

Coxwell Pit SSSI - 6/12/02

It is now proposed that the Trust will consist of two members appointed by the Town Council, two by RIGS (in both cases the appropriate succeeding bodies in the event of either being disbanded or changed for whatever reason), one by the Faringdon schools, and three other Faringdon residents (I assume they will have to be on the Faringdon role of electors).

The Town Clerk will now take this to an appropriate solicitor to iron out any creases and to prepare a Deed of Trust for presentation to the Town Council and then to the Charity Commissioners. By appropriate solicitor is meant one recommended by the Charity Commissioners.

If any of you would like to volunteer or propose somebody for membership of the Trust we will be very happy to receive suggestions. You do not have to have any particular qualifications, essentially just an interest in the welfare of the town and its facilities. However interests in the local wildlife, scenery, woods and gardens and natural history in general would be assets.

Norman Snelling

NormanSnelling@compuserve.com

Broadband for Faringdon Update - 2/12/02

I am working closely with BT to monitor the levels of people registering their interest in DSL technology

The response is now getting better a total of 135 have registered their interest

BT now have revised figures for making the decision whether or not an exchange is upgraded and the figures start from just 200 interested parties

So come on spread the word to register the interest and this time next year we may all have faster internet connections

Scott Gildert

[Email Scott to register your interest](#)

Healthcheck Meeting - 29/11/02

A meeting in the Corn Exchange, 29/11/02, 7.30pm will describe the projects identified from the healthcheck process. As many residents as possible are needed to help prioritise these.

Richard Grecian

Faringdon Market Town Project Manager

01367 244667 or 07884 367963

Broadband For Faringdon- News- 13/11/02

We have received details of a seminar being run by SEEDA on 27 November in Oxford (Kassam Stadium) from 08.00 to 11.00 hrs.

Some grants are available to businesses to assist in the installation of some Broadband systems and as they include satellite systems where cabled Broadband is not available, this all seems highly appropriate for the town.

More details from Business Link (0845 606 4466) or events@businesslinksolutions.co.uk

Broadband For Faringdon 24/09/02

I live in the town and am disappointed by the number of responses that BT have had.

They need at least 400 people to register their interest in the technology. I can understand why as I work in the broadband industry and know how much it costs to implement this technology.

Although figures are not fully confirmed I have been looking into providing this service myself to the town and have worked out that I would need at least 250 people to sign up to the service to make it viable to implement, - so please can I ask that this is widely advertised to register the interest or else people will have to make do with the standard 56k dial up connection.

If they wish they can register the interest with myself then when I have enough responses then will look in to either

implementing it myself or whether to pass the interest onto BT
Scott Gildert email: Scott.Gildert@telindus.co.uk

Town Meeting - Pump House Business Plan - 19/09/02

I have just been to the Town Meeting called to discuss the Pump House Business Plan.

The overall plan is very good, although there are one or two omissions, for example the ongoing maintenance cost is not included in the impact on the precept. However, it is clear that the choice (hand the building back and pay for repairs, keep the building and pay for the repairs, plus gain the building for the use of Faringdon residents) is really no choice at all, and the plan must be pressed ahead with.

The Council now has a real opportunity to turn around how it is perceived by a significant number of residents. Just because nobody stands for election to the Council does not mean that everybody is happy with it, rather it means that nobody can be bothered to do the work required of a councillor. It's so much easier to come to meetings and throw spanners.

What most people want to see is real progress, rather than the current perception, which is (rightly or wrongly) of large sums of public money being thrown down the toilet. The Council need to get the tenant removed, get the asbestos cleared (both of which have been promised by Councillor Moorhouse in "a matter of weeks"), meet with the Faringdon Trust's representatives and present the plan (in the hope that they may consider withdrawing their legal action), and start the repairs, ideally earlier than the plan proposes.

Jeremy Searle

GOOD NEWS Re Care of Folly Path/Stanford Road/London Road - 6/9/02

It is with pleasure that I can say that Martin Turner Deputy Area Engineer, at the County Council not only took the trouble to ring me last week, but has also written to me outlining not only the County Council's responsibility to this area, but also its commitment from here on in to its upkeep.

Now that we have it in writing, we can expect to see a vastly improved look to the area.

Martin Turners letter states:

Folly Footpath

The maintenance of the tarmac length of the footway is the responsibility of Oxfordshire CC Environmental Services. Overhanging vegetation and weed growth will be cut back at regular intervals throughout the growing season. For this work to be cost effective, the timing of the cuts will depend on the growth rates throughout the season. It is impossible to state the precise number of cuts and timing, although inspections will be undertaken. It would be most useful for this office(01235 531331) to be notified when and if future problems arise in order that prompt action can be taken. An application of weed killer may also prove necessary in the future and provisional arrangements are in hand. The retaining wall on Stanford Road will also be included.

Stanford Rd/London Rd

Although funding in the past has prevented an area based weed spray programme it is hoped this can now be established. I therefore propose to include in the weed spray programme London Road and Stanford Road. The build up of growth and dead weeds now established will be cleared as soon as I have resources available. Once cleared, weed spraying should prevent a significant recurrence.

The Folly & Circular path

The un-metalled (non tarmac) footpaths near The Folly are the responsibility of Oxfordshire CC Cultural Services dept who have been made aware of your concerns. I will send a copy of this letter to them together with your previous correspondence outlining the main issues.

