

Faringdon Fossickers events - 30/3/06

We are holding two trips into Ardley Quarry near Bicester on Tuesday 4th and Tuesday 11th April 2006. This is a great chance for some fossil hunting in the Jurassic limestones, as well as the opportunity to see one of the county's largest active quarries.

To book places for either day please contact us on 01367 243260 or e-mail contact@oxfordshiregt.org.

Dino Days, one at The Batt School in Witney on Friday 7th April, and one at Chipping Norton Town Hall on Monday 10th April., 11am - 3pm

There will be plenty of dinosaur activities to take part in, lots of rocks and fossils to look at, and the chance to meet Trixie the Triceratops!

[More information](#)

Norman Snelling

Low cost Composters (£6) and Water butts (£35)- 30/3/06

VWHDC and Thames water are offering these at a special price, that includes delivery.

"All the Councils in Oxfordshire have entered into an agreement to supply composters and water butts to residents at reduced prices. The benefit of this year's promotion is that all prices quoted are inclusive of delivery direct to the householder.

These are not subsidised by the Councils, but do receive some funding from Thames Water.

You will also see that the water butt kit also includes a child safe lid, a stand and a rain diverter.

The leaflet promoting this for 2006 is currently in production and will be delivered to every household in Oxfordshire in the coming months"

It couldn't be easier so why not give it a try? Call 0845 1306090 (not VWHDC)

More info on www.getcomposting.com/oxon

[Copy of draft leaflet](#) (Adobe 7 needed)

Faringdon musical society - 29/3/06

Would anyone be interested in joining a group that loves to sing and act I am looking to set up a group that loves musical theatre. I would look to staging maybe 2 musicals per year and possibly a panto around christmas

This group would be open to all abilities and ages

if you are interested let me know

my email is scott.gildert@dsl.pipex.com

Markets - not that easy - 29/3/06

I have already pointed out to many people, and again at the Chamber meeting on Tuesday last, that the present Farmers' Market is held monthly on a Tuesday to complement the weekly market (whose original Charter was awarded to the town by King John)

Also, what anyone wishing to start a Saturday market has to realise is that most of the present complement of Farmers' Market traders do not wish to attend on a Saturday even if they could! In fact some of them actually attend markets elsewhere on other Saturdays anyway, so Simon Holmes would have to find a new set of traders.

Rosemary Packer and I have often been asked whether we would run a market on Saturdays for the very reasons Simon is asking about, but both she and I want our weekends free, thank you.

Also there is a lot of work in arranging such a market, not least having permission to use the ground that we use on a Tuesday, and making sure all traders have proper insurance etc.

It isn't that easy vis a vis "snap them up" as you will see from above, the farmers who attend have their own helpers!

If Simon is serious, the first port of call to set up a second market would be to contact the Thames Valley Farmers' Market Association
Mike Heathcoat

More markets - 29/3/06

Great to hear all the positive comments about the French Market - it was a resounding success and lovely to see the market place so busy!

In answer to the posting about the Craft Market there are already plans afoot for regular craft markets in the Corn Exchange - the first one is being held on Saturday 15th April from 10am - 4pm.

Let's hope it's as well received as the French Market.

I would also like to add that there has been much discussion over the past year about extending the markets in Faringdon to include a weekend market. The idea is well supported but not quite as easy as it may sound! Discussions continue and the sort of positive feedback given on this site can only help to push this project forward

Anna Marlow

Folly Park Quiz - 28/3/06

Folly Park Quiz with easter egg prize for under 8's and 8+

Sponsored by Faringdon Motor Parts

Closing Date 21st April 2006

[Download Quiz sheet \(29kb\)](#)

Friends of Folly Park

Kiss of life for Faringdon - 26/3/06

Yes ! A weekend market would be great !

Even better would be the addition of a craft-fair in the corn exchange a la Cirencester or even a carboot sale.

Residents would happily walk to such attractions.

BUT...(there's usually a BUT).... Where would the visitors find a convenient place to park their cars ?

Wet Blanket

(AKA HGM)

French Market - 24/3/06

Well done to Simon Holmes!

I also work out of the local area five days a week (I'm pretty sure its not just the two of us) and try to shop as much as possible in the local area at weekends.

This however means driving to Wantage market.

Why can't Faringdon have its own weekend market? It would bring the town to life in the most fantastic way.

The French market was fantastic - I've gained half a stone in a week on a diet based loosely on cheese, wine and bread.

More of the same please!

Mel Taylor

Re-Welcome to Faringdon - A Market Town - 23/3/06

Firstly, Sunday was indeed a resounding success and congratulations to all those involved in the organisation. Events like this should remind us all what a stunning town Faringdon can be when lit by sunshine and the sound of a bustling crowd.

Simon Holmes makes a very good point that the weekly Tuesday and monthly Farmers' markets would work even better at weekends and this very question was raised at this week's Chamber of Commerce meeting. Part of the reason it is not held at the weekend is that the stall holders have a packed diary of markets they attend so it is not that easy for them to switch from one day of the week to another.

However, it is not beyond the realms of possibility for this to change with a bit of organisation and it may well be worth your while Simon contacting Mike Heathcoat who does a fantastic job of organising the monthly Farmers' Market.

I'm sure he would appreciate any offers of help to progress the Market.

If you'd like to contact me I can let you have Mike's contact details.

David Reynolds

info@peluche.co.uk

Weekend Market - 23/3/06

I'd be up for helping with a Weekend Market too.

We really need someone from the Chamber of Commerce to comment.

Paul Cornell

ED: Contact information for the Chamber can be found on [tatownaffairs1.htm](#)

Hysterical Market Town? - 24/3/06

When I first came into Faringdon some two years ago, I misread the sign on Park Road and thought it read "Welcome to Faringdon, hysterical market town".

I searched around but didn't get the joke (at first.)

Now I understand that the market was so old, it was historic.

Well done to the French and the organisers for bringing life back last Sunday.

That's more like it!

You might be able to change the sign to 'modern market town' one day.

Barking dog

Welcome to Faringdon - A Market town - 21/3/06

On Sunday I came into town with my 6 year old son to take a look at the French market and was amazed to see the number of people wandering around, tables outside the coffee shop and Portwell bar, busy with people enjoying the event, and it got me thinking... then it got me a bit worked up... I've lived in Faringdon for around 5 years now, and I drive past the signs welcoming me to "A Market town" every day, and in all those 5 years, this is the first time I've seen a vibrant market in the town.

The markets during the week (be it regular market or Farmers market) may deliver the same kind of energy, but I work during the week, in Swindon, and therefore don't enjoy the benefit of them. I talked this through with a few friends and various different opinions were presented as to why the town can't enjoy a market at weekend, but I'm unsure as to whether any of the answers are factually correct or based on their own ideas.

The point I'm rambling towards is, why doesn't a town like ours, with a perfectly positioned market square, offer up a regular weekend market ? I know I would use it on a regular basis and I'm sure I'm not the only one.

Does anyone know who is responsible for organising the market, and why it seems to be limited to only reaching a fraction of the population ?

I would be more than happy to give up some of my own time to help organise something that would attract not just the residents of the town, but visitors from the surrounding area, who might just come to enjoy "Faringdon - A Market town".

Simon Holmes

Ed: Suggest you contact FAP via Julie Farmer Julie.Farmer@fap.org.uk

487 new houses - effect on our Council Tax - 21/3/06

I wonder what Faringdon Town council will do to our Council Tax when all the new houses are occupied.

They could say whoopee!! $487 * £107.20(\text{Band E}) = \text{around } £52\text{K extra to spend}$

or they could say hey we can reduce the amount each household pays- by spreading the current budget level over the new houses (2786 now, 3273 in two+ years) This would mean a reduction from about £79 per household to £67.

Of course VWHDC will have a similar decision to make. I'm not sure how many new homes there will be across

the district but what is certain is that we won't know whether either councils will take the opportunity to reduce the contribution per household or simply view it as an opportunity for having more (of our) money to spend

Perhaps our opinion will be asked!!!
Gene Webb

Doggy ID - 20/3/06

Working dogs are excluded from the law about collars and tags.
A few years ago our dog was "dognapped" by a passing motorist when he decided to take a short cut along the road verge after helping round up the cows for milking.
Had the motorist taken the trouble to stop at any of the nearby houses they would have told him whose dog it was.
It cost us a lot of money and some inconvenience to get him back
Jane Boulton

Stolen Dog?? - 19/3/06

I don't think dog owners should be too worried that this man was 'dognapping' at the Folly.
Yes, I appreciate that it is a growing and very nasty crime, but would he still have been in the area an hour and a half after the dog went missing?. Perhaps he should be thanked for looking after this, as he probably thought, stray dog.

I think this just highlights the importance of correct identification on dogs. As far as I know, it is against the law for a dog not to have an address and telephone number on its collar.
Microchips are very good, but not unless you are in a position to have a 'microchip reader' ie. vets surgery, animal rescue centre. I'm sure this man, and most other people would have rung the owner if a number had been available.
Dogs without collars and ID might be assumed abandoned
Name supplied

Rob the Cheese - 19/3/06

What happen to Rob cheese shop?
Will it ever be back?
Like cheese and the apple pies just never seemed to get there when it was open
Name supplied

French Market - 19/3/06

Congratulations to The Faringdon Chamber of Commerce for organising this market - it was a great success
Julie Farmer

Children collect litter - 18/3/06

The children at Faringdon Community School take an active role in picking up litter and maintaining their school site.

It is wholly unreasonable to expect them to take a significant lead in clearing waste from the streets and pathways around Faringdon particularly when so much of it is potentially hazardous;
I think if we are harping back to a distant era then the author of last mail on this subject might want to consider putting together a 'working party' (or did they call it a fatigue) of volunteers from across the community, to tackle this task.

