment - 23/7/03**

I would like to respond to some of your findings which were recently passed on to me:

60% want meeting rooms with decent kitchen facilities - the Corn Exchange is perfectly adequate on both scores but these could be included as a part of the theatre restoration, as well as bar facilities.

50% groups use churches, Corn Exchange, Old Town hall, leisure centre, Bowling Club, Friends meeting house - yes, because the theatre was so badly run by the previous management and has been shut for years. None of these alternative venues are suitable for putting on performances.

Some want to see a youth 'hub' in the building - this could be included as part of the theatre as in the past, if seating is removable, or as you say, there are plenty of existing facilities that could equally well be used for this purpose.

The theatre could be demolished and outdoor play/community space created - the park area near the town library already attracts enough drinking, litter and general yobbish behaviour so close to the centre of town. There are sufficient of such areas already in the town and being a rural town there are many areas outside that could be used or developed.

The theatre could cost £500k to bring it up to today's standards - money attracted by theatrical events of various kinds will give a significantly better return than the other uses mentioned and will attract people into the town. Money should also be obtained from the state lottery funds for such a worthwhile community project.

Ian Lee (Webmaster)

Faringdon Dramatic Society website: [www.faringdondramatic.org.uk](http://www.faringdondramatic.org.uk)

email: [ian@idlee.co.uk](mailto:ian@idlee.co.uk)

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### **Pump House - comment/letter to De Facto - 17/7/03**

Dear Clare,

I have just read about the ideas for the pump house, and I must admit that the idea of knocking down the theatre shocked me.

In the report it states that other venues are used for shows and the like, and that of course is true, simply because the theatre is no longer in use. The stands in the corn exchange can hardly be called a stage, and all the other venues we have had to use since the demise of the community centre (brought on by a few, at a cost to many) to put shows on, are all woefully inadequate.

That theatre could be an asset to the whole of Faringdon, not just the usual pushchair/old dears brigade who seem to be the only benefactors in Faringdon. All manner of shows could be put on there (travelling groups and our own local talent)

I personally went quite a lot to Wantage civic hall to see some of the copy-cat groups which are popular at the moment. Every show was sold out, the shows were good, the theatre clean, smart, and comfortable. This could be how the theatre in Faringdon could be.

Another remark was that groups MIGHT use it, this is said, I believe, because no-one believes, or trusts anything that they are told by the so called "powers that be" in Faringdon anymore.

We all know what, and how, and who destroyed the community centre, and unfortunately now we assume if it can go wrong, it will go wrong as the same people will no doubt be involved again.

If the plans go ahead for a garden, can I suggest it be a garden of remembrance, to let the people of Faringdon remember the day, once again, we all got shafted, and lost what any other community would give their high teeth for.

Yours faithfully,  
Jim Horton.

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### **Traffic Calming, Coxwell Road and Street- 2/7/03**

I have just heard that there is a proposal from the County Engineer to put speed cushions at 100 metre intervals in Coxwell Road and Coxwell St. These are the type that can be straddled by Ambulance, Fire Engines and the like, so that their speeds are not affected.

I'm told that residents will be consulted - but the form of this consultation is not known.  
Gene Webb

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### **Faringdon Pump House -Decision Time- Speak out or lose it - 2/7/03**

*This is a precis of a press Release from DeFacto, the company FTC have employed to investigate the options for the Pump House*

The future of the Pump House as a Community facility will be decided at the end of July.

Faringdon Town Council are seeking your views.

Findings

Of 60 groups consulted (numbers responding not known)

- 60% want meeting rooms with decent kitchen facilities
- a number want rehearsal or performance space
- some want to see a youth 'hub' in the building (reservations expressed as to whether this is an ideal location)
- 71% said they MIGHT use the facility
- Faringdon appears to be reasonably well served - 70% consider that suitable facilities already exist
- 30% consider existing facilities are not entirely suitable
- 50% groups use churches, Corn Exchange, Old Town hall, leisure centre, Bowling Club, Friends meeting house
- cost of bringing Pump House back into use is high
- theatre could cost £500k to bring it up to today's standards
- theatre could be demolished and outdoor play/community space created

Time is of the essence- without intervention this Listed Building (owned by Lord Faringdon) will continue to deteriorate

If you have views please let them be known. Email [clare.evans@defacto-uk.com](mailto:clare.evans@defacto-uk.com)

Full press release from the Home Page

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### **Pubs in Faringdon - Have your say** - 2/7/03

Make the most of a chance to have your say, and enter a draw for £50 worth of Champagne (or other drink of your choice).

Market research is currently being undertaken to gather the community's views regarding the present facilities offered by the licensed establishments in Faringdon.

Please email [MartinPhillips2@aol.com](mailto:MartinPhillips2@aol.com) (a Faringdon resident) for a questionnaire.  
Over 18s only. Confidentiality is assured - your details will not be passed to others.

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### **Local Plan Consultation** - 2/7/03

Faringdon Council have organised a company to conduct a telephone survey to gather the views of local people on the Local Plan - ie the need for more employment and housing land.