Regarding dog fouling, litter, broken glass I have also passed a copy of recent correspondence to The Vale White Horse DC.

All that remains now is for the Vale to show similar commitment, in writing, to its responsibilities towards the area; eg dogs mess, broken glass and litter in the area. Dogs mess bins are required, as is their maintenance; signs advising

of fines for owners allowing their dogs to foul the path are required. And very regular inspections of the area are required, mainly the Folly Path and around the Folly itself, for litter and smashed glass.

Heaven forbid that small children should injure themselves up there, lets hope the DC have enough insurance cover for that sort of claim landing on their desk.

Dom Matterson

Old Health Centre - Planning Application GFA/144- 2/9/02

I've seen the plans.

The application is for the conversion of the existing building, at the frontage there are proposed four dormers in the roof to aid two levels. The rest remains single level.

There are proposed to be 15 car parking spaces. The existing in access is to be blocked up, with the existing egress becoming both access and egress.

Peter D King

Old Health Centre - Planning Application GFA/144- 31/8/02

Change of use from Health Centre to 9*2 bedroom dwellings and 1*1 bedroom dwelling.

Applicant : W Associates Ltd

Agent: Victor C Brown Architect PO Box 3358, OxfordOX33 1GB

It doesn't say if it is to be demolished or converted, nor does it mention parking spaces for perhaps as many as 19 cars.

Clean up Faringdon Petition- Update 31/8/02

I've written again to VWHDC and OCC asking for a detailed response to the Petition. I know it seems established that it is a VWHDC responsibility, but I'd like to see that in writing; along with their views on dogs mess bins.

I've asked that it is discussed at the next Healthcheck meeting and also asked June Rennie how I can ensure that it is on the agenda for the next Faringdon TC meeting.

It is looking better up there at the moment, but as we've said, we want commitment, published and accountable, to its long term maintenance. I have stressed also that London Road is still a mess - that old estate wall, and raised footpath, all overgrown and decaying.

Dom Matterson

Focus on Faringdon - comment 24/8/02

It's really good that Faringdon Town Council is trying to keep us informed of their activities and important projects in the town. However, in the interest of accuracy and completeness I must make the following comments

Under Grants awarded 2001/02 foto Film Club should read foto Faringdon - nothing to do with FilmFaringdon- the Film Club

Pump House

Minutes of a Council meeting in March indicate that the Faringdon Collections Trust(the landlord) met with FTC at the Pump House and said then that they were intending to pursue the 146 notice, to retrieve the lease from FTC.

SSSI

The bulk of the work to preserve this site was carried out by Mike Windle, Oxfordshire Rigs, and Norman Snelling, a local geologist. They negotiated with the builder and got his agreement to give the site and money for its restoration, to the town. Someone/body needs to be the legal owner, and FTC have agreed to be the legal owner. Management arrangements(Committee or Trust) for the site have not been finalised. I understand these are to be discussed at a full Council meeting in September.

Skate Park Demonstration day is to cost £1500 for hire of the mobile facility. An evaluation of potential Skate Park sites is to take place. These include Tuckers Park, Willes Close field, Town park, Oakwood Park but does not include the Leisure Centre as (it was said) VWHDC won't agree to this.

It would have been nice to hear about:

The town park, and the plans to spend the budgeted money (£3k) on its upkeep

Traffic calming measures being introduced by Oxfordshire CC

Market Square Improvements update

Gene Webb

Folly Path - Good News - 22/8/02

I've just heard that Vale White Horse DC now agree that the cleanliness of the Folly path is their responsibility, and because cleaning the path has always been part of Biffa's cleaning contract, regular cleaning will now take place.

Hooray!!

Gene Webb

Pump House Business Plan - 15/8/02

Consideration of the promised business plan for the Pump House could not take place at FTC Finance meeting 14/8/02 as the plan has not been finalised. It seems that a working party has discussed the plan and made changes to the figures of income and expenditure, but a revised document has not been produced.

The timetable now is that it will be presented to a full council meeting on 11th September, and at a Town Meeting on either Wednesday 18th or Monday 23rd September

Oh dear!

Gene Webb

Increase in Car Park Charges - 15/8/02

The Vale District Council have proposed increases to the car parks charges in Faringdon. Their reasons are that they need more income to offset costs, and don't want to increase the Council Tax.

Faringdon Town Councils Finance Committee have agreed to the proposed charges on the basis that:

- a basic charge of 20p is not much money

- we have nice car parks!!

No mention was made of the impact on 'on street' parking, and how this would affect pedestrians, cyclists, through traffic

No mention of the underused Gloucester St car park - and how this could generate more income.

I despair!!!

Gene Webb

Faringdon Town Council and Planning -4/8/02

Update to my letter of 2nd August detailed below.

It is now 6 days since I Faxed a letter to the Town Council regarding their gross error in making an unsubstantiated representation on my application.

Namely that they objected on the grounds that the scheme would cause a loss of a double garage, when the scheme actually proposed an integral double garage in almost the same location.

The Town Council has made no attempt to contact me, apologies for its error or suggest any solution. This is despite a formal request for the Chairman to meet with me to explain the Town Councils position on this matter.

We place our trust in these people to do a job to the best of their ability, in this case they have clearly demonstrated that their best is way short of the mark.

I note Mrs Taylors comments below concerning Mr Hickmores statement about the Town Councils embargo on the loss of garages. I strongly suspect that this is the root cause of the Town Councils objection to my application.