I wouldn't want anyone to get the impression that the rubbish that litters Faringdon is entirely down to its young people - I could point out a few adults who regularly allow their dogs to foul Gloucester Sreet's pavements.
Name supplied

More Litter - 18/03/06

In response to the rubbish and litter comment, I would agree that parts of Faringdon are very unsightly due to

'fly tipping', but that our own town sweeper is doing a very good job in tidying up the streets. Clearly the Council could do more in cleaning up the areas worse affected.

By the way, Faringdon Community College has a very good litter duty rota which has been so for many years. Two nominated students referred to as "EPO's" (Environmental Protection Officers) collect litter every day around the whole school site and outside the leisure centre.
Name supplied

Additional Housing- additional facilities for the community - 18/3/06

I expect many of you know that when a significant development takes place, the developer is required to provide money or facilities to the community in recognition of the increased population. There is much planning law and guidance surrounding these 106 agreements, and clearly the community gain has to be appropriate for the size of the development

A Supplementary Planning Guidance document has been produced (see

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/PlanningPolicy/LocalPlan/supplementaryguidance.asp)

which lists the things that Vwhdc think we may want as a community (this document appears to be quite old - and I'm not sure if it has been updated)

ie

An extension to the Leisure centre gym and car park

An additional football pitch at the school/ leisure centre

A skate park

Community Art

and from Faringdon Town Council

Faringdon Community Centre

Faringdon Community Bus

It also includes essentials - things like road building, sewerage, contributions to education, fire, library

A development of this size is a rare occurrence - so we must be sure that it delivers what the community needs. With this in mind a group of us met to discuss the Community needs. We were representatives of FTC, Chamber of Commerce, Fap, Far, Retailers group - and we used the Healthcheck action plan document to produce our list. Which, in our priority order is:-

Car parking - to encourage existing and new residents to use the shops and facilities in the town- huge money needed

A Skate Park to be located in the country park possibly near the new cricket ground £5k

Youth Club to be located in the old bar in the Community Centre/Pump House, £30k

Tucker Park Development.- rugby pitch - estimated cost £15,000- A Trim Track - estimated cost £17,000 An all weather sports pitch - estimated cost £200,000

Additional Community Bus and paid driver, £100k

National Coach Pick Up Point- in one of the planned bus stops on Park road

Disabled lift in the Pump Rooms- £30k

Faringdon Guide - for all residents - definitive information about the facilities in the town, £10k

Performance venue, £50k

It is expected that grants will be available for the skate park, sports and performance facilities - so figures above are for pump priming

FTC (Alan Hickmore) has written to VWHDC with our list, and has asked for it to be included in the Supplementary Planning Guidance doc that will be out for consultation. He has also asked about the consultation process and activities - we think it is from 23/3 for 6 weeks. Open meetings and displays have been mentioned - but no detail or dates is currently known.

It is absolutely critical that when the consultation is open that as many people as possible make their views known - otherwise we'll get what VWHDC want - which looks, on the whole like extensions to their property in Faringdon

Please keep an eye on this website and around the town for updates and opportunities to comment.

Also have a think about what you believe to be most important - it is highly unlikely that we'll get it all

Gene Webb

Rubbish and litter - 17/3/06

Faringdon is a nice town, we all know it but I'm afraid that the state of some of the open areas and linking footpaths around town is pretty abysmal.

The walk from Southampton Street to Park Road, or up Pioneer Road across the grass land is strewn with rubbish - bikes, trolleys and all nature of plastic and paper rubbish.

It is the same up Sand Pits/Rogers Cement and the fences around the school fields that are quite a disgrace. The rubbish is unsightly and as a previous contributor noted about kids throwing glass - frequently glass ridden and dangerous for pets and young children.

When at school in Wiltshire we used to have a school litter session once a week to clear the school grounds - perhaps Faringdon School ought to do the same. Educating children to pick up litter also might help encourage them to put it in bins in the first place (especially if they have to go out weekly to 'womble' around the school grounds in all weather to pick it up.

Some householders ought to do better as well - I see quite a few idle folks at the back of Town End Road/Butts Road who think it is much easier to throw their decorating/gardening waste over the back fence into the field rather than take the 5 minute trip to the tip on the Stanford Road!

What measures does VWHDC take to improve matters, some of the litter has been there for months in the bushes?

We need more bins, and the school might start educating the kids to use them!

We could all take a little more pride in our town, but more bins, regularly emptied, dog litter bins and some programme of litter/rubbish clearance, if only annually by the council or folks on community orders would assist in keeping the town cleaner.

Name supplied
Ed: hear hear!

Stolen dog?? - 17/3/06

Today, it appears someone tried to take my black labrador bitch from the Folly.

My dog-walker had let her off the lead to do her usual hole digging and she was missing for an hour and a half. My dog walker, obviously very worried, was calling and whistling for her and asking other walkers if they'd seen her.

A few people said they'd seen her with a man.

When she eventually found her, the man had our dog on a lead, told her off for not having the dog tagged (she is microchipped), said he'd found her near the 420 and offered to keep her.

He seemed to think it was funny that she'd spent some time frantically looking for her. of course, this could be totally innocent but my dog-walker is upset and was intimidated.

Since our dog is 6 years old, gun trained and slowing down a bit, we find it highly unlikely that she'd run off, totally out of character and start running around near the main road some distance off.

As I said, this could be innocent but after hearing of dog snatchers operating around Swindon, I advise all Faringdon dog walkers to be on your guard.

The man was walking with a collie and had a spare lead with him which he used on our dog.

Thanks to everyone who assisted in the search today
Mel Taylor

Skate Park - 17/3/06

I would like to reply to the comments made about the skate park.

The Faringdon SK8 park committee are working tirelessly to get a skate park in Faringdon and feel we are nearer than ever to our goal.

It has been recognised that youth facilities are badly needed in the town.

We are in discussion with the District council with regard to the location of the park. . The extension to the Folly Park on Jespers hill, we feel, is the ideal location for the park.

Hopefully we can convince the planners that it can work, we will certainly put forward our argument vigorously.

Ed Vaizey was great when our little delegation went to see him and recorded the kids on a pod cast, lets give these kids a voice, after all they should be encouraged to have an interest in the Town and its workings. Please show your support for us when you can.

Mandy James (chairperson SK8 Park committee)

Council Tax - we're the highest - 16/3/06

I'm sure that it has been noticed that the Council tax bands for Faringdon takes the gold medal this year. The Council tax is the highest for the whole of the Vale.

Of course, we do get a better service, we do have better facilities, our streets are paved with gold. Compared with the services and facilities in Wantage and Abingdon, clearly they are have reason to grumble.

Am I being unduly critical, or have I missed something?
Would a councillor please explain why our bill is so high?
Devils Advocate

Ed: It's the Faringdon Town Council budget that makes us the highest in the Vale- high spend on the Pump House!

Skatepark - 16/03/06

I noticed this small item in the Times this morning:
(The Times, Thursday March 16, News, p13, PEOPLE, Hugo Rifkind.)

"There are few cats more hip than Ed Vaizey, the podcasting Conservative MP for Wantage who, we are told, is campaigning for a skate park in the Oxfordshire town of Faringdon, after hoodied youths petitioned his surgery. We haven't yet managed to ask him why it's so mega sketchy that the locals haven't even got a kinked rail to down their tricktionary grindage on without the donut shop going Crazy Texan on their session, but we will".

Just to remind anyone who's interested in this, the skatepark campaign has been around for a number of years, and here is another item, from our very own Talking Points in.....**13/01/03**

..... Tribe UK are to evaluate the possible Skate park sites. These are:- Willes Close, Marlborough Gardens play area, Tucker park, and the Country park.

The evaluation report (hopefully completed by end Jan/early Feb 03) will be in the public domain, but probably not until the Town Council have considered it.

The Town Council's preferred site is Willes Close because it is near the town centre and is owned by the Town Council designated for leisure space, providing issues raised by nearby residents can be overcome. No other uses for this land, owned by the town, have been considered. Building of the skate park will go out to tender. £25k has been allocated to fund the development, some of this is 2002/3 Town Council budget and some will be in 2003/4 budget year. No mention was made of the running costs of the park.

Steve Leniec hopes the skate park will be ready to use by the summer.

From FAR [Faringdon Association of Residents] meeting.

Personally I am nearer to using a zimmer than a skateboard - so I couldn't walk the walk, but lets see if something actually happens this time round....obviously so far no one yet has been able to talk the talk!

Folly (not very hip) Cat

PS. I asked Hugo Rifkind for a translation of the last sentence, for those of us whose language skills need updating.

Here it is, and many thanks, Hugo Rifkind.

"Roughly speaking, the last sentence means 'We haven't yet managed to ask Vaizey why it is so terribly bad

that the resident skaters don't even have a damaged piece of old skatepark terrain on which to practise their repertoire of moves without the police getting incredibly cross at the whole situation.' I think. "

see Ed Vaizey news/diary: <http://www.vaizey.com/type2show.asp?ref=94&ID=59>

VWHDC office in Faringdon to close - sign a petition - 12/3/06

It seems that VWHDC are 'exploring possibilities'- surrounding the VWHDC office - the decision to close has not been made yet

Faringdon Town Council have started a petition against the closure of the Vale's office in Faringdon- It's not known what alternative services provision VWHDC will put in place (if any) but if this is inadequate it could have a detrimental effect on the workload and running costs of the Faringdon Town Council office.

The petition is available in the Corn Exchange office, the T.I.C. office and in the Library.

Obviously we want to get as many signatures as possible before the VWHDC meeting in Faringdon on 22nd March

But if you're unable to call in any of these places do **email me with your views** and what the impact of not having a Vwhdc office in Faringdon will have on you

June Rennie

june@faringdowntowncouncil.org.uk

Parking enforcement - well done - 10/3/06

Well done to our community support officer and the traffic wardens from Abingdon who are doing a stirring job of deterring illegal parkers in Faringdon.

It's amazing the number of visitors to Faringdon and some local residents who don't seem to have worked out that it's a risky financial gamble to park along certain stretches of these roads particularly those bits which have the pretty yellow lines running parallel to the kerb!