About 500 people will be contacted (no idea how these will be chosen) during July, at a cost of £3145

Gene Webb

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### **More Houses, Coxwell Pit Site** - 27/6/03

Builder Ede has applied for permission to build 33 more houses

Can Fernham Road cope with this??

Gene Webb

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### **Faringdon Broadband** - 10/6/03

Faringdon exchange should be upgraded for BT broadband - ADSL by August 20th, 2003.

This is great news for Faringdon, as BT's model foresaw that we would not receive broadband until October - so great that it has been bought forward !!

This has been down to all those who registered and assisted in campaigning to finally bring 21st century communications to Faringdon.

A big thank you to everyone and a large pat on the back to all!!

BT have passed on that they are offering some deals at the moment if you sign up with them (on-line is even better) by the end of June. The choice is yours, but you may wish to speak with your own ISP first

Sarah Allen-Stevens

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### **Swan Lane Development** - 13/6/03

Planning permission for a development of sheltered accommodation and low cost housing has been refused.

This land is currently designated as light industrial

Gene Webb

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### **The Pump House** - 13/6/03

DeFacto, the company that the Town Council have engaged to assess the use and viability of the Pump House, will report their findings to the Council at the end of July.

I assume it will include an analysis of potential use and income, ideas/plans for refurbishment, with estimated costs and potential grant funding.

Gene Webb

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### **Market Square Improvements - Latest News** - 13/6/03

All the money has been found (£350k), most available in 2003/04, but some in 2004/05.

The Vale's current plan to is let the tenders after 18/6/03(when permission to do this will be sought), with a view to starting the work in January 2004

Gene Webb

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### **Madd May Fest May bank Holiday 2004** - 14 June 2003

We are planning to hold a carnival event as part of the festival, and would like groups to enter into the spirit of the day by participating eg. floats, costumes, dancers, musicians, join in and make it a colourful event.

There is no theme but the festival is over the May day bank holiday.  
If you can help please contact the organizers, Sam or Hilary on  
01367-243-806 or email [mail@nprince.fslife.co.uk](mailto:mail@nprince.fslife.co.uk)

Many thanks, Sam.

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### **18 Coxwell Road Development** - 10/6/03

On Monday the 9th of June, at a time when many people were waiting to see the latest re-run of The Darling Buds of May, The Vale of White Horse Development Control Committee (better known as the Planning Department) **refused**, by an almost unanimous vote, to pass the outline plan for development of the land behind the old Health Centre site.

Almost 300 Faringdon Residents signed a protest petition and a significant number made their views clear in other ways.

During this protest campaign it became clear that the majority of those signing believed that the final outcome had already been decided and the Old Boy Network would prevail against the feeling of the Faringdonians.

I have to admit I was one of these and I am happy to admit I was wrong.

Every participant in this effort deserves thanks and it would not be fair to name individuals but, Judy H. Alison T. or Martin D. you are welcome to a cup of coffee at my place anytime...as long as my offer is not misconstrued as a bribe.

The problem of illegal carparking and speeding in Coxwell Road remains but we are now assured that it will not be exacerbated in the near future.

Harry G Mitchell

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### **PC in the Tourist Office** - 31/5/03

I learnt today that the Tourist Information Office now has a PC- good news!!

It will be even better when it is replaced by the correct hardware and connected up- it seems it was delivered on 31st March (possibly to beat the financial year deadline??), and there it has sat for 8 weeks

TI Staff have been trained, but are waiting for 'someone' - VWHDC?? English Tourist Board?? to sort it out and get it working.

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### **TV reception problems** - 15/5/03

The complaint about the Tetra masts at Faringdon and Berinsfield have filtered back to the Head of Engineering at Carlton TV.

It seems that there might be a case if the viewer is experiencing reception difficulties and is not using any form of amplifier (just an aerial and a downlead).

If they are using an amplifier the case will not stand for very good technical reasons.

If you know of anybody who has such a setup and is still suffering interference can you drop me a line .

Thanks

Gary Bates [gary.bates@carlontv.co.uk](mailto:gary.bates@carlontv.co.uk)

News Operations Abingdon

Central News

9 Windrush Court

Abingdon OX14 1SA



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### Quality Parish Status - 15/5/03

Faringdon Town Council have agreed to apply for Quality Parish Status by 4/2004. This involves taking on responsibilities, currently undertaken by the County and the District, and with their agreement and partnership. It would mean that FTC had responsibilities similar to those of the old Rural District Council (pre 1974)

Gene Webb

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### Councillor Thomson - 14/5/03

At the Faringdon Town Council meeting 14/5, Cllr Thompson said that her objectives for the next 4 years are Street Cleanliness and Development of the Folly Park

Gene Webb

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### Skate Park - 14/5/03

Faringdon Town Council, Recreation and Open spaces 23/4/03 minutes state that .....report from Tribe indicated that although none of the sites were wholly suitable, none were ruled out. Members felt that the land behind Willes Close had most potential, although it was acknowledged that more work would need to be carried out prior to installation.

Cllr Mrs England was asked to pursue the possibility of an indoor facility on privately owned land in Faringdon. (*does anyone know anything about this??*)

Actions agreed:

- 1 Contact VWHDC for their views on siting the facility at Marlborough Gdns
- 2 Arrange a site meeting with Environmental Health officers to discuss the above site and land adjacent to Willes Close
- 3 Commission Tribe enterprises to design a facility suitable for either location, on a pad of sufficient size to allow future additions and from quieter materials.