However, a complete embargo without any reference to the particular circumstances of an individual case is nonsensical.

I also suspect that the Town Council took the description of my application at face Value as follows;

?Two storey side extension (demolition of garage)? (this was the description of the application being renewed ? it had already been granted permission in the past). In doing so they have failed in their duty to give proper consideration to this planning application, they could not have looked at the plans. It is inconceivable that had they done so they would

have reached the conclusion they did.

The plans clearly show a double garage being replaced, there is no loss of a garage and there cannot be any pressure for onstreet car parking. The real give away on the plans are the large double garage doors shown on the front elevation and the words 'Garage?' on the plans. How clearer could it be.

Notwithstanding the above I offered the Town Council an Olive branch to resolve the situation. I formally requested that the application be taken back to its committee for further consideration. They refused and it is not on the agenda.

The Town Council do not have the bottle to admit it has made a mistake in public, nor does it have the bottle to apologise to the person it has done a major injustice.

Again it must be said, if the Town Council cannot be trusted to give proper consideration to this very simple application, how can it be trusted to promote the interests of the Town on complex matters.

Peter King

Asbestos and the Pump House- 2/8/02

FAR has been told by an officer of VWHDC that:

- (a) the asbestos was found by the surveyors employed by FTC to cost the repair work on the Pump House,
- (b) according to Vale records, no laboratory tests were asked for or done,
- (c) the "squatter" is NOT a squatter as he is a paying tenant. (FTC is believed to be his landlord).
- (d) as a tenant he is entitled to remain in the building with the asbestos present,
- (e) no closure notice is attached to the outside of the Pump House for Public viewing as the closure is not due to health threatening conditions inside,
- (f) The closure order referred to by Cllr A Hickmore at the FAR meeting was issued on March 15th 2002 by the "Public sector housing" group at the Vale under Section 604 of the Housing Act. It was signed by Ian Charles (VWHDC)

The reason for the closure states that the Pump House is "unfit for human habitation as it is not free from serious disrepair". There is NO mention of asbestos on the order.

Faringdon Association of Residents(FAR)

Planning applications and Faringdon Town Council - 2/8/02

Re Mr King's letter:

The Town Council's attitude to planning applications has indeed become puzzling.

At the recent meeting of the Faringdon Association of Residents, someone expressed concern at car parking around the corner of Canada Lane with the Pines. Mr Alan Hickmore, representing the Town Council, responded by stating that the parking problem in the Pines had been noted, and that the problem was due to the fact that many people did not use their garages. They had, he said, either filled the garages with junk, or converted them into living accommodation, and consequently were parking in the road.

"In future" said Mr Hickmore, "The [town] council will no longer be recommending planning applications from that estate to convert garages into living accommodation"

Given that the houses on the Pines estate all have ample hard standing for cars, the logic of the council's position escapes me.

Hilary Taylor

A planning application, and Faringdon Town Council!!- 1/8/02

The town council at its last meeting in its wisdom deemed it appropriate to object to a planning application for a two storey side extension to a residential property on the grounds that it resulted in the loss of a double garage and that it could cause additional pressure for onstreet parking.

This ignores the fact that the application was to renew a permission which raised no objection first time around.

It also ignores the fact that the application plans clearly show that the scheme provides a double integral garage in almost the same location as the garage to be demolished.

The application site also has capacity to accommodate over 7 cars, although only two are needed for this residential

property.

There is no loss of a garage and no threat to onstreet parking.

This begs the question whether the Town Council actually bother to look at the plans before them, visit the sites to make informed judgements, or possess the ability to read and understand a building plan.

To top it off the Town Council representative following a discussion with the chairman advised me that it has no ability to alter a recommendation, even if it got it wrong, and that I now have to wait until the District Council consider the matter.

It was also put to me that although it was no excuse I could have attended the meeting to explain my case. This is such a simple case it needs no explaining,

I have subsequently shown the plans to my 70 year old mother in law who immediately saw that the garage was being replaced.

My application will now not go to committee until mid September. The planning officer could have issued a permission under delegated powers this week had the objection which is based on no sound planning grounds not been sent by the Town Council. He suggested that I contact the council because their comments are based on a complete misunderstanding of what is proposed.

If the Town Council cannot get it right on such a simple and straightforward scheme, God help Faringdon with regard to complex applications.

A very concerned and astounded resident.

Peter King

Fernham Road Housing Development - 31/7/02

Despite protestations of awareness of the septic tank belonging to residents of Coxwell Lodge Drive, the builders (Ede Ltd) currently clearing Coxwell pit in preparation for the housing to be built there have managed to break open the manhole cover and half fill the tank with rubble.

They now want the residents to meet 'for discussion' but say for there to be a septic tank in that area is not an option. Not quite what we were led to believe.

R.Coward.

BROADBAND in Faringdon - 22/7/02

BT are now offering customers the ability to pre register their interest for broadband services on

www.broadband1.bt.com

Between now and September, BT will announce the number of subscribers required to justify the cost of upgrading the Faringdon telephone exchange.

The website guides you through step by step what you need to do.

If the required number of people register, then we can expect full broadband services to be available in Faringdon
Richard Bernard.

The Winged Fellowship Trust- 22/7/02

Faringdon Town Council has donated £300 to the Winged Fellowship Trust towards cost of holiday care for five disabled Faringdon residents.