Now all that remains is to work on those ignorant individuals who think it their right to park on the pavements of Faringdon (and I am not referring to over nighters who generally arrive late in the evening and are gone by the early morning)

Ii was one of these individuals who nearly cost my son his life the other day; so shocked and hurt was he that he was not able to get the plate number of the car as it sped away.

Pavements are for people - please understand.

Name supplied

Have dinner with Boris?? - 8/3/06

Boris Johnson MP describes himself as, " I... well, I'm me.

The MP for Henley-on-Thames, editor of the Spectator, columnist for all sorts of wonderful publications and a damn good chap, some might say."

Well, you could hear Boris speak at the forthcoming VRH Charity dinner.

Volunteer Reading Help (VRH) is holding their annual dinner at the beautiful commercial restaurant at Oxford Brookes University, Headington. This year they are lucky enough to have The Hon Boris Johnson MP as their guest speaker.

VRH is a national charity working to enable children to become confident and literate for life and to impart a love of reading through the sustained commitment of trained volunteers. *In Oxfordshire alone VRH helps 750 young children every week, including support at the Faringdon Infants and Faringdon Junior Schools.*

VRH recruits and trains volunteers to work with children aged 6 to 11 who find reading a challenge and may

need extra support and mentoring.

Without individual support children can fall behind their peers and lack confidence and self esteem.

Their trained network of reading helpers support the same children week in, week out, giving each an hour of quality, one to one time. They read, they play, they talk. With the support of VRH their approach to learning and enjoying is often transformed.

Their confidence, self esteem and reading standards improve. Results from the annual pupil survey indicate that intervention and mentoring support improves not only a child's reading ability, but also their self-confidence and self-esteem. Results also showed an improvement in reading age of 15-24 months in 80% of VRH-supported children.

You can learn more about VRH at www.vrh.org.uk

The dinner is on Friday 26th May at 7.30pm and tickets cost £35 per head including drinks and canapés. Venue is the commercial restaurant at Oxford Brookes University, Headington.

For more details please contact Eddie Williams on 01367 241142 or email edchriswilliams@aol.com

Faringdon Man To Appear in a West End Variety at Her Majestys Theatre Haymarket - 8/3/06

A few weeks ago I successfully auditioned for a Variety Show to be staged at Her Majesty's Theatre Haymarket.

This is a dream come true

Over 8 Weekends 41 people who have come from all over the UK will train to put on a Professional West End Variety show to be Performed in the West End on Sunday 26th March

Anyone wishing to see this one Night Only performance should call the Box office on 01502 516918

As well as 41 principal cast their will be Dance troupes and speciality acts performing, making this a truly spectacular show

Performance starts at 6:30pm and ends approx 9:30pm

Scott Gildert

Ed: Have you thought of offering your performance at the Faringdon Arts Festival??

Classey Books? - 06/03/06

Hello, I wondered if you know what has become of Peter Classey of Classey Books, Marlborough Street. I have tried both his business and home telephone numbers but neither are now available.

Many thanks,

Linda Svensson

linda@webskills.co.uk

Lost Dog - 04/03/06

PLEASE CAN YOU HELP ME?

OUR WONDERFUL 1 YR OLD BLACK WHITE AND TAN, BROKEN COATED JACK RUSSELL WAS STOLEN FROM CHOLSEY NEAR WALLINGFORD ON 19.2.06. APPARENTLY A DOG JUST LIKE HER HAS BEEN SEEN IN THE LAST WEEK LOOSE AND SCARED RUNNING IN LONDON STREET.

ARE YOU ABLE TO SEE IF ANYONE ELSE HAS SPOTTED HER?

THE DOG WARDEN IS AWARE OF HER.

THANKS, LIZZIE 07785 340 828.

LTA@TRIGGERFILMS.COM

Re: How to Become a Councillor - 28/02/06

I am very concerned about your comments that emails to the Town Council have gone unanswered.

My address is clearly shown on our Website, but I have received no emails enquiring about how to become a Councillor. Can you tell me please the dates when you sent them and I will investigate this.

Unfortunately, the law prevents you becoming a Council member until you are 21 years of age. However, this does not prevent you from attending Council meetings and putting your views to the members in Public

Speaking Time. Although our office is only open to the public during weekday mornings, I am always prepared to meet outside of these hours if asked.

June Rennie
Town Clerk Faringdon Town Council

VWHDC- Online planning applications - 26/2/06

I have just noticed that you can view planning applications online at <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/Planning/publicaccess.asp>

You need the planning application number and then you can view the application form and site plans - all in pdf files.

You can also submit comments using the online system

Hooray - a step forward!!

Gene Webb

Madd May Fest - 25/2/06

M.A.D.D are looking for people who would like to help at the M.A.D.D May Fest.

28th April-1st May.

Please contact Sam or Hilary on 01367-243806

Sam Prince

Gene and Hilary..Faringdon's Page 3 Girls.... - 25/2/06

Congratulations to Gene Webb and Hilary Taylor, Co-Editors of www.faringdon.org for the well deserved praise for their efforts on page three of the Faringdon Folly.

Please, ladies, don't let your natural modesty force you to suppress this comment. (However much you may blush in private)

An Admirer (AKA HGM)

Ed: Thankyou Harry- page 3 eh? better not meet - the illusion will be shattered

Heard the other evening that Thames Water kept a close eye on this website when the controversy about the Sewerage Farm was going on - they said they took on board the views in TalkingPoints- and had the impression that there is a good community spirit in Faringdon. Hil and I were really pleased!!

Road Closure in the Market Place - 24/2/06

Does anyone know what alterations are to be carried out on the north end of the market place on the 8th March?

Name supplied

Emergency Services GPS - 24/2/06

I heard the other evening that if an ambulance is sent to Faringdon, if the crew don't know Faringdon they follow their GPS - and are directed up the Stanford Road from the A420!!

This was from someone who interacts with the Ambulance service - so I guess it is true

Gene Webb

Faringdon Market Square - 24/2/06

The picture of the "unimproved" old Market Square emphasises the unsympathetic nature of the "improvements" foisted on the Town at vast expense.

The clear open space is now cluttered with posts, signs, kerbs and humps which are already discoloured with road dirt and chewing gum, and it is no longer fit for purpose as a Market Square (but evidently great for

skeateboarding!)
Name Supplied

Faringdon Arts Festival Fund Raiser - 24/2/06

POWERTRAIN playing classic rock covers at The Corn Exchange, Faringdon, 18th March 2006, Doors open 7:30 pm.

with support from "The Generals" and Simon Stafford.

Tickets £5 in advance from the Portwell Bar or The Barbers Shop, Marlborough St, £7 on the door.

All proceeds to Faringdon Arts Festival

Fund raising - 22/2/06

Hello! My name is Sarah and I used to be a resident in Faringdon and attended the Community College until going to University last year.

For my gap year I went to Fiji to work with underprivileged children who were deaf and disabled.

I am currently trying to raise £1000 towards new wheelchair equipment for the children, as they have a huge lack of resources and this is impacting both the teachers/carers and the children themselves.

I was wondering if you had any idea of anyone who might be interested in making a donation to the cause?

I have some upcoming sponsored events here at university, but it is a great deal of money to raise.

I would be really appreciative of any help you could give.

Thank you in advance,

Sarah Banks

sarahbanks@fsmail.net

Ladies watch found - 21/2/06

A ladies watch has been found on the bridlepath at Wicklesham.

If anyone wishes to claim ownership, please contact me at sallenstevens@wicklesham.co.uk

Sarah Allen-Stevens

How to become a councillor - 21/2/06

I am an 18 year-old living in Faringdon and fed-up with promises from the Town Council for youth facilities and nothing ever delivered.

I'd like to join the Town Council but how?

I work during the day (outside of Faringdon) and the office is never open at the weekends. My lunch-hour is 1pm-2pm, when the office is closed.

I've e-mailed to ask for help, and have had no reply.

There's no information on the Town Council website as to how to join or whether I need to fill in forms.

How does anyone ever join the Town Council or get to be elected?

Does anyone know what I need to do?

Name supplied

St George's Day - 20/2/06

April 23rd is St George's Day and there is a move afoot to make it a public holiday.

I'm not sure why he should be recognised in this way but he is (if he ever existed) the Patron Saint of all 'Englishpersons' and not just of Football Fanatics.

Any one feeling strongly about the subject should go to www.stgeorgesday.com/voting.asp and register a vote in his favour. I'm sure he would be very touched

HGM

More Houses in Faringdon - 20/2/06

Just to add to Gene's posting below, and to clarify matters slightly.

The Inspectors report into the VOWH local plan, does not approve the development of 400 dwellings at the Nursery site, nor does it approve a further 150 at the Red House. This in reality can only be done following a planning application for which there is not one.

For fear of being pedantic, what the Inspector does, is he recommends ratification of the Councils proposal in its draft local plan to allocate the land at the old nursery site for 400 dwellings. Given this position the allocation will almost certainly be adopted and no doubt an application will soon follow. The Council will be in a reasonable position to recommend approval of any such application, subject to its content being acceptable to them. Residents affected can still however make valid planning objections to any such application, when it is submitted, but these will be in the context of the principle of development being accepted via the local plan process.

In respect of Land at Red Lodge, the Inspector has recommended that the site and plantation be allocated but for 37 dwellings, not the 150 mentioned below. The Council did not support this proposal at the inquiry, and may or may not accept the inspectors recommendation.

We will all need to wait in eager anticipation of the Councils proposed modifications, expected some time in March/April I think, to see what the planning authority propose to do.

Hope I've not offended you Gene for attempting to clarify matters.

Devil's Advocate

Ed; No probs - glad to have accurate info

Folly Lights - 19/2/06

I agree with HGM on 15 Feb....we definitely hope for more Folly decorations next year, the Folly lights are the BEST of all the lights in Faringdon....and....no pressure Pete, but we have come to expect them now!!