I'm puzzled - having seen the whole Tribe report I fail to see how this conclusion has been reached. I thought Tucker Park looked best!!

Gene Webb

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### Pump House/Community Centre - 14/5/03

The first Full Town Council Meeting of this term met 14/5/03. In minutes that they approved it was stated: £16k of emergency repairs, to make the building waterproof, are being carried out now. Completion is due 23/5/03

Another program of work is out to tender, with a view to work starting in July

The Corn Exchange Committee will be considering the employment of a facilities manager as it is intended that the front of the building (ie the original building) is open very soon. It was not made clear how many floors of the building will be open.

Below are taken from the Clerks Report

#### **Monies to be paid out in period to 8/5**

Andrew Townsend architect £5200

H&E Heating engineers £1525

Defacto Project Management monthly fee £2350 (*I thought they were benign paid on results only!!*)

#### **Bills that require payment in the normal way ( I've no idea how this is different from above!!)**

Darby's solicitors £5175

DPDS Consulting Group £1528 (*think this may be to do with local plan*)

The Landlord's solicitor (Faringdon Collection Trust) will meet Faringdon Town Council's solicitor in Court in July. The landlord's solicitor is insisting that a consent agreement - a detailed list of work needed to fulfill the terms of the lease, is produced. FTC don't think this is necessary but can do nothing about it. FTC are liable for

any costs associated with this - presumably because they have not kept to the terms of the lease.  
More money down a black hole  
Gene Webb

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### **Skate Park - results of site assessment** - 07/05/03

The report produced by Tribe, dated February 19th 2003, is now available to the public.

I have summarised the recommendations in [Skate Park Assessment](#) or if you prefer you can see the full report from Town Council Office.

Doesn't look to me as if any of the 3 locations is ideal - the common problem being one of proximity to housing - but maybe it would be acceptable at the furthest point from the housing.

Gene Webb

### **Christmas Vandal** -27/12/03

Sometime during Boxing Night some Christmas decorations in Faringdon were vandalised. This was not a difficult operation and it required no great physical or mental powers. It is obvious that whoever did this shouldn't be blamed as he must be suffering from some form of mental illness and he must be pitied. But I find it hard to believe that he was alone. He probably had a minder, who must have been aware of what was going on but was unable to control the poor man.

This message is for the minder. I can sympathise with your predicament as your patient may well appear fairly normal some of the time. However should he cause more damage or injury in the future the responsibility will be yours not his.

Please, if you have any feelings at all for this poor unfortunate, try to get him to seek professional help.

Concerned

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### **Star of Wonder** - 27/12/03

Thanks to Peter White for the impressive star on the Folly Tower. It is only through his initiative and hard work that there is electricity in the Tower that enables it to be lit each year.

I'm not sure who funds the work or the electricity each year- but I suspect it's Peter White

THANKYOU

Gene Webb

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### **Irritated of Faringdon** - 27/12/03

We know that the Vale of the White Horse Council isn't perfect. The Bank Holiday changes to the rubbish collection schedule are such that there is maximum pain for everyone - everyone's dustbin day changes over Bank Holiday times. I understand this is so that it is fair for everyone!!

BUT - they do tell us well in advance of these changes. However many local residents still put their rubbish bags out at the normal times - having the effect of cluttering the streets over a holiday period - a time when we have visitors to the town.

Not a good impression

Please, please, do look up when your changed day is and put the rubbish out for this collection time

Name supplied

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### **Merry Christmas!!!!!!** - 23/12/03

Hi Gene

I know you're a busy girl and at this time of year you will be very busy wrapping presents, planning who sits where in order to reduce the inevitable friction associated with family parties and rushing out to get extra Christmas Cards for the people on your 'Damn we haven't sent them one' list.

I have just checked the Website thinking to find a cheery festive greeting and what is your thought for the day? Street Cleaning!

So on the day before Christmas Eve I would like to say to all Faringdon-Onliners and to you and your fellow faringdon.org helpers:

**Happy Christmas and all the best for 2004**

Harry. G. Mitchell

Thanks Harry - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and thanks for all your contributions  
Merry Christmas and Happy new Year to everyone else too!!  
GW

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### **Parking again** - 24/12/03

I moved to Langford House recently, and was shocked by the chaotic parking situation in Gloucester Street, and the speed at which cars and vans, etc., hurtle down to the town centre.  
Noticing the street was a major pedestrian thoroughfare to and from the town centre, a school and a library, I wrote to councillor Jim Moley on the 25th November, 2003 voicing my serious concerns. I said that the street is an accident waiting to happen because of the number of children who use it, and the restricted views for both pedestrians and drivers caused by the line of parked cars.  
I asked for "real" traffic calming measures to be installed, viz. speed bumps and carriageway constrictions, as they have at, say, the bottom end of Corn Street in Witney.  
I haven't received a reply yet, but I have noticed the correspondence here about residents' parking in Gloucester Street, and I hear talk of enlarged buildings and new flats being built in the area, which will add to the parking problems (and which I knew nothing about).  
Though I'm new to the area, I do think that the residents need to come together, to do some "joined up thinking" about the whole issue of traffic in Gloucester Street- public parking, residents' parking and speeding.  
I believe any fair minded person would agree that residents should as far as practicable have allocated parking spaces, with visitors using the public car park, but I think it necessary that traffic calming be installed, too.  
The lack of the former will result in frustration and inconvenience for residents, and perhaps a degree of resentment towards those who habitually use the parking spaces outside of their properties; but the lack of the latter will lead to an increase in the current mix of speeding cars, school children and severely restricted visibility and by the laws of probability will eventually lead to a fatal accident.