Well, what is this Trust, I hear you ask?. It so happens that I spent last week at Netley, near Southampton at one of the five centres the Trust has in Britain.

It is designed to give disabled persons of 18 upwards a holiday with every care they require and also to enable their carers to recuperate in pleasant surroundings. It is not necessary for the person's carer to go as there are plenty of volunteer carers there.

Each person has a single or twin bedded room with en-suite bath/shower.

The centre is in pleasant grounds running right to the water's edge of Southampton Water.

I found the food was excellent and we had interesting excursions using a large coach adapted to take up to 18 wheelchairs and a similar number of carers.

One excursion was to the Basingstoke canal where a specially designed canal boat took 9 wheelchairs at a time up the tree-lined canal and back. Others were to Portsmouth, the New Forest, a bird sanctuary and shopping in Southampton.

Unfortunately, not sufficient people know about this Trust which is of such great value to anyone who otherwise would not be able to have a break. Other centres are at Chigwell Essex, Nottingham, Southport and Bodmin. Further details can be obtained from admin@wft.org.uk

Hector Paroussi

Market Square Improvements - 19/7/02

Some changes to the plan, taking account of local views, have been made.

The plan will go to VWHDC committee 17/7/02 for ratification.

VWHDC plan to make bore holes to investigate the underlying substructure for hidden historic materials and also the possible effects of vibrations from proposed traffic humps.

Some funding has been committed by VWHDC, Oxon County Council, Faringdon JET, local employers and further funding sources are being investigated.

When all is agreed a detailed specification is needed, for costing and tender purposes.

The next opportunity for Faringdon residents to comment on the plans will be at the Planning approval stage.

GeneWebb

Folly Park - 19/7/02

Alison Thompson reported at the Town Council meeting 15/7 that there was an issue about ownership of the ditch that crosses the proposed access to the Folly Park.

Not knowing the ownership of this is causing delay.

VWHDC legal dept are requiring indemnity insurance against ownership claims that may arise in the future. It seems that insurance related to potential housing development of this suggested - costing more than if the land was deemed to be parkland. Costs were not given.

The reason why it should need to relate to housing - when there are no plans for this is unclear.

Gene Webb

Old Health Centre - 19/7/02

A purchaser has been found, with exchange of contracts to take place in 3 or 4 weeks.

The purchaser has intimated that their preference would be to convert the existing building to living accommodation, though it is not believed that this is a condition of the sale.

The South West Oxon PCT were asked that if the building is to be demolished that architectural features were preserved and given to the town.

Gene Webb

Weeds in Faringdon - 19/7/02

I have been told today that Faringdon is top priority for the spraying program which is to start on Monday 22nd. All area where there is weed growth will be sprayed - town and residential areas.

I first spoke with Oxfordshire County Environmental dept about this in April, was told the program across the Vale had started in May.

The contractor has been 'ticked off'

Heigh Ho!!

Gene Webb

Faringdon Town Council Meeting - 10th July 2002

Pump House

The Council received a section 146 notice in October 2000 and has resolved to defend it if the Faringdon Collection Trust pursues it. This would allow a Court to decide whether the Collections Trust could terminate the lease and carry out repairs that they believe are required and send the bill to Faringdon Town Council. Faringdon Town Council don't want this to happen and so would contest any action.- presumably because they believe this would incur greater costs and result in no facility for use by the town.

A full business plan will be available to the public by **3rd September in readiness for a public meeting on 10th September.**

Cllr Moorhouse did indicate that while public views would be sought, this was not consultation and the FTC would carry out their plans to reopen the Pump House, as they were the elected members and represented the people of Faringdon.

Cllr Alan Hickmore indicated the existing draft business plan needed to be extended to include figures for 5 years.

Cllr Mike Ilott felt that income estimates were over estimated and expenditure under estimated and that overall the cost to the town was severely underestimated.

Cllr Moorhouse said that £4k has been spent on roof repairs and it is his belief that the building does not let water in through the roof. He said that leaking pipes were repaired a while ago. It is estimated that £10k will be needed to deal with the asbestos problem, and though the situation with the tenant was not mentioned, it seems likely that the asbestos cannot be dealt with until the tenant vacates the building.

Faringdon Cleanliness - or lack of

2 members of the public put forward views that Faringdon was dirty and uncared for and they wanted something done about it

Cllr Judith Heathcoat(Oxon CC) said that the state of the streets was largely the fault of people - *I think she meant dropping litter - not the weeds, the pigeon faeces, the bumps in the pavements and potholes in the road.*

Cllr Alison Thompson(VWHDC), when asked by Alan Hickmore what she was doing about it said that she had mentioned it and would ring again.

Cllr Jenny Young(FTC) said she thought it was a cultural issue.

Cllr Mike Illott said he thought the Faringdon Town Council should lead on the dirty town issue

Skate Park

FTC have agreed to spend £1500 on hiring a mobile skateboard facility for one day. Date and venue to be decided. £1000 has been agreed for site evaluation - though the minutes do not indicate which site(s)

VWHDC and Faringdon

Alison Thompson (VWHDC) reported that the Vale had spent £180k on Faringdon in the last 18months - but she didn't say what it was spent on.

She said that a Libdem councillor had said recently 'Faringdon can't now complain they're being neglected (indicating they could have 18months ago)'

Folly Path

Cllr Judith Heathcoat said that the County was not responsible for the care of the upper part of the Folly path(above the archway) and that the Folly Trust was.