Thanks for all your hard work.

Name supplied

Ed: Hear hear

VWHDC Cash office closure - 17/2/06

Vale of White Horse District Council intend to charge £20 to visit the rat that lives in your house and deal with it, and make £27,000 a year from it, not just yours but altogether.

That's a lot of rats in the district! How do they know?

At the same time they propose to shut the District Council cash office in Gloucester Street to save £14,000.

Catch a bus to Abingdon to pay the rent? I don't think so.

Cutting services, charging for rats and proposing over 500 new homes all in the same week! Strange.

The Rat Catcher

Ed: I had heard a rumour that the cash office may close - does anyone know any more?

More parking - 16/2/06

I would like to thank the kindly people who came to my wife's aid when she came off her bike in Coxwell Street on Monday 13.2.06. She managed to hit some of the many potholes and was catapulted off and suffered a nasty cut and a broken collar bone.

And please, if anybody saw the incident then please contact us as she would be more than grateful.

To those that parked inconsiderately in the street that day, may you have a plague of locusts descend on you.

What do double yellows mean?

Colin and Judy Eddy

More Houses in Faringdon - 15/2/06

I have just heard that the latest Local Plan, gives approval for 400 houses and business units (near the

Folly/Nursery View I believe) and another 150 homes at Red House- on the old Swindon Road
The VWHDC web site is down - there could be more information when it's available again
Faringdon Town Council have been discussing the possible planning gain(section 106 agreements) that the town would expect. I know they want this to include money to do the remainder of the Pump House(theatre and community room), and the normal additions for schools- no idea what else - perhaps we will be consulted!!
Gene Webb

Folly Tower Lights - 15/2/06

It looks as if the batteries in Pete White's Folly Tower Lights have finally run down.

Once again Thanks Pete.
I'm sure I'm not the only one hoping for something similar next year.
HGM

Warning - 10/2/06

Can I just send a warning to anybody intending to walk along the footpath that links Southampton St to Park Road.

A short while ago I saw at least three young lads from Faringdon School enjoying themselves by throwing bottles up into the air and watching as they smashed on the path - even more fun was had by breaking a wine bottle against a post. They ran away when I shouted (how brave of them !).

The path is a mess and very dangerous.
These lads, I saw a few minutes later walking up Berners Way and turning into Jespers Hill - wish I'd followed them further.
I hope they are pleased with themselves.
Name supplied

Recent edition of Vale Views - 1-/2/06

Received recently - the regular news paper form VWHDC- I scanned it for news of council activities in Faringdon - there were none mentioned. So feeling irritated I emailed VWHDC and said ' The VWHDC main towns are Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon There is no mention of council activities in/for Faringdon in the recent Valeviews- indeed Faringdon isn't mentioned at all. But maybe that's because VWHDC have no activities/projects of significance in the town!!!!
In an area such as this, residents identify with the nearest town - not the Vale as a whole
VWHDC web site and Vale News should reflect this'

I was surprised by the reply which said' Thank you for your comments regarding the latest edition of Vale Views. If there are any particular council-related issues or events in Faringdon you would like to see coverage about I would be more than happy to hear from you.'

When I pointed out that I thought Valeviews existed to tell us about council activities - and other than going to Council meetings (in Abingdon!!) I knew of no other way to find out what is going on here.
I suggested that the departments were asked specifically about activities for each area

The reply to this was ' You are right in your assumptions regarding information gathering. All staff and councillors are invited to suggest content for Vale Views, but just like any other newspaper, we also welcome information from our readers, provided it is relevant to the Council's business.
I will endeavour to find some Faringdon news for the next edition.

I have a suspicion that VWHDC have no significant projects/activities going on in Faringdon - mind you that might be good news!!

If you know different let us know on Talking Points.
or if you have any suggestions for Vale Views you can email to comments@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Gene Webb

More about Post - 7/2/06

It was interesting to read the post by Valerie about recorded and special deliveries being farmed out to courier services.

I would like to know what member of the postal staff said this, as its entirely untrue.

A package cannot be taken out by another company part way through the delivery process, so telling the customer that it is so is just misleading.

I am a postman in Faringdon, and although I am not from the town, I have met some very friendly locals, and am very happy in my job. I may make the odd mistake, and I would imagine others do to, but then who doesn't!

Its not always nice getting up at 4am in the middle of winter and spending 3-4 hours walking the streets, but I am providing a valuable service, and don't like to let my customers down.

Hopefully, my customers are happy with the service I provide to them.

Name supplied

More about the post - 6/2/06

I think 'Local Resident's' reply is a little lame and the fact they wish to withhold their name speaks volumes.

What part of 'My original posting was not aimed at the post men & women who delivers my letters' did they not understand?

Are you saying I do not have the right to complain when a service I have payed for is not provided?

Do you wish to defend Royal Mail Faringdon or just to continue to deflect the issue at hand?

David Poultney

February Post - 6/2/06

I must say, I find that the Royal Mail tend to be at their worst around the middle of February.

I remember this time last year, that they failed to deliver even ONE of my Valentines cards. Not ONE!

I know for a fact that I must have had at least four or five because my cousin Derek is MUCH uglier and less suave and sophisticated than me, and even HE got three.

The posties' performance last year was an absolute disgrace, and I expect them to do FAR BETTER this year.

I am on good terms with my lawyers and I am inclined to sue if they do not perform satisfactorily this year.

Name Supplied

Ed: Thankyou - I didn't know this - I always wondered what happened to my Valentine cards too!

Reply to Faringdon Post 5/2/06 - 6/2/06

I'm really suprised that your parcels aren't delivered by van later in the day if they are too big/heavy for the postman.

I can honestly say that this has never happened to me. If I'm out, fair enough, I get a card asking me to collect but I've never had to do this just because the postman couldn't carry it.

At Christmas I understand they hired extra vans to cope with the parcel deliveries.

Have you contacted the Sorting Office to ask why you aren't getting a full postal service ?.

Name supplied

RE: Post people - 6/2/06

I think that your comments are very narrow minded, considering that your post person refuses to take days of sick because there job is important to them.

I think that you should appreciate that they wake up at 4 o'clock go out in all winds and weathers.

Do you not think that people jobs are hard enough without people like you complaining!

Maybe you should thank them every now and again.

Could you do it?.

Local resident

Faringdon Pantomime - 5/2/06

A huge well done to all those who worked so hard to put on a brilliant panto this year...everything was good; script, acting, costumes, songs and music, sets and lighting etc etc.

I absolutely loved it!

Oh yes I did!
Name supplied

Faringdon Post - 5/2/06

In reply to 'Poor Postpeople - Give Them A Break !'

My original posting was not aimed at the post men & women who delivers my letters. Like I said, they find the 'Sorry you were out' post card already sorted and placed in their delivery bags.

I also appreciate the work they do in the community which may not be part of their job, like giving directions to visitors or helping older people over the ice rink that Budgen's create in town. (I will save this for another post)

My comment/complaint was about the system. I pay, through post & packing for a service, which is not being provided. If Royal Mail had a service where you could choose for the item to be held at the sorting office for later collection, at reduced cost then fine, then people would have that choice.

At the moment however we pay for a door to door service, at that is what I expect.

If the sorting office staff choose to keep items out of postpeople delivery bags to keep the weight down for health and safety purposes then fine, but then deliver the items by car or van.

Don't make us come and collect.
David Poultney

Parking enforcement - 3/2/06

Be fair, We can't have it both ways! Earlier on these pages there was comment on illegally parked cars, and a certain amount of irritation that nothing was done about it. Now that the parking issue is being taken more seriously (and the police *have* warned us) There are complaints about that, too.
It seems that police/traffic wardens can't win.

On the subject of getting a ticket when no one else around you has - this has happened to me too. Cars come and go. Yours - and mine - just happened to be there at the same time as the warden. Just think of all the times you've parked illegally and got away with it. If you park illegally, you take a chance.

Sometimes you lose.

H. Taylor

Ed: In some council areas the Councils have taken over the enforcement of onstreet parking (in addition to car parks) from the police. I guess this will happen in Oxfordshire. Whether enforcement will be more effective if and when this happens here is a anyone's guess

Dead cat found - 3/2/06

Dead cat found on the Littleworth/Thrupp road. The cat is a black and silver tabby with white underside and paws. If this is your cat or you know to whom it belongs please contact me ASAP either via the message board or through the editor.

Joan Monks

Delivery of post - 3/2/06

My Faringdon postpeople still deliver parcels. I think the previous writers' postpeople are making up excuses!
Paul Cornell

Poor Postpeople - Give Them A Break ! - 3/2/06

I'm not a 'postperson' but I appreciate the work they do.....even if occasionally I have to collect a parcel from the depot.

The amount of non-letter mail they have now is amazing. How many of us do our shopping on-line ?. I did most of my Christmas shopping this way which involved parcels arriving every few days. Unless the mail is guaranteed next day delivery I don't think I would take a morning off work to wait for it, and if it is guaranteed delivery I've never known one not to be delivered, I'm sure I'm not just lucky.

These people receive far too little thanks - and if we lose this service we will regret it.

Saturday deliveries are already under threat - few courier companies deliver on Saturdays so why should Royal Mail ?.

Name supplied

Community Safety - 3/2/06

Want to have your say about policing in Faringdon?

There is an open meeting at County Hall on 6th February, 10am

[See press release for more information](#)

Gene Webb

Sorry you were out - 3/2/06

I am glad to see the debates remain lively!

About the "Sorry you were out" notes, I have suffered this too.

When I asked my postman about it he said because of the amount of parcels that were being misdelivered by new staff and because of the risk of theft, postmen do no longer deliver parcels unless a signature is required, in which case it will be farmed out to courier firms.

It is aggravating to take a morning off work to wait for an important parcel, only to receive a note at 11:30am ordering you to go to the depot before 12!