Name and Address Supplied

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### **Street Cleanliness** - 22/12/03

I wrote to VWHDC to say that our streets are not as clean as they were (new contract started in October 03)  
This is the reply I received:-  
"Thanks for your observations.  
We have experienced a slight delay in making the improvements to street cleaning we expected with the new contract, due in part to the departure of key members of staff both from the Vale and Cleanaway.  
That said, we have a new monitoring officer starting with us on 5th January to cover the North Vale area, including Faringdon.

This, together with the appointment of a new Area Manager based at Cleanaways new depot will allow more focused inspections and I am confident that standards will improve as a result.

The Applied sweeper (aka the "green machine") should be deployed in Faringdon every Thursday. We are being told that is the case and our new monitoring officer will be asked to verify this once she starts.

The street cleaning standards and schedules are currently being modified from the original Biffa versions and updated maps and schedules will be distributed to the Town Council for display soon after the Xmas break.  
I would also hope to get this info on our website in the near future.

I will relay your concerns to the supervisors and managers at Cleanaway and request that they raise these issues with the local operatives"

Sounds as if they're on the case - but I think we need to be vigilant in letting them know where standards are not met. In the past the assumption has been that if we don't complain we must think its OK!!

Gene Webb

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### **Parking again!!** - 16/12/03

We read your comments about residential parking on Gloucester Street.  
I tried to get a sensible answer from Oxford, Vale of the White Horse and Faringdon Town Council on how to

apply for residential parking in Swan Lane, nobody could give me a good answer.

The only suggestion was to bring it to the attention of our Politicians.

Parking for us residents at Swan Lane becomes every day more and more difficult, especially now with the change of Faringdon Hotel from Hotel to 9 flats and 1 business, the start of building 66 apartment and houses in Swan Lane on 05.01.04 (construction will go on for 50 weeks) and the work on Market Place. Maybe we should pass a petition around for all households on streets which have no parking facilities like yours, ours and more likely others.  
Charlotte Rawson

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### **Parking in Church St** - 16/12/03

Just wanted to respond to the parking issue.....I think Church Street residents need to think about residents parking too because we already struggle to park outside our homes & are bound now to become a haven for those fleeing the Market Place restrictions.  
Who/Where's the best place to ask?  
Faith Mitchell

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### **Residents Parking in Gloucester St** - 16/12/03

A group of residents have got together and requested that parking for residents in Gloucester St is improved. You can see their findings in [Parking in Gloucester Street\(Word document\)](#)

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### **Market Square parking** - 16/12/03

I hadn't realised that a 30 minute free parking scheme was being suggested for the Market Place and feel it is too short.  
It takes my wife almost that long to choose a shopping trolley.

However it is encouraging to see that some interest is being shown in the problem. Unfortunately it is not just a case of encouraging drivers to use the existing carparks because they are almost always full and the only area near the town centre not fully utilised is the Police Station Carpark.

Any resident parking scheme would be almost impossible because I am sure there are more cars than prospective places and it would seem that almost any scheme would have to make allowance for the ubiquitous builder's skip.

Harry Mitchell

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### **More Parking**

Just as an adjunct to the previous letter, I noticed this in the guestbook of the Virtual Tour ( [www.the-virtual-tour.co.uk](http://www.the-virtual-tour.co.uk) ) of Faringdon town centre

*"For me, a Faringdon Resident, the Tour is very interesting but for Faringdon Expats the Virtual Tour must be fascinating. **It even gives the impression that there really is room to park. Congratulations.**"*

Seriously, though, a large part of the problem is in the myopia of our town planners and our council representatives' willingness to allow planning permission for property development within the town centre. There have been a number of small sites adjacent to the streets where on-street parking is chaos, but instead of these being designated for residents' parking, they invariably gain planning permission for small housing developments, thereby adding to this predicament.  
All areas like Faringdon, with streets of cottages/small houses, - now often occupied by two/more car families, have this difficulty, and it is obvious that no landowner is going to sell land for parking when there is far more money to be made out of housing.  
The answer therefore must lie with the planning regulations and the relevant councils' awareness to understand the effect on the quality of life for all of us, plus the nerve to do something about it.

Hilary Taylor

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## **Open letter to Thames Valley Police, Chief Constable** - 13/11/03

Dear Chief Constable,

I feel impelled to write to you to express my pleasure at the lifting of parking restrictions in Faringdon. This is a pleasure which I am sure is shared by all other car owning Faringdonians.

The knowledge that we can park our cars without let or hindrance adjacent to, on, or straddling yellow lines - single or double- is a great source of relief to us all.