Through contact with the Folly Trust after the meeting I was told that the Trust has a deed showing they are responsible for the woodland area and the tower only.

Gene Webb

More Traffic Calming - 11/07/02

May we expect traffic calming measures in London Street also?, - I would have thought that this was a priority.

Hilary & Gerald Taylor

ps. **re Stanford Rd.** - well, John, there *are* some expensive houses up there, perhaps your resident thought the upper part of Stanford Rd. was included in the purchase price!

Stanford Road - Is it privately owned? - 9/7/02

As a dog walker i was walking my dogs past over the turning for nursery view,& i was stopped by a resident from one of the houses up there & they told me that this part of the stanford road is "private" and rudely told me not to walk my dogs up here anymore.

So when did the county highways sell that part of the stanford road?

i thought it was going to be reopened in the near future please can someone shed some light on this.

Best regards

John

Traffic Calming - 6/7/02

I heard last week that Oxfordshire County Council will be installing some traffic calming in Coxwell St/Rd as a high priority. Calming will be installed in Fernham Rd, Lechlade Rd, and Highworth Rd as a lower priority, but within the next 6-9months.

Gene Webb

Detrunking the A420 - 4/7/02

Changing the status of the A420 is driven by Government ethos that the road does not link to docks or airports so

only carries local, not international traffic.

Oxfordshire CC supports detrunking, although they have lodged an appeal against it. The road has already been demoted by the Government, it is now a non-core type of road and their next stage will be to detrunk. I have lodged an objection to this and received an acknowledgement.

However, I have moved my position slightly. Is it better to have the maintenance of a low priority non-core road with the Highways Agency (low funding and works priority) or is it better to have it under the OCC's control where it would be top of their schedule of importance for maintenance?

If it is detrunked the funding of the road maintenance will be transferred from The Highways Agency to OCC and there will be a 12 mth period of the two authorities working together.

All outstanding works, like Buckland/Gainfield, Littleworth and the A417 and A420 Stanford Road, Faringdon bypass roundabout will be undertaken - I am assured, although I remain to be convinced.

However, the Town Council and a landowner have lodged an amendment to the A417/A420 improvement plans. Both would like to see the Stanford Road re-opened.

I am against this as I think it would develop as a "rat-run". Because of this suggested amendment the A417/A420 scheme is on hold.

There are wider issues. Detrunking of the A420 could affect Watchfield and Shrivenham. They are worried that the Swindon Borough Council will see it as an open card to develop along the A420 and both villages could become satellites of Swindon!

So from a County Councillors point of view I have to ask what is best for the care of the A420, what is best for the care of the community. If an Inquiry is held this saga could go on and on!

Judith Heathcoat
Oxfordshire County Councillor

Asbestos at the Community Centre - 26/6/02

Re closure notice on Community Centre because of the existence of asbestos in the building.

Interesting, considering that asbestos is present in probably half (nobody really knows) of the Vale schools as well. The kids will look forward to them being served closure notices!

Most people are well aware that asbestos is only a problem when building work near it (drilling, etc.) is necessary. Its "existence" is no reason for closing a building.

Dave Headey

Clean up Faringdon Petition - 19/6/02

I have sent the petition and an accompanying letter to each of the councils saying that i have been asked to get back to central tv news and the oxford mail as soon as i can with progress reports.

Dom

Public Services - 22/6/02

One of the underlying problems is that there are too many service agencies involved

Care of the environment is fragmented across County, District and Town Councils - and even within these organisations there is more fragmentation as different teams do different bits - no one body/section has responsibility for the whole and those involved don't talk to one another, align contracts, care about the impact of what they don't do, and how it impacts another service.

I have been told many times - we don't do that - its them'

Public services have been charged by the government to 'join up'- but they are slow to do so, and I think reluctant because of the need to change working practises and let go of some of their power base.

It's time it was changed- and the elected members are the ones to make it happen

Gene Webb

Street (lack of) cleanliness - 19/6/02

Well done to those involved in this campaign.

We have informed the Faringdon Healthcheck team that we are unhappy with cleanliness of streets in the town centre, citing pigeon excreta etc.

We lived in Germany for 6 years where it is not unusual for streets not just to be swept but also washed down.

We are in admiration of the Roundtable? team that set out every 6 months to scour the local verges for litter.

It might be a good idea to advertise this more and get some normal volunteers to assist.

I for one would help. Keep up the good work.

Gary Vale

Folly rubbish again - 17/6/02

Below is the reply to an Oxfordshire County Council member of staff who stated that the Folly was visited 4 times in 2001 -

'..... but there are 200 + people who will refute this. i will stand my ground and suggest that these 'visits' are no more than that. there is no way on gods earth that any proper clearance has been carried out on the folly path/stanford road 8 times in the last 2 1/2 years. absolutely no way whatsoever.

Easter this year was the first time in well over a year that any proper clearance has been carried out.

some half hearted attempts were carried out at some point on the weeds on stanford road, and at top end of the path as well at some stage, but any 'visit' was a million miles from what is required.

- you need to get up there and see for yourself how repulsive it is. and try to get your guys to do something before someone other than my dog (cut on broken glass around folly in march) gets hurt and cc accountants start getting nervous about how much and what sort of insurance cover they have.