Valerie Simmons

Worried Castle Owner - 2/206

. Yes, it is absolutely the case that anyone can put in a planning application on your property without your knowledge (and, in theory, receive an approval!).

However, what they can't do, of course, is go ahead with the development without your consent.

So your castle is safe!...until that is...you realise that your castle is suddenly worth many more thousands demolished than it will ever fetch in its current state!...Tough call, isn't it?

Seems not for some of those living in Coxwell Road!

David Reynolds

Re: Parking tickets - 2/2/06

Not only do they issue tickets when legally parked but also don't issue tickets to ALL those illegally parked.

We received a ticket yesterday when the other cars illegally parked in the same road didn't. Fair cop for ours but it does smack a little of vindictiveness.

Also, a ticket issued to a friend last year didn't even have the correct road on it.

Perhaps the issuers should learn the geography of the town.

Name Supplied

Problems with Royal Mail? - 1/2/06

Does anyone else have problems getting Royal Mail to deliver large parcels or heavy items to the door?

On Monday I collected the post and found a 'Sorry you were out' postcard on the doormat, with some letters. I actually heard the post being delivered and no one knocked the door, or rang the bell. This has happened several times in the past and I have managed to 'catch' the postie at the door.

It appears the large or heavy items are not actually put in the post bag for delivery in the first place, so he/she could not hand the item over and a visit to sorting office was in order.

Does anyone else suffer from this problem? If I pay for a service (In postage & packaging costs) is it too much to ask for an item to be delivered to my door?

David Poultney

And now a parking ticket for being legally parked! - 1/2/06

I have written previously about the ridiculous parking restrictions in Gloucester Street and how they are being unnecessarily enforced.

This morning I have found that a ticket was slapped on my car yesterday morning at 8:32 despite the fact that it was legally parked; not even over the yellow line by a millimeter.

We are not just the victims of "jobsworths" but of time wasting, blind ones to boot.

Ifor Phillips

Oxford Geology Trust - 31/1/06

There are a number of geology related events planned through February and March - have a look at [WhatsOn](#) and [Press releases](#)

Tourist Information Centre - 31/1/06

I was somewhat mystified as to why the council appear reluctant to formally assess the effectiveness/productivity of the TIO;

lets face it public organisation and those organisations in receipt of public funds, whether it be school, hospital etc have not only to demonstrate that they provide value for money, but that that they also provide a 'value added' component; how else are the public to have confidence in its elected council if they are not prepared to establish some sort of base line against which productivity can be measured.

£20k is a lot of money!!!!

Name supplied

An Englishman's Home? - 31/1/06

According to Mr Reynolds an Englishman's home may be his castle but anyone can apply for permission to build on it. Is that correct ? ?

If that is the case can a plan to access 26 Coxwell Road through the corner of its garden between 31 and 33 Elm Road in order to reduce the traffic entering Coxwell Road be possible ?

Surely not.

Worried Castle Owner

Faringdon Arts Festival - 31/1/06

The Faringdon Arts Festival team are starting to organise the 2006 Festival.

If you would like to take part in organising the Festival, meet new people and become active within the community please contact Julie Farmer on 0845 859 1720 or email julie.farmer@lineone.net.

The festival will take part over the weekend of 7 to 9 July 2006.

All welcome.

Faringdon Area Project (FAP) - 31/1/06

FAP will be holding an Open Meeting on **THURSDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2006 from 6:00pm to 9:00pm** in the Corn Exchange, Faringdon

The meeting is open to all who live or work in Faringdon and the surrounding villages.

If you would like to shape the future of Faringdon and the Villages please come along and have your say.

Julie Farmer, FAP coordinator

26 Coxwell Road Development/ GFA 19425 - 28/1/06

It would be easy to say "told you so" but I'm going to anyway!

Part of my vociferous campaign against the GFA/4905/5-X 18 Coxwell Road development proposal was that it set a dangerous precedent to allow a perfectly habitable 30 year old house to be demolished to access to the site!and hey ho!...here we go!

Readers might not be aware that anyone can put in a planning application to demolish any property whether they own it or not.

There is a rumour that Faringdon is to be demolished to make way for the construction of a completely new town!

The struggle continues!

David Reynolds

Ed: See [taplanaps.htm](#)

26 Coxwell Road Development/ GFA 19425 - 26/1/06

The owners of 26 Coxwell Road have accepted that their neighbour's development at 18 Coxwell Road will probably go ahead and have decided to jump on the band wagon.

And who can blame them ?

The idea is to demolish their home and replace it with 12 houses and a block of garages

Who's next ?

HGM

FARINGDON STREETS & PAVEMENTS - 25/1/06

I am confined to an electric wheelchair and when leaving home I have two alternatives. Either I use the pavements which tend to veer you to the gutter every time you reach the often steep approach to houses. Or I use the road itself which is very bumpy due to the very many projecting repairs that have been made.

I invariably use the highway even though this entails a risk from those motorists who often don't exercise enough care when overtaking.

Kind Regards

Hector

Ed Reminds me when I saw a surveyor type person looking /assessing the pavement in Marlborough St last year. When he told me this is a legal requirement, (of the County)I said Oh great - when might they be improved. Oh no it's only the assessment that is required, not doing anything about it!!

New Folly Path - 24/1/06

I would like to say how wonderful and appreciated the new flattened pathway up to the Folly Tower is now. It makes a really difference, especially for those with children's pushchairs to contend with!

Laura Bishop

Faringdon Town Council, Town meeting to discuss the 0607 Budget -

23/1/06

Meeting notes

FTC precept 05/06 was £222798 less £7500 from reserves which reduced it to £215298. Precept 06/07 £216312- no moneys from reserves used- less than .5% increase

End of year reserves predicted for 05/06 £55776 (to include £42k earmarked reserves) For 06/07 the end of year estimate is £37798, to include £20200 earmarked reserves. The auditors recommend no less than £54k in reserve.

Office and establishment

£144769 budgeted, plus £2k for replacement computers

This budget covers office expenses, staff salaries, and £27k grants for awarding to local organisations

FTC now employs 5.3 fte (including TI 1.3fte), and has a staff compliment of around 10 people.

Community and Tourist Information is budgeted to cost £19k which includes £1k for a panic alarm, as staff are there alone sometimes. Includes 1.3 fte No information was given about numbers of visitors- local or otherwise, accommodation booked, peak times. Councillor Hughes asked if there was to be an assessment of the TI business this year- to continue it, change it etc. After much talk/prevarication about how valued it is Cncllr Leniec finally said that no review was planned.

Planning and Highways

4k budgeted, which represents 50% of the cost of 2 bus stops - the rest paid by county or Bus company(can't remember who) 2 have/are being erected at the Health Centre end of Park Road. 06/07 there will be 2 at the Highworth road end of Coxwell Road. Bus shelters are usually put where there are currently bus stops - though this might not always be possible. No planning permission is needed, only agreement from the County Highways division

Pump House

The revenue budget showed £11650 estimated costs (heating, cleaning, maintenance, waste etc) less estimated income of £4500. The Direct Council Expenditure budget is mostly Pump House expenditure - £17382, the loan repayment (£150k loan increased to £170k 05/06) and £5000 architect's and professional fees - not sure why they're there when there is no money budgeted to do anything else to the Pump House in 06/07. Cncllr Leniec said fees may be removed in future years.

Staff for the Pump House include part of a venues manager (a nearly full time post to cover Old Town Hall and Corn Exchange), and part of a full time caretaker. Cost of these were not shown separately but I guess altogether must be at least £30k, so the Pump House share could be £10-£15k.

There is also £6000 insurance included in the Office and Establishment budget, most of which is for the Pump House

So altogether the Pump House will cost us about £39k - £44k in 06/07. Of course if it is used extensively, this figure will reduce as the income increases.

There is no money budgeted for an internal disabled lift, or repairs to the club house and theatre. It is hoped that money will be provided through a 106 agreement IF the housing development between Park road and Stanford Road goes ahead (apparently we should know in Feb)

Corn Exchange

Budgeted to make a profit of nearly £3k in 06/07- but remember this excludes any salaries - venue manager/care taker? And it excludes the £5k per annum the terms of the lease require to be put aside for major repairs. There have been complaints of noise, so the committee is looking into ways that the hall can be soundproofed - not straight forward as it is a listed building.

The committee will be discussing improvements with the leaseholders - VWHDC - disabled loos, improvement of loos, and we were told, a long list of other things

Recreation and Open spaces

Net expenditure £15611- after allotments rents of £464 - includes maintenance equipment, vandalism costs, All saints churchyard maintenance £10k capital has been budgeted for Willes Close and Skate Park- but Cncllr Evans indicated that this is for 2 separate projects - development of Willes Close and, to support the skate park project. It does not mean that the skate park will be in Willes Close.

VWHDC cash office

This was not discussed at the meeting, but it was mentioned afterwards that VWHDC are possibly going to close the office in Faringdon.

Gene Webb

The Joy of Talking Points - 23/1/06

I have only just discovered News and Views. What joy! The ideal place to air in public my ignorance and prejudices!! Especial congratulations to the Editors for being prepared to allow the publishing of Politically Incorrect views.

(Coming up Prejudice number 1)Democracy has more to fear from Censors than from free speech. I refer of course to Adrian's and the closed mind old codger in the Bus Queue views on immigrants.The fact that the National Health Service would have completely collapsed without them together with transport and a host of other services is much more likely to affect the opinion of the public than the views of two odd individuals.

The letter from sisters Ali and Tess was of great interest, but I fear Squadron Leader J.Thomas was pulling their legs. I have it on the good authority of my old friend Rear Admiral Richard Head, that in conditions of low cloud it would indeed be a folly for Brize Norton to expect protection from the magic lights on top of Lord Berner's magnificent erection, and under such conditions the aircraft would have to rely on the new fangled Global Satelite Positioning. I fear that without the subsidy from the Powers that Be the lights will all too soon be extinguished.