Equally it is a relief that we can park in the various zones marked 'no parking' such as the bus stop zone outside the Old Town Hall, and most convenient of all, on the pavements throughout the town.

The lifting of all these restrictions is a most imaginative action. It relieves us of the hassle of finding a car parking space, or of having to use the town's car parks which cost money to use.

I expect you have come to your wise decision on the basis of reports from your officers who must have told you that although most of the streets are normally completely cluttered up with cars both day and night, and have been for some years, the town has so far not experienced a complete shut down.

There is I feel only one situation in which you could think of taking some action and that is with those inconsiderate people who stick 'Pavements are for People' labels on our car windscreens when we park on the pavements.

Of course the cars cause an obstruction to a few people but most of us can deal with complaints from the elderly in their battery propelled buggies - a rude word with a tinge of aggression is usually enough.

With young mothers with push chairs - one normally suggests that it would be better for their health if they carried their babies in their arms, and even with the visually impaired - one just suggests that they can walk in the road and listen out for oncoming traffic.

What these label stickers do not seem to realise is that our cars are our pride and joy, that they have a high aesthetic value, that we put much elbow grease into polishing them, and that most of us have borrowed a lot of money to buy them and have to pay the banks a lot of interest just to keep the loans going.

To have a nasty little label stuck on one's windscreen is deeply upsetting!

This is perhaps our only grumble in what I hope you will accept as an appreciative letter.

We hope that we can now look forward to a bright yellow sticker to go inside our windscreens with the words 'Faringdon resident: exempt from parking restrictions.' in our forthcoming Christmas mail.

Yours in appreciation, N.J.Snelling  
A Faringdon resident.

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## **Pump House update** - 12/11/03

The Council met to accept that Lord Faringdon's proposal - in the form of a draft order- should be agreed.

During discussion it became apparent that the draft order had not been considered in detail by the Pump House working party- they appeared to be relying on their solicitor to do this and advise accordingly.

They agreed it anyway.

I asked again that they inform the town of the financial implications for both short and long term. This is especially important as they seem to have decided not to turn the upper floors into residential accommodation (and therefore no rental income).

The draft order includes deadlines of 15/7/04 for the plans and specifications to be approved by the Faringdon Collection Trust and that the work should be complete by 30/06/2005

There appears to be an issue about a rent charge from VWHDC for the use of the Corn Exchange - I've heard £17k pa mentioned. Faringdon Town Councillors are discussing this with the Vale. It is evident that they are

considering moving out of the Corn Exchange to the Pump House.

The Finance meeting that followed spent most of its time picking over grant requests- total sum around £4k. The discussion on the 2004/05 budget was less detailed, and did not mention the Pump House and its costs, except to say it should be deferred until it is known how much is needed to be spent (out to tenders for Ground floor, and upper floors)

A fun evening!!  
Gene Webb

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### **The logic of VWHDC Planners!!** - 10/12/03

The VWHDC has sent me a letter confirming that the old Physio Building, now an almost completed "affordable dwelling", can be demolished in order to provide an entrance to the proposed development in the garden of 18 Coxwell Road.

Kate Barker, a member of the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee, has just revealed that the building of affordable dwellings in our area falls short of the number required to keep up with demand. Admittedly Coxwell Road has not, so far, been specifically mentioned.

The old Health Centre site would have provided 10 such affordable dwellings but the Vale of White Horse Environmental Services Directorate (the Planners) has agreed to the demolition of one of them in order to "facilitate construction of private drive"

The following offering sums up my view and I am certain I am not the only one to be puzzled by the committee's thinking.

### **Ode to the Planners**

The old Health Centre Building is now almost complete  
The tasteful gables in the roof blend in..they're very neat.  
The topsoil that's been brought in contains no builder's rubble  
The gardens and surrounding lawns should thrive with little trouble  
So congratulations Planners you knew what you were doing  
When you said it would be OK to convert an ageing ruin.

The Physio Department is now a cosy flat.  
You said it could be altered.. You can be proud of that.  
It needed underpinning, new doors and windows too  
This smart, much needed, dwelling is partly down to you.  
I know little about Planning..I believe what I am told.  
I don't pretend to understand..The jargon leaves me cold.  
You've just sent me a letter saying that this pretty flat is going to be demolished..

***Now where's the sense in that?***

H Mitchell

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### **On Street Parking** - 9/12/03

I've heard that we should expect to see the Traffic Warden around our streets far more often than we've been used to  
Gene Webb

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### **COMMUNITY SPORTS LEADER AWARD** - 29/11/03

Are you aged 16+? Would you like to gain a FREE nationally recognised award?

The Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA) will equip you with the skills to lead sports sessions for children and young people.

No prior experience is needed, just enthusiasm to work with young people and sport.

Course starts: Thursday 8th January. Time: 7pm - 9pm Place: Faringdon Community College Gym

For more information contact Helen Wynn (Sports Development, Vale of White Horse District Council) 01235

531197 or Rachel Kenyon (School Sport Co-ordinator, Faringdon Community College) 01367 240375

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## NETBALL LEVEL 1 ASSISTANT COACH AWARD

Wednesday 21st January (6:30 - 9:30pm) & Sunday 25th January (9:00 - 4:30)

Venue: Faringdon Leisure Centre

Cost: £25 per person.