Surely time is going to be better spent getting it sorted from here on in

Funding is not an acceptable excuse. not when several thousand pounds get spent putting up bogus 'historic' town walls on park road, and when the cost of giving this work to half a dozen men/women on community service, at no cost, is all that is required.

Incidentally, i have someone lined up to sponsor the dogs mess bins, which should mean money to you guys of course, or the district? '

dom

Pavement potholes - 15/6/02

My problem, as a wheelchair user, is the many potholes, some 9" deep round which you have to manoeuvre increasing the danger from traffic.

I would explain that I always travel in the roadway and not on the pavements. These not only go up and down at each house entrance but also slope towards the road pulling you that way.

I will therefore look forward to pothole repairs as a priority.

Hector Paroussi

Folly Path - 17/6/02

If this is about the discarded cans & Bottles and the danger to dogs being walked there, what about the foul mess that dog owners allow their dogs to do when they walk them?

The path is not safe to walk children up there, nor does it encourage many from using the path.

Geoff Smith

Cleanup the Folly campaign - 15/6/02

Many of you will have seen the piece on Central TV news about the sorry state of the paths and pavements leading up to the Folly. This follows on from the collection of over 250 signatures in support of the campaign.

See the [Oxford Times](#) article

Do give us your views on talkingpoints@faringdon-online.co.uk

Gene Webb

Stanford Road Weeds - 15/6/02

I'm not sure what you are expecting about S.Rd, but have you noticed how the road on the l/h side is disappearing into the verge and is now 2/3 ft narrower than the r/h side? 2 other points.

The Council seem to have given up using weedkiller on the footpaths etc and as a result there are weeds in every nook and cranny.

The other thing is that there are a number of houses with hedges encroaching on to the footpaths, in some cases by as much as half of the original width (and more) of the path.

Ron Fox

The Green Dragon - 15/6/02

At last - the pavements of Faringdon are being swept properly - Biffa/Vale have employed a Faringdon man who clearly intends to do a thorough job. There is already a noticeable improvement in Marlborough St and other parts of the Town Centre.

I've contacted the Vale to suggest that they get in touch with the County, who are responsible for getting rid of weeds in the pavements, so that this mans efforts are even more effective.

(In April, the County did say they would spray at least once this year - but is yet to be done)

Gene Webb

Heads in the Sand- 10/6/02

Taking on board the councillors excitement that the folly path had been cleared just before easter (nearly 3 months ago), i thought i'd check it out myself this weekend just gone, to see how exciting it really is.

imagine my surprise at counting 14 separate dog turds before getting to the bench half way up, and nettles to the side fast approaching six feet and ready to bow over thereby preventing access to any elderly people in wheelchairs let alone small children.

such a charming place.

when are the council going to get off their backsides and force this onto the cc's agenda.

by the way, the latest count on the petition to clear the place up on a regular basis is 210 plus.

Do the council give a damn? they have a lot of convincing to do to prove otherwise.

Dom Matterson

Car Parking in Lechlade Road

Visiting a friend in Lechlade road the other evening, I could not help but notice the predicament of all the residents of the cottages there, who have no places except on the road and squeezed along the roadside on the raised verges to park their cars.

The nearby school yard, however, remained empty and padlocked.

It seems like a sensible idea to share this space and allow residents to park their cars there say, between four thirty pm and eight am.

One of the local residents tells me that the education authority has been approached, but wouldnt allow residents to park their cars there without payment.

Would it *really* cost the authority anything? Isn't it time common sense prevailed over tribalism ?

Hilary Taylor

Access to field behind Willes Close - 31/5/02

I've heard that a planning application has been made for the erection of industrial buildings in the field between the Peugeot maintenance garage(Industrial Estate), the footpath and the track at the end of Southampton St.

Presumably there will be access roads needed from the industrial estate.

Wouldn't it be good if there could then be access to the land behind Willes Close (Town Council preferred place for a skate park).

This could open up the possibilities in how this land is used (it's owned by Faringdon/Town Council)- perhaps a Community Centre, or even housing to make some money for the town?

G Webb

Broadband in Faringdon - 30/5/02

I've heard that Oxfordshire County Council have a project to install Broadband communications to the Community College and the library (where there will be 3 PCs)- should happen during 2003, but it seems the project is already running late.

It seems it is not being extended to other areas of the town - it's an Education dept project so presumably their world is only schools and libarraies - seems an opportunity lost.

Still it is(or will be) a step forward

G Webb

Town Cleanliness- or lack of it(2) - 30/5/02

I know the folly trust do it once a year, but as regulars, and small children know, this is not enough. besides, when it was done at easter, this was the first time in 18 months, in which time it had grown to be repulsive, and a natural draw for mispent youth.

and if I get one more pathetic excuse about the wrong type of weedkiller, diversion of funds from little kiddies the sick or the elderly, I'll do my nut.

Dom Matterson

Town Cleanliness or-lack of it(1) - 30/5/02

In response to the councillor...

the comment states very clearly at the start that the responsibility lies with the county council and that the town council's responsibility is to make sure views are heard and represented fully at county level. not that the folly or the trust is the responsibility of the tc. it also states the the cc will get the petition when the time is right.

Where does the word "ultimately" appear in that comment, in relation to the town council or indeed anything? is the councillor feeling a little defensive? does he protest too much?

I'm glad the tc have been making representations to the cc and its representatives, I quote, "for a very long time", thereby of course demonstrating what a toothless unit they are and what a complacent and arrogant organisation the cc is.