I called the lights magic because they are. Has anyone else noticed that they appear at sundown quite unaided by human hand and equally mysteriously have gone without trace by sunrise. At night there they are, suspended well above the towers eight minarets presumably from a post of some sort but by day there is no post to be seen. Is Mr Peter White the proud possessor of a sky hook from which he suspends them? In any event he is to be congratulated and thanked.

Congratulations too to Ali and Tess for choosing such a great man for their great Grandpa. He was a prolific inventor and the incandecent electric light bulb was only one of his many strokes of genius, but would they please tell us which, where, and what is this other well illuminated edifice?
Roger Young

CLEANLINESS OF FARINGDON LEISURE CENTRE - 23/1/06

The Faringdon Artistic Skating Club and clubs around the area have been skating at the Towns Leisure Centre for the past 15 years. The centre has one of the best skating surfaces in the south of England and skaters from all over the country love to skate in Faringdon.

For 3 years in the 1990's the British Mini/Minor and Cadet Championships were held at Faringdon. Unfortunately over the past 18 months Faringdon Skaters have been asking for the Leisure centre to sweep the floor on a daily basis in order for them to have clean condition during their training sessions.

The club skates on a Tuesday from 5pm to 6pm and the floor is swept. However on Saturdays the condition of the floor falls below an acceptable standard resulting in members having to sweep the floor prior to use virtually every week.

After complaining to management on Saturday 14th Jan our visits on the following Tuesday/Thursday/ and Saturday the floor was in no better condition, as viewed by the Town Mayor, but also to find that the V Mop found broken on Tuesday 17th was still not fixed by Saturday 21st making it difficult for the cleaner to use. The Duty manager arranged the repair.

Faringdon Skaters pay the Leisure centre approx £1,252.26 every 13 weeks, this is without any extra time that is booked on Friday and Sunday for private tuition. We would just like 14 minutes a day spent on sweeping the floor 7 minutes in a morning and 7 minutes at night and washed every 2 weeks. With this level of cleaning the floor would be acceptable.

On the 4th Feb our skates have very a very important test day in order for them to enter the British Championships, and be able to skate on the International Circuit. What an honour for Faringdon to have 4 skaters, we have 3 more standing in the wings. To have a clean floor would be great.

The Swimming Pool staff and Fitness room staff should be commended for their level of cleanliness. The dry side of our Leisure Centre leaves a lot to be desired.

Visits to Wantage and Abingdon Leisure Centre's are immaculate. What is happening to Faringdon.

If you have any comments with regards to our Leisure Centre and it's Cleanliness please make it known. Email me at deeengland2@aol.com full confidentiality.
Dee England

The Pump House is open for business - 21/1/06

I went to the opening of the Pump House last evening.- even though in the past I have been highly critical of the amount of money it was costing us.

However that aside, the interior of the building appears to have been done beautifully. The staircase is wonderful and the jubilee room on the first floor is especially lovely with it's views over the Market Place. The 4

rooms on the top floor are each a good size.- I'm not sure whether these will become more meeting rooms, or perhaps business office space.

Until sometime in the 60s it was The Insititute and Services Club. In the 70s the then Town Council agreed a no rent, repairing lease with Lord Faringdon. At that time the building was in a very poor state of repair, so the town funded repairs and refurbishment, I'm told to the tune of about £60k (equivalent to £500k ish now??). and it became the Community Centre

Last night it was mentioned that the recent costs have been £400k- I suspect just for repairs and refurbishment and not including fees, solicitors, court costs etc, and of course not the many hours of unpaid effort of all the town councillors involved.

So isn't Lord Faringdon lucky?? Even though he has not had any rent for the building since the 1970s, we have funded the maintenance and repair of the building since then - and must continue to do so for another 30 or so years.

Horrendous costs, and there are more to come in dealing with the room and theatre at the rear of the building, to say nothing of what it might cost to maintain a nearly 200 year old building for the next 30 years.

I guess we're stuck with this - so all we can do is make as much use of it as we can and enjoy it - the rooms are lovely

Gene Webb

Town Meeting - 19/1/06

MONDAY 23rd JANUARY 2006 at 7.30 p.m. The Pump House, 5 Market Place, Faringdon

This is an opportunity to hear how FTC have spent the budget (which made us the highest Council Tax payers in the Vale) and what their plans are for 06/07.

There's usually an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions

Pump House - open day - 19/01/06

The Town Council would like to invite everyone to a tour of the building, and to see the facilities which are now on offer, between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. on Saturday 21st January 2006.

The Pump House is at 5 Market Place, Faringdon.

The bike is found - 19/1/06

Dear All

I thought I would share our good news. Last week my son Edward got his bike back.

You may remember that it was stolen from outside dawns barbers shop. It was found and the police went to retrieve it and we (especially Edward) are very happy.

Thank you to anyone who kept their eyes open.

Mandy James

Teen Age Cancer Charity - 19/1/06

Well done Joe !

Name supplied

CORN EXCHANGE - 18/1/06

I have been browsing through Talking Points and i notice a lot of comments have been made on the christmas lights to which i must agree are quite impressive.

Why is it that £7000 pound can be spent at christmas to light up the streets yet in the corn exchange the lighting is some what diabolicle to any artists performing on stage.

Has faringdon not yet heard of spotlights- they do help to create an atmosphere and highlight any artist that is performing. And as for that so called decibell monitor i'm surprised any acts perform in there at all.

Come on faringdon bring it up to date it is the year 2006.

Name supplied

Teenage Cancer Charity - 17/01/06

My son Joe Thurston aged 11 from Faringdon had his head shaved at the weekend in aid of Teenage Cancer Trust. He has raised £400 so far.

A bit of background info on the charity: 6 teenagers every day in the UK are diagnosed with cancer and are more often than not treated in inappropriate facilities alongside very young children or old people.

What TCT does is provide specialist teenage units in NHS hospitals so that this can change. We currently have 7 units across the UK but we need 20 so that every teenager in the UK has access to one. To find out more please visit www.teenagecancertrust.org or call 02073871000

If people would like to donate they can make cheques made payable to Teenage Cancer Trust (and convert any cash into a cheque) and send to: Teenage Cancer Trust 38 Warren Street London W1T 6AE - with a note to say they are supporting Joe! Thanks
Sally Thurston

We don't normally put photos in here - but just this once we thought we'd make an exception - ed.



Folly Lights - 16/1/06

I did not mean to disparage the sterling efforts of Peter White with my missive, he is to be congratulated for the skilled manner in which he explored the decorative nature of sodium lighting festoonments.

I am wondering however if the rash of UFO sightings around town lately have anything to do with Faringdon resembling some curious alien landing strip
Daniel Worth

To Adrian (again) - 16/1/06

At least you're thinking!

It would be very egotistical of the human race to think we are the only sentient beings in the cosmos considering how many stars there are out there.

As to god, well we all have our own opinions and the existence of aliens wouldn't necessarily preclude one.

The elderly gentleman seems to relate aliens to E.T.'s and to people from other countries. We have had immigrants to this country all through the centuries and although many cause trouble most of them come to work and make a new life for themselves.

On the other hand, many people emigrate from this country to make their lives in another one.

I think people forget to change the default to release their names (or they're shy). Personally, I've just left it in default, but I'll change it this time.

Jane Boulton

Christmas Lights - 16/1/06

For what it's worth I liked the Christmas lights and more importantly my 2 and 4 year old children loved them! It was slightly disappointing that half of them went out on Christmas Eve and perhaps the Town Council would be entitled to claim some of the £7000 back as a result.

I am personally more than happy for my pound to be spent illuminating Faringdon at Christmas as I think it brings warmth, festivity and a pride in the town to many (clearly not all!) Faringdon residents. I am sure that if the Town Council decided not to spend money on lights at Christmas this site would be inundated with far more negative comments than positive!

The Folly Tower looks great and I look forward to seeing what innovative ideas Peter White comes up with each year (though I agree that we should have a 'Bring back the Beacon campaign!').

I also think that the trees in the town centre looked fantastic floodlit and wonder whether this should be a permanent feature! Thanks to all those who contributed to the assorted displays - I'm looking forward to next Christmas already (!!!)
On another note, Talking Points has been great reading this month, particularly the rat related comments, long may it continue!
Name supplied

Magnificent Edifice - 16/1/06

Name supplied's (why do they hide?)

Comments on Mel Taylor's description of the Folly Tower lights seems to have missed the point! No one is knocking Peter's efforts. Indeed his brilliant Millenium beacon has slipped into Faringdon legend.

The real issue, if the figure is correct, is what exactly cost £7,000 and perhaps more importantly who paid for it!

Does anyone out there have the answers?

David Reynolds

Ed: HGM below explains - apologies - I was a bit late in publishing it, and another thankyou to Peter White- his tradition of lighting up the Folly tower adds such a lot - I'm hoping he'll do something similar to the millenium beacon sometime - maybe 2010??

More about Faringdon's Christmas Lights - 13/1/06

As I understand it Pete White provides the light on the Tower and it doesn't cost us anything. As such it is fantastic value for money and Thank you Pete White. Individual houses have also been amazing this year.

The Rotary Club organises the Switching-on of the lights and makes a substantial contribution to the cost. So, Thank you Rotary Club.

The Town Council, out of our Council Tax, pay for the rest and it works out at about £1 for every man, woman and child in Faringdon.

When the lights were switched on it looked as if we had good value for our money and the FTC should be thanked for arranging what looked like being a splendid display. Unfortunately the lights provided were not up to the standard expected. For most of the holiday period only 25% of them were working. Some discussion is still going on, as a bill has been submitted for two emergency call outs.

Unlike some towns the Faringdon traders make no direct contribution but most do make a great effort towards the 'illuminations' though not all have the same idea about what is appropriate. Davis DIY gave us a taste of what traditional decorations should be about while Budgens provided a taste of the minimalist approach which featured hardly any decorations and unlit trees.

I know which I preferred and it wasn't the unlit trees.