For further information and to book on the course contact Helen Wynn at Sports Development on 01235 531197 or helen.wynn@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

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## Parking Enforcement - 29/11/03

There have been a few traffic incidents in the town recently, caused or exacerbated by illegal parking on the streets and around the Old Town Hall.

Currently the Faringdon police, who are responsible for on street parking enforcement, have little or no time to work on improving the situation.

We are entitled to a share of a part-time traffic warden, based at Wantage, but often she is called to other duties, presumably seen to be more pressing than parking enforcement in Faringdon.

We know parking will continue to be a problem- houses that once had none or one car now could have 2 or 3. It also seems to be the case that Planning permission for residential property does not always make allowance for enough parking space. Surely almost any property in this 21st century should have at least 2 off road parking spaces??

What do you think?

What can be done?

What should be done?

Gene Webb

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## Market Square Improvements- 29/11/03

The contract has been let to Isis Accord (a contractor that Oxfordshire County uses). I understand some changes have been made to the spec as the tender was about £60k above budget. I've also heard that the surface of the area around the Old Town Hall will not happen or will be different in order to reduce cost.

Gene Webb

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## Market Square Improvements- 15/11/03

You can see some 'pictures' and samples of the materials to be used in Faringdon Town Council Office  
GW

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## FARINGDON FOSSICKERS - 15/11/03

We - the Town Council and RIGS - have received a draft Trust document which will enable us to go ahead with the establishment of the Faringdon Fossil Trust to manage the Coxwell Rd. fossil site.

We had a meeting with the Mayor, Mrs. Dee England, and Councillor Alan Hickmore on the 21st October to discuss the draft document which, subject to some very minor points was satisfactory to both sides and which will now be presented to the Town Council for final ratification (done 12/11)

The Coxwell Rd. site will be gifted to the Faringdon Fossil Trust ( not the Faringdon Town Council) which will become responsible for its management.

The Trustees will be two representative of the Faringdon Town Council, two members of Oxfordshire RIGS and up to three other co-opted Trustees. The powers and activities of the Trust are laid down by the Charity Commissioners, as are the duties of the Trustees. The conduct of meetings, and the presentations of reports and accounts etc are all strictly defined.



Hopefully the Trust will soon be formally established and I will keep you all informed as things progress. It seems a long time now since Mrs. Mary Greetham first alerted us to developments in the Coxwell Rd site and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your interest in and support for this venture.

Thanks are also due to Mr. Ede of Builders Ede for his imaginative and generous donation of the site to the people of Faringdon

Norman Snelling.

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## **Faringdon Town Council meeting** - 12/11/03

This was a full council meeting, attended by 11 councillors.

I had hoped to hear about the Pump House and the Skate Park - but these weren't discussed.

The Recreation and Open spaces minutes of 15/10/03 indicate that VWHDC Environmental Health dept have discounted Marlborough Gardens as a potential Skate Park site. 'VWHDC Officers seem fairly positive about the land adjacent to Willes Close', and will visit other skate parks in the area, and report findings within one month.

The Pump House working party minutes (24/9) indicate that the refurbishment is being pursued. In public speaking time I asked that the town should be made aware of where the money to do the work is coming from and the impact on our Council tax. It seems that De Facto the consultants will receive one more months payment (£2350), and then their work will be done.

The Fossil Trust will take ownership of Faringdon's SSSI in Fernham Road. Councillors agreed to the Declaration of Trust document. Councillor Hickmore and Evans are to be the FTC representatives on the group.

It was agreed that Faringdon would become a Fairtrade Town. There are 5 goals - most of which are already in place. Faringdon could be the first Fairtrade town in the south east.

FTC has bought advertising space on the Community Bus. This appeared to be a way to give non grant money to the bus group.

FTC receive, as consultees, various documents and information from VWHDC and Oxfordshire CC. I asked them to 'think cyclist' for relevant plans such as highways, pavement, parking changes etc

Oxon CC, (Judith Heathcoat) report:- JH asked that FTC encourage businesses to allow employees to be volunteer fire fighters. Anyone under 55 can put themselves forward. Hours and cover can be arranged to suit work and personal circumstances. Unless more volunteers are found, Faringdon is likely to lose its 2nd appliance.

Work on the pavement surfaces on the South Side of London St is likely to take place during November

VWHDC report included:

Tennis club's new site has been approved by Minister of State.

Tenders for Faringdon Market Place work have been returned. £63k above the original quotes was mentioned. Some minor modifications have been made.

I gave up at 9.20!!  
Gene Webb

Please do email <mailto:talkingpoints@faringdononline.co.uk> and tell us what you think about these or other things!!

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## **Re Special Provision for cyclists** - 5/11/03

The writer of this message (below 25/10/03) seems to be missing the reason for the popularity of cycling and hence the requirement for more consideration to be given to the safety of cyclists on the roads.

Here are just a few of the benefits of cycling.

Bicycles are non polluters, they produce no noise or noxious fumes unlike a car which creates a great deal of

noise in order to cause considerable pollution problems.