As regards the recent pre easter clearance of the folly path, congratulations. What do you want ? a biscuit? Once in 18 months is not good enough. sustained improvement is what is required, and not just the folly path. the approach to folly path is disgusting as well. come to that most of the london road wall is overgrown as is the short footpath leading towards the sudbury house hotel.

When visitors come in to faringdon via london road, is their first impression

a) "my what a sweet well maintained near the cotswolds historic market town this must be..." or is it

b) "God almighty, i'm glad our own town council get more done in our town than this lot here.... yuk. lets not move here dear, the councils obviously don't care, what a filthy looking place".

Perhaps it is time to put up a couple of naff bogus park road style 'historic town walls' on london road for a few grand. far better to spend money like that than clean the place up.

Dom Matterson

Cats Eyes on the A420 18/5/02

Has anyone noticed the magic cats eyes along the A420 - around the area of the pub and the corner before the Longcot straights. They look like normal cats eyes until you look in your mirror and see them glowing behind you. How do they do that? Does anyone know??

Josephine Wood

Weed Killing 18/5/02

Apparently the County has employed a contractor to spray weeds in South Oxfordshire- hopefully this includes Faringdon, especially the Stanford Road.

They won't be coming around to clear away dead weeds, as it is too expensive. It is not certain whether there will be a second spraying later in the year, as it is not known how much this one will cost!!

G Webb

Old Health Centre 18/5/02

I have been told by someone at South Oxfordshire PCT that sale of the Old Health Centre was advertised in the Oxford Times and Estates Gazette. Sealed bids have been received and it is thought that the preferred bid is under negotiation. No timescales were given.

G Webb

Old Town Hall

I've heard it said that the Old Town Hall - lovely though it is - does not raise enough income to cover its expenses. This was true of the Corn Exchange for 01/02 too - and that's with the Vale WHDC owning the building and presumably having responsibility for some repairs.

Not sure what the Town Council can do to make the Old Town Hall viable- but it doesn't seem a good idea to plan even more meeting rooms (eg the Pump Rooms (Community Centre)) in the town that will need to be subsidised from our Council Tax.

Gene Webb

14/5/02

Detrunking A420

This is the moving of responsibility for the road from a national highways body to Oxfordshire County Council. It seems that the County Council agree to detrunking in principle, but there will be some detailed points to discuss, of which most important locally, will be any plans to improve A417/A420 junction.

I don't really know what the pros and cons of detrunking are - only that the Town Council and Judith Heathcoat (County Cnclr) have formally objected to the proposal.

Perhaps one of you have more info?

G Webb
14/5/02

All Saints Church - wall repairs

Due to decisions made by former councillors (in the 1970s) maintenance of the walls that surround All Saints Church and grass cutting in the churchyard are the responsibility of the Town Council.

I have been told that a quotation of £30k has been received to remove the ivy and repair the front wall (Church St). The JET group have decided this is too much money and are seeking a quotation from a local builder. It seems that the Church are making no contributions towards this repair cost.

The church and surrounds are an important feature of Faringdon, and so should be well cared for- just seems a bit unreasonable that the Church bears none of the costs.

G Webb
14/5/02

The Folly Access

. Sorry to keep on but I really can't allow you to get away with comments like "responsibility goes back to the Town council who are ultimately responsible". It just is not true.

The Folly Trust is a completely independant organisation set up by Lord Berners to maintain the Folly. At no time has the Town Council had any ownership or responsibility for it or for the access to it.

You should also know that the Town Council has been making representations to the County and the County Councillor (who is the person you should be addressing) for a very long time. In fact action has been taken as anybody who has been up to the Folly recently will know.

It really is about time that you used your excellent site to to complain and comment to the correct people and bodies.

Cnclr Hickmore
14/5/02

More on the state of Faringdon Streets

I agree with Alison Moore, and it is the County Council who are responsible for the paths and general maintenance of Stanford Road and the lower part of the main Folly path. It is the Folly Trust who are responsible for the upkeep of the top end and the paths and benches around the Folly itself.

It is the County Council who will get the petition when the time is right, backed up with (god willing) local press, radio and television coverage.

However, 'subbing out' the maintenance to the Folly Trust does not mean that the Council are free of responsibility. If the Trust can't/won't pull their weight, then the responsibility defaults back to the Council, to whom they are answerable. Councils love to hide behind this kind of fudge.

It is the Town Council's responsibility to make sure that the residents' views are heard and represented fully at County level, and it is they who have the job of leaning on the CC if work needs to be done.

The town council would love to absolve themselves of blame at the first opportunity, but should remember their responsibilities.

On the point of residents looking after their own, absolutely, but if the Council leave a place looking like a dump then people will treat it like a dump. If it is kept respectable, then people will treat it with more respect. A little naive? Perhaps, but I'll bet once it is done and acted upon, people will behave differently.

Congratulations on the car park toilets. just goes to show what we can get done. That was another classic example of council negligence, that borders on near complete contempt for Faringdon, and its residents. It is somewhere else that you can't take your children in Faringdon.

Far better for them to link up with lots of foreign towns and spend our money going there rather than clean their own up.

And they always fall back on nice bit of emotional blackmail about ramps for the disabled or underprivileged this or that. In the hope that we will go away.