It looks as if this website may be in for a lively year....Splendid

Harry G Mitchell

Ed: Thanks for the clarification - my note about the £7k was not specific enough.

Faringdon - wind power - 13/1/06

Does anyone know if Faringdon could be powered by its own wind farm?

Name supplied

Magnificent edifice - or mobile phone mast? - 15/01/06

I was very dismayed to read the letter from the person complaining that the light display on The Folly made it look like a mobile phone mast. I think you should apologise for such crass comments.

It is my understanding that Peter White who does the lights on the Folly every year does so off his own bat. He should be applauded for providing such a unique Christmas lighting display and should not be subjected to mean spirited comments such as yours.

I, and I am sure i speak for many others who would be saddened, and Faringdon would be the poorer, if Peter were to decide not to put in all this effort due to thankless people like you - shame on you!!!!

name supplied

From Adrian - 15/01/06

You asked to know what the incident was.

Well let me tell you I was speaking to an old man the the bus top in the town centre and I had a picture of an alien on my t shirt, he said to me...

"Oh you believe in them do you ?" and I explained ,

" Scientifically, yes". He looked at me like I was an idiot , he started to tell me he believes in God and that he goes to church and all of this nonsense, finally I said to him ..

"I think it is closed minded to not believe in this kind of thing" , he looked at me disgusted and then said ..

"The only bloody problem with aliens is all of these immigrants coming taking our money we have worked for", I must admit i agreed with him. When I told him I thought it was the fault of older generations he simply implied that I had no respect.

I think he had no respect. This led to me thinking further about this subject.

Adrian Mold

Magnificently Upright Edifice - 15/01/06

One is so pleased to read that there is someone else in Faringdon who, like me, feels proud and warm at the sight of such a magnificently upright edifice, especially when bathed in constant light. Nevertheless, the current lighting, I believe, lends a certain exoticism.

Squadron Leader Jon Thomas of the RAF has reliably informed me that the lighting has little to do with this fantasy but is in fact a safety measure to ensure that all planes especially those on the newly routed flight path from Heathrow, fly directly over Faringdon, thus avoiding Brize Norton and Fairford. So it looks likely that this lighting may well be a permanent fixture.

In addition, I gather that the Christmas lights were heavily subsidised by BAA , or so I heard both in The Folly pub and at the WI Christmas market.

Ali and Tess, the great grand daughters of Thomas Eddison (creator of another well lit edifice)

To Adrian - 13/01/06

I'm not sure how old people have to be in your estimation to be classed as old. However, as I shall be in receipt of my own pension next year (having worked all my life for it) I may possibly be in your category. I already receive a widows pension, worked and paid for by my recently deceased husband.

In my life I have met a lot of people of all ages and all classes and in my experience they come in all personalities whatever their ages.

I'd love to know what incident in particular started this rant.

Looks as if this site is getting more notice. I have pointed several friends to it who weren't aware of its existence.

Name supplied

Ed: Thankyou for spreading the word - the more people who visit and contribute, the better the site will be

Lights - 13/01/06

I thought the lights were disappointing. £7k????? The red one made the tower look like a mobile phone mast. Bizarre idea at best.

Someone passing on the road would have no clue why a changing light colour seemingly hovering in mid area would indicate anything at all, let alone our beautiful tower.

When we first moved here, the tower was lit that christmas by a bright light which illuminated the tower for miles around. It made me feel proud and warm when driving home.

How has it cost seven grand?

Mel Taylor

Great start to the year - 13/1/06

What a great start to the letters page, rats, cooking rats, eating rats, talking rats, stropky teenagers, grumpy wrinkles, ok, a slighty boring parking matter, but as my old mate Elton once said, " we'll be fighting our parents out in the street to find who's right and who's wrong" wahoo, bring on the bitch fest!!!!.

Oh by the way, I gave my child some rat to eat.....apparently, it tastes like chicken...

Name supplied

Faringdon's Christmas Lights - 13/1/06

For those who thought they were good - and those who didn't - I've heard they cost about £7000
Gene Webb

For Adrian from GG - 13/1/06

Dear Adrian

I was pleasantly surprised at the restrained tone of your reply and you make it clear that you really do seem to care about the mess this country is in at the moment.

I have to plead guilty, on behalf of my generation, to allowing this situation to arise but let me explain why it came about. This will sound patronising and I can't help that but it doesn't make it untrue. The answer is very simple.... In the good old days we felt we could trust our leaders to do their best for the whole country not just for their own selfish concerns. Now we know they have feet of clay and every day we get further proof that many of them couldn't run a drunken party in a brewery but it took us a long time to realise it and when we did it was too late.

Your generation is stuck with the mess we made and I'm afraid you have to sort it. (That's the nearest you will get to an apology)

I'm keeping this short because I don't want to force your reply off the bottom of the webpage.

GG

From Adrian - 12/1/06

Well thank you for your reply, it was the kind of patronising response I am accustomed to.

As for voting, well I believe the past generations have damaged our political system so much that it is beyond repair and full of corruption.

Your generations voted these people in, and look what you left for us..... dog eat dog, global warming, an unfair benefits system that pays young ladys to have children.

thankyou so much !

name supplied

Rats and Mice - 12/1/06

Some of you might be interested in this web page, with recipes for cooking rats and mice

http://bertc.com/cooking_rats.htm

Good eating!

H Taylor, joint ed. FO

Rat Recipe - clarification needed - 12/1/06

Rat recipe of 6/1/06: Is that the boned or unboned weight of rat? Would hate to get it wrong!

Name Supplied

Welcome to Adrian Mold aged Thirteen and Three Quarters - 11/1/05

Dear Adrian

Your tirade against Old People was a dead give away ..I guessed immediately who you were but I hope you got the permission of an appropriate adult before you used the Internet.

In a few years time, when you have overcome the problems of puberty and your acne has gone you will probably feel embarrassed that you wrote such juvenile drivel but don't let that put you off. Voltaire (admittedly now long dead and a Frenchman) was a keen defender of anyone writing anything so don't be discouraged.

I am one of those Old People you talk about. My grand-daughter calls me GG which stands for Grumpy Grandpa and she gave me that name on her 16th Birthday when I told her that from now on she could do anything she wanted ...as long as she imagined that I was watching her.

I do have a pension, in fact I have two. I got one for paying into a government scheme for all my working life and the other for being in the Forces for 30 years.
You are right to realise that you will not be as fortunate as me as things are at the moment so when you are old enough to vote try to get a government which will alter things for you..
At the moment you're between a Rock and a Hard Place when it comes to choice but things must improve by the time you are old enough if only because they can't get any worse.
I won't comment on your other views because I don't want to be too critical but I feel I should point out that you are guilty of doing what you accuse me of doing... Judging and complaining...
But don't let that stop you !
GG

Rats - 9/1/06

I would just like to say that I parked my rat in London Street for 10 minutes and when I returned it was delicious.
John Dalymple

Learn to Jive - 10/1/06

Corn Exchange, 8- 11
6 week beginner course starts 10/1/06
Plus Intermediate lesson during the evening, plus freestyle dancing
No need to bring a partner
www.jiveplus.com

Old people. - 10/01/06

I am absolutely sick of the attitude of old people in this town. They do not appreciate that we all work hard for them . We wont have any pensions when we are their age. The way they treat young people is a disgrace, they always complain, they always judge us. I for one am sick of it. I try to talk to old people at bus stops and they look at me like I am going to mug them, what a joke !
name supplied

Share in a wind farm - 8/1/06

Westmill Wind Farm Co-operative Ltd. is seeking to raise £3.75 million to build the first community owned wind farm in southern England on the Oxfordshire/ Wiltshire border.
For more information visit www.westmill.coop . To request the prospectus phone 0870 234 2002.
Adam Twine

Police Station telephone - 8/1/06

The yellow non emergency telephones outside Faringdon Police Station are not working.
When the receiver is lifted you obtain an automated message informing you the telephone number has changed.
You have no way of dialing the new number.
I have reported this to Thames Valley Police to be rectified.
The non emergency number displayed on the police station door is correct (0845 8 505 505)
David Poultney

Parking (Gloucester Street) . - -6/01/06

We have, on several occasions over the last 10 years, raised the subject of parking on Gloucester Street with the Council's Traffic Committee through their questionnaires.
We may have a voice, but it doesn't seem that it's listened to.

I agree that we shouldn't have to rely on the discretionary powers of the police to sort our parking problems, but in the absence of any changes to the road markings it seems to be all we can hope for.
Ifor Phillips

Tart Rat, - 06/01/06

you really should take your coffee decaffeinated, calm down dear, think of all those starving children and your roll in keeping humanity going, and I now realize why you always chew through power cables, it is of course to show us the error of our ways, wastfully leaving lights on all over the place, of course by turning them off, a new BMW could be purchased to carry the fact finding junket personnel who come back to tell us " how terrible it all was,and how it was good to get back to the air conditioned hotel",

no, I take my hat off to you Tart rat, you and your kind should be treated with much more respect (that recipe does sound good though) and of course, should we deplete the rat population, as we do with everything else, there is an abundance of dog,(and of course, CAT!!) recipes anyone???
name supplied

Rat Recipe - 06/01/06

I see the Faringdon Tourist board is out in force again, trying to deny that we Faringdonians eat rat. What poppycock!

Faringdon has long been known throughout the region as the rat cuisine capital of Oxfordshire, ever since the great potato famine of 1723, when the people of this town were sustained for 5 months on a diet of boiled rat and nettle soup.

It's one of the worst-kept secrets in Faringdon - If you're new to the area, and want to try something uniquely Faringdonian - try asking at the Market Restaurant, Ming's Takeaway or (of course) The Rat's Castle for their late night special menu! In these days of identikit fast-food chicken, kebab and burger takeaways, places like Faringdon should be trying to ADVERTISE their particular cuisine, not hiding it under the carpet!