They use up none of the worlds rapidly reducing natural resources.

They do not require vast amounts of road surfaces when in use nor do they require enormous car parks when not in use.

The speed attained by a cyclist is proportional to the physical effort applied to two pedals not the infinitesimal pressure required on a single accelerator pedal.

The list is endless but it goes some way to explaining why no government has ever considered taxing this healthy and environmentally friendly means of transport.

Indignant cyclist

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## **Faringdon Community Response Team** - 5/11/03

In the UK some 150,000 people die suddenly, and with little or no warning, from sudden cardiac arrest. The majority of these deaths occur out-of-hospital. There are 300,000 heart attacks occurring annually. 85% of these sudden cardiac deaths are largely reversible if treated properly within the first few minutes of the victim collapsing into sudden cardiac arrest. The only definitive treatment for this is defibrillation.

The Faringdon Community Response Team is part of a Nationwide initiative designed to provide trained people within the community who are equipped with defibrillators and who give their services on a voluntary basis by attending emergency calls.

We work in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust and attend heart attack victims along with the ambulance and crew.

The First Responder may reach the victim quickly within a few minutes of the onset of the attack thus providing a better chance of recovery for the victim. Sadly the chances of survival of such an attack will drop dramatically by 10% with each passing minute. Unless defibrillation takes place quickly, surviving a cardiac arrest is unlikely.

The Ambulance Service within Oxfordshire is probably second to none, but the help of the First Responder is essential in such a large rural community where long distances on call out exist and it is not always possible to achieve arrival within this critical time scale.

### **What type of incident would a First Responder attend ?**

The First Responder 'on call' is contacted by a dispatcher in the Oxfordshire Ambulance Service controlroom and asked to attend an emergency. The type of emergency may include unconsciousness (due to an injury or medical problem), chest pain and breathing difficulties either in the home or public/work place. An emergency ambulance is always dispatched to any incident attended by a First Responder.

### **How can you help ?**

Join the First Responder Scheme. Anyone can assist our First Responder scheme with administration, fund raising, support, training etc.

Become a First Responder. You will be over 18 years old, physically fit and be able to demonstrate a satisfactory standard of proficiency after training. You should have a sympathetic, caring approach to people and have the ability to work as part of a team, be honest, trustworthy and reliable.

### **Make a donation.**

The start-up costs for the Faringdon Team are in the region of £5000 - this includes a defibrillator at a cost of £2000.

Currently, the team are operating on an entirely voluntary basis - they receive no payment whatsoever for call-outs. Donations are always welcome and you can be assured that the money will put to good use.

### **Support and training.**

Following any serious incident a designated person is available to offer confidential support and advice. First Responders will meet on a regular basis, offering on-going support and training. First Responders will hold a valid First Aid certificate and be trained in Oxygen Therapy, the use of an Automatic External Defibrillator, Risk Assessment and Manual Handling. Further information.

If you would like further information about the Faringdon Community Responder Team please contact: Godfrey Smith 01367 242448

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## **Cycling in Faringdon** - 25/10/03

I'm pleased to see that the rights of the cyclists are being defended.

I agree that they should be given some extra help in negotiating Coxwell Road.  
On the pavement they are constantly impeded by thoughtless pedestrians (some of them even pushing prams) and the cars using the road must be a constant irritation.  
It's quite a while since I was a cyclist and perhaps you could remind me how much a Road Fund License costs for a bicycle.

Someone may well tell me that sarcasm is the lowest form of wit but you will already have realised I don't subscribe to that view.

Incidentally I sincerely think your website is great and I wish more people used it . So how about some input from cycling Emailers for a start?

Harry G Mitchell

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### **Broadband**- 25/10/03

On the 18.10.03 I had a little moan about my Broadband connection and I contacted the Freeserve support team who admitted that glitches can occur with any computer ( I already knew that) but they also stated that the 50:1 contention ratio should not be a problem.

Since then I have only had one connection problem which lasted for about three hours.  
I am now very happy with my latest toy but I appreciated Richard's input.

I would like to get the views of other Faringdon Broadband users and particularly wonder if anyone knows how many are connected to the Faringdon exchange.  
Harry

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### **Skate Park in Faringdon** - 25/10/03

Has anyone heard anything about it??  
GW

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### **Traffic Calming**- 25/10/03

Oxfordshire County Council (via the Traffic Advisory Group) have been asked to make provision for cyclists when they design the traffic calming in Coxwell Road.

I have also heard mention of traffic calming in Park road. I have no details, but will ask OCC to improve the provision for cyclists in this road too.  
Gene Webb

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### **Street cleansing in Faringdon** - 18/10 03

VWHDC have let the contract to a different contractor - from 1/10/03

Cleanaway, the new contractor has a different approach to keeping our streets clean. So far I have been told:-

- a litter picker (with broom/buckets etc) will clean the Market Sq by 0800,
- and the streets leading to it by 0900
- after this time other streets will be done when possible.
- Given it is done manually there is a hope(expectation?) that areas where cars are parked will be done too
- 'Our' green Dragon, is now kept at Wantage, will come here once a week (minimum every 2 weeks in the contract) to sweep the pavements - probably the town centre, beyond that I don't know
- VWHDC will monitor the cleanliness - frequency, whether on foot, or from a car( they have been known to count this as inspection!!) not known
- Contingency if our man is ill or on holiday is not known.
- the contract is output based - as the previous one was. VWHDC did have pictures of cleanliness levels - maybe these remain the same.
- VWHDC will be monitoring the contract closely and I have heard that they may produce reply paid comment cards for us to use.