As for feeble excuses about EU regulations and weedkiller, for the abundance of unwelcome weeds across the town... instead of having lots of infernally dull meetings, why don't they pop over to Wantage and ask them how they keep their square and streets clear of weeds, or Chipping Norton.

As someone once said (and I'm not sure who) - "Rome wasn't built by having meetings....Rome was built by killing people".

A little strong perhaps, but I know what they mean.

Dom Matterson
13/5/02

Faringdon Loos - comment

"Loo of the year competition". Yes this has been running for many years. It is a national competition which for some years was won by the gents loo at Shepherds Bush Green. An amazing place which had goldfish in glass cisterns - and was always kept immaculately. I don't know if it still exists in the same way.

Until recently (about 18 months ago) the public loo in Faringdon was highly commended and the then cleaner was congratulated in full Council (VWHDC) for her dedication and the excellent state of the toilets.

Unfortunately the demands of cleaning it five times a day was too much after four years and she resigned. A great shame.

I believe the VWHDC has had problems replacing her - hence the terrible condition it got into.

This really is the sort of thing which District Councillors should deal with!!

Cnclr Alan Hickmore
13/5/02

Faringdon Public Toilets- progress

I sent my comments and photographs to the appropriate body, in Abingdon, and I am delighted to say there has been an improvement.

Long may it continue, and I am looking forward to the day when litter bins appear in the building, and when the disabled toilet is -er- open for business.

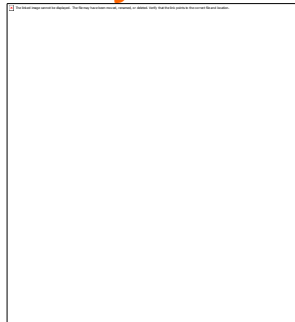
Hilary Taylor , 8/5/02

PS: I was bemused to learn that there is a 'Loo of the Year' competition. Can anyone illuminate this subject for us?

Make comments or make a complaint about cleanliness to VWHDC via

Email martin.litherland@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Fancy Walking into This?



Disgusting isn't it?? But this is what you see when you visit the public lavatories in the car park in Faringdon. Not only you, but me, and any other residents, tourists, visitors to the town. We pay for these lavatories to be regularly cleaned, yet, out of interest, I have visited them on a number of times recently and found on each occasion the floors littered with empty bottles, cigarette ends, and miscellaneous debris. I know that public loos get dirty quickly but the ones in Faringdon aren't inundated with visitors, so where is the cleaner - for whom we are paying?

Hilary Taylor



Comment re Conference in Faringdon 23/3/02 item (below)

The conference which was called to explore the development of rural market towns in the South East was a vital and important step in raising the profile of Faringdon among our fellow parishes and towns - but also amongst future funding agencies when we reach the next (implementation) stage (of the Healthcheck).

It is very important that everybody in the Town is committed to the project so that we can see Faringdon develop in the way that the Townspeople want.

I am interested that "GW" can't see the relevance (or accuracy) of my comments.
I would like to see more on this - rather than a somewhat broad and unfounded statement.

Cnclr Alan Hickmore

Street Cleanliness in Faringdon

Where as I agree totally about the comments on the state of the litter, dog mess, broken glass, I think it should be remembered that it is the people of Faringdon themselves who create the mess.

We do need new dog bins up on the Folly Hill, and in Stanford Road, the bins elsewhere in the town are very well used.

We need to ensure that the correct Council and Councillors are nagged to get these jobs done.

I don't believe that the Town Council has any control over the maintenance of Folly Hill, I think that it is the Vale of White Horse and the Folly Trust, but perhaps our Town Council can apply pressure again to get these problems sorted.

Faringdon is a Town with so much to offer but it is the residents we need to educate about litter.

[There is going to be a clean up Faringdon day on Sunday 5th May](#), usually only Town Councillors and 6/7 turn up for this but hopefully this year there will be a few more , meeting at the Corn Exchange at 11am.

I think the Website is Great!!!

Alison H Moore
25/4/02

Helping the police with their enquiries/work - Faringdon Police Station

If you have some free time available and want to help the local community, become part of the police volunteer support team.

To help the police have more time to be out and about in the town, give help with routine office work, reception and working with the public.

There is no upper age restriction. You specify the hours you can give. The police will provide any training that is needed.

More info on www.thamesvalley.police.uk/recruiting/indexvol.htm

Contact jenni.collins@thamesvalley.police.uk

Faringdon Healthcheck

One area of the Faringdon Healthcheck is to look at the existing transport and traffic situation, identify problems and come up with suggestions of how it could be improved.

So if you would like to comment on public transport, parking in Faringdon, traffic issues - congestion, speed etc, please email me and I'll incorporate your views in the study

Gene Webb 23/4/02
genewebb@clara.net

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH relaunch, Westland Road

At a meeting in the Bell Hotel yesterday, a small number of residents met to relaunch at least part of Neighbourhood Watch in Westland Road. I was asked to be the local co-ordinator for the lower end section.

If you wish to contact me on any subject to do with neighbourhood watch you have three alternatives as shown below
Hector Paroussi, 25 Westland Road

Westland Road (Lower End) Faringdon Co-ordinator.

Tel 01367 240696 if engaged Mobile 07766 004 227 E/mail hparoussi@hotmail.com

Faringdon Pre School Appeal

£100,000 is needed in the next 12 months to buy a new school building. There will be a number of fund raising initiatives.

For donations, support or information call Mary Thomas 01367 243588