The Really Good news - the man employed has been seen doing a thorough job in Stanford Road - digging out

weeds, sweeping - Sounds very promising!!

In the meantime, if you see a real problem I suggest you ring VWHDC 01235 520202, or email [waste.team@whitehorsedc.co.uk](mailto:waste.team@whitehorsedc.co.uk).

Gene Webb

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### **Broadband in Faringdon** - 18/10/03

I'm pleased with my connection(nildram), even though there are times I cannot connect - I guess because there is contention for bandwidth. How are you getting on? Let's share our experience  
Gene Webb

#### **Freerise Broadband experience**

I installed Freerise Broadband on 8/10/03 on a trial basis and am far from happy with what I am getting. The installation went very smoothly but I just can't rely on it being available when I want it. As a home user I am on the 50:1 contention ratio deal but the Broadband support team assure me this shouldn't cause a problem with my connection.

I connect via an extension lead which is not ideal but I'm sure a lot of computer users have to do the same and if the system can't cope with this situation I will get rid of it. I am not prepared to install a second line as this would defeat one of the advantages of Broadband i.e. the 24/7 availability without losing my ordinary phone  
Harry G Mitchell

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### **Faringdon's Berlin Wall** - 2/10/03

As a Vale District Councillor and Oxfordshire County Councillor I should like to thank Marian Costley, Chair of South Faringdon Residents Association for bringing to the attention of the Vale the concerns of over 300 Faringdon residents in relation to the fencing off of land around the garages alongside Southampton Street close to the Tennis Club.

This fencing off was undertaken by the Vale Housing Association which is not now part of the District Council since being sold in 1995 by our predecessors at the District.

At Mrs Costley's request I have made enquires and discovered from the Rights of Way Officer at the County Council that no legal public right of way exists over this land.

However, it is clear to me that the public have used this route for many years and **I am pleased to report that legislation exists which may allow the route to be formally designated a right of way which would then require the Housing Association to remove their "Berlin Wall"**.

To achieve this a formal application needs to be made, supported by written statements, that evidence that the route has been used for over 20 years. I have supplied the necessary information to start the ball rolling on this and will be more than happy to support the application when it is made.

Cllr Andrew Crawford

Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Spokesman for Wantage Constituency

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### **Reunion - Faringdon Secondary Modern School 1957 - 1961/2** - 2/10/03

Terry Sillence, Derk Jordan and Lesley Butler are trying to get a school reunion organised for pupils at the school between 1957 - 1961/2. 1962 was the first year that pupils from this school took GCE 'O' levels.

Anybody interested please contact [TerrySillence@aol.com](mailto:TerrySillence@aol.com)

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### **Southampton St path to Health Centre** - 30/9/03

Are there any plans to improve the footpath from Southampton Street to the new health centre?

It's the obvious route linking the town centre and the new health centre but there is a section of rough stones that make it almost impossible to push a pram or push chair across.

After all the money that has been spent it seems to be a let down that the path has not been properly finished.

Jenny Barrett

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## **FARINGDON AND DISTRICT LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE**

The Corn Exchange, Faringdon, Thursday October 9th 2003 7.00pm

Faringdon is now a BEACON MARKET TOWN

The Vale of the White Horse District Council, The Town Council and the Countryside Agency have pledged

support for Local Food into schools, hospitals and military establishments

CHAIRMAN Poul Christensen Board Member of SEEDA Local Farmer

KEYNOTE SPEAKER Carol Parker Children's Outreach Manager Public Health - Five -a-day programme  
Manager 'Food For Life'

SPEAKER Alun Williams Local Businessman. Chairman of the Enterprise Gateway 'The Faringdon Local Food  
Business Plan'

SPEAKER Rupert Burr Local Farmer 'Biomass 'What's in it for the farmer?'

SPEAKER Roland Bonney Director: Food Animal Institute 'How we can help ourselves'

Workshop:

Groups Group 1 Finding the markets.

Group 2 Site for a warehouse, and small processing/catering plants

Group 3 Transportation of produce

A Meeting for Producers, Processors, and Consumers. Everyone is welcome SUPPER of local food and wine .

Enq: Daphne Saunders

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### **Street Cleanliness** - 29/9/03

I have heard that the VWHDC street cleansing service has been moved to another contractor - from 1/10/03. It seems that the green dragon pavement sweeper will no longer be available to Faringdon on a daily basis - another town is to have it!!!

Lets hope this doesn't mean that the streets will be allowed to get dirty again - as they once were before Dave was employed.

I have also been told that the frequency of cleaning is not specified in the new contract - but that cleaning will take place on an as it's needed basis.

I suggest we 'help' VWHDC to achieve this by reporting any litter and street cleanliness issues whenever it is necessary. VWHDC main phone number is 01235 520202

Gene Webb