As a Faringdonian born and bred, I am proud to say that every St George's day for 25 years now, I've cooked myself and my family our traditional meal of Rat, Apple and Sweet Potato Casserole! It's tasty, nutritious, cheap and much better than anything you'll get out of that dreadful Farmer's Market. In fact, for the curious, I'll share the recipe:

- * 12 to 16 oz of sliced rat
- * 3 medium sweet potatoes, about 1 1/2 pounds, peeled and sliced 1/4-inch thick
- * 2 tablespoons light brown sugar, packed
- * 4 apples, quartered
- * 3/4 cup hot water

PREPARATION:

Brown the rat on both sides; place in baking dish. Spread apples and sliced sweet potatoes over rat then sprinkle with brown sugar. Add hot water. Cover and bake at 350° for about 60 minutes. Baste occasionally while cooking. Remove cover last 15 minutes.

name supplied

Thanks for that - I'll certainly try it - ed, FO.

Incidentally, whenever I've asked about the late night specials, I've been told that they weren't that kind of establishment and if I continued to pester them they'd have to call the police.

Parking again! - 06/01/06

I would suggest that if there are concerns about the appropriateness or otherwise of parking restrictions on Gloucester Street or in other areas of Faringdon they are raised by our council representative on the traffic committee - I can assure you that you do have a voice; my experience has certainly been a positive one.

With all respect to the police and to our community support officers they are not paid to intellectualise the law but to enforce it.

I agree with you that the markings are outdated but I'm not sure that relying on the discretionary powers of the police is necessarily the answer.

name supplied

Rat tart?? RAT TART?? - 05/01/06

How dare you! I am the Tart Rat, a sour and fearless individual who deeply resents the implication that I may be captured and ingested by some mincing feline footler, let alone by feral infants. Time was, I would have eaten *them*.

For goodness' sake, can't a fellow enjoy the sewers in peace with his extended family without being the butt of cruel and insensitive correspondence?

Yours, etc.

Tart Rat.

Rat Tart.....? - 05/01/06

Yum yum - Now you're talking!

I think I have a recipe

Folly Cat

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING 05/01/06

Faringdon & District Rotary Club will be pleased to receive your Christmas Trees for recycling on Saturday 7 January at Faringdon Market Place and High Street Shrivenham from 9.30am to 3.30pm. Donations will be taken for charity.

Mike Bell

SLICE OF RAT TART, ANYONE? 04/01/06

So, because Faringdon has a few Christmas lights, that somehow equates into "children on the streets eating rats", I assume this person means the third world as I have not witnessed any of this in Faringdon (unless they mean eating AT Rats Castle).

Tell me, why is it that some people feel the need to be the conscience of everyone, does this pious act make them feel superior to us lesser mortals, I ask this because everyone I know ,including myself have spent many years quietly giving hard earned cash to every charity going, (a good friend of mine returned from Uganda just before Christmas after spending three weeks helping the Baptist Union over there).

Do these people really think turning a few sixty watt bulbs off is going to make an 'appence of difference to people dying of starvation, no, it won't,(hold my reigns a moment, I feel like getting on this very high horse) and it seems the more money we send to stop the dying children, the bigger the BMW car collection becomes for the leaders.

People have been dying ever since I was a boy in the sixties sending milk bottle tops off to Blue Peter to buy tractors,so I for one will never feel guilty for looking at a few lights, and turning them off won't change a thing, if it did of course there would be a thousands of charity workers on the dole, and very,very large office blocks in Oxford going empty, do you really want to be responsible for THAT disaster????

name supplied

Re:Park Road Lights - 04/01/06

I was wondering if the cars mentioned were leaving or entering town. I have found it very difficult to see the lights at this time of the year on a sunny day as the sun is so low in the sky it is behind the lights and shines in your eyes. Although that is no excuse for not taking due care and attention.

name supplied

Parking.04/01/06

I see that in an earlier post the police have been praised for their new enthusiasm for issuing parking tickets. I agree that parking on double yellow lines, particularly in London Street, was out of hand but enforcement elsewhere is a complete nonsense. The issuing of parking tickets in parts Gloucester Street surely qualifies for a "Jobsworth Award".

There is a yellow line on the RHS of Gloucester Street dating from the time when Langford House was a business premises. The continued existence of this yellow line serves no useful purpose whatsoever and the issuing of parking tickets for parking here is quite ridiculous.

We used to have a local policeman who recognised this and acted accordingly. That's community policing.
Ifor Phillips

PARK ROAD LIGHTS - 04/01/06

I also have had many near misses at these lights. I cross every day on my way too and from work. You really have to be very careful as the cars coming from the town are going often too fast to stop! Just because the lights are red you can't assume it is safe to cross!

Maybe speed cameras are the answer (now there's a thought!) Or more police speed checks.

name supplied

Park Road - pedestrian lights - beware! - 2/1/06

I was walking into town just before Christmas and needed to cross Park Road at the pedestrian lights near Portwell Press. I pushed the button and waited for the lights to turn red.

I was just about to cross when a car went straight through the red light. Then, unbelievably, a second car went straight through the red light.

My son was in his pushchair and if I hadn't had my wits about me, both my son and I would have been hit. Needless to say both cars were travelling well above the speed limit.

I was really shaken and wanted to warn others to be careful when crossing this busy road

Name supplied

Christmas Lights - 2/1/06

I admit that I am not a large fan of the Christmas lighting arrangements, it offends my sentiments to have such an extravagant display when many tiny children are living on the streets and in some cases eating rats.

Name supplied

Web Blog for Faringdon ++ - 31/12/05

I've just started a blog (that is, an online diary) about my writing and the life of Faringdon, including, on a regular basis, some fiction about our town.

The aim is, as always, to put Faringdon on the map.

It's at: <http://paulcornell.blogspot.com/>

Paul Cornell

Ed: Thanks Paul - this will add another dimension to Faringdon going on

Poetry Competition

Congratulations to the winners of the Poetry Competition!

The winning poems were: *Most Popular* - [Rapunzel's Allsorts](#) by Sarah Fuller

Jim's Choice: [Poem for Faringdon](#) by Val Sandsford

£30 prize for the poem with the most votes from you, and £20 for Jim's favourite.

Portwell Bar have offered a bottle of bubbly for each of the winners plus an invitation to recite the poems

There will be a prizegiving ceremony at Portwell Bar - date to be arranged.

[Go to the Poems page](#)

Re Water shortage - 30/6/06

Dam!

You write your humorous Poem, think you've covered all the best topics on talking points and soon as you send it in, along comes a little gem like this!

Name supplied

Water shortage - 30/6/06

Following the previous correspondent's message I'd like to add some food for thought.

The fact that there is a water shortage is, arguably, not the fault of the water companies. However, it is most definitely NOT the fault of the consumer.

Why then do we continue to pay exactly the same for a much reduced service? Shouldn't there be a refund? Are we within our rights to withhold payment?

Any legal observations would be welcome!

PS Apologies for moving away from the poetry...I could always write you a song though!

David Reynolds

Ed: Please do!!

Water Shortage - 27/6/06

Following recent press reports into the hosepipe ban affecting our town I am writing to offer to share my water requirements with my fellow residents.

I have been for some time, observing official guidelines such as not flushing the toilet unless absolutely necessary and so on but unfortunately, every-time for me is absolutely necessary so I must find other ways of conserving resources in the spirit of the community.

I have been living for some time on the contents of my neighbour's compost bin (kindly purchased at a discount from Vale of White Horse district council) and this has yielded several hearty soups and stews over the previous few months but following my neighbour's annual mulching of their flower beds, this particular avenue of supply has dried up.

I therefore would like to offer on a weekly basis, several gallons of my bathwater, used once only and perfumed lightly with Norfolk Lavender bath elixir for whoever would like to re-use it.

Is it too much to ask for a reduction in my council tax bill in recognition of my continued commitment to preserving resource?

Yours sincerely

Mrs T Oldtrye

Freecycle - 26/6/06

Did you know you could get rid of unwanted items by offering them on **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid..** A section of the site is set up for people living in VWHDC area
Have a look <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/valewhitehorsefreecycle/> You need to register
Gene Webb

Heyfordian - 26/6/06

Re: We may lose the Heyfordian bus

When did the timetable disappear from the council website?

Tim Koder

Ed: Which council site do you mean? Maybe drop them an email??

Bees - 25/6/06

I actually like bees. My dad used to keep them.

Two years ago we had a swarm in our garden and it was a major problem to find a beekeeper to deal with it. We found the president of the Swindon Beekeepers Association who came out and collected them. He later gave us some of their honey.

I know there is a beekeeper in Faringdon, but trying to find him in an emergency is impossible. My neighbour has just had a swarm killed because she couldn't find the right information.

When you need someone over a weekend, the council aren't available and you are advised to ring the police. Technically they are supposed to give the name of the nearest beekeeper. In effect you get someone on a switchboard who calls out the pest control people.

I am upset that this hive was killed through ignorance and lack of information.

Name supplied

Ed: Get the beekeeper to give us his/her info for this website? It may help a little

Walking for Health - 23/6/06

A group of people are trying to get these going in Faringdon. If you're interested either come to the meeting on **Monday 26th, 2.30 at the Health Centre**, or if you are unable to, email me to register your interest

[More information about Walking for Health](#)

Health walks are short organised walks, often led by trained volunteers from the local community. Designed with health in mind they can improve both physical and mental health by offering a safe, relaxed and sociable atmosphere in which to walk. Health walks are perfect for beginners, those who would like to become more active or perhaps lack the confidence and knowledge about where to walk.

genewebb@nildram.co.uk

FARINGDON ARTS FESTIVAL -23/6/06

The Faringdon Arts Festival 2006 will start on the 6th July with the Battle of the Bands in the Community College.

On Friday 7th July there will be a concert in the Market place with the winner of the Battle of the Bands followed by four local bands.

On Saturday and Sunday the stage will be full of entertainment for all the family.

Our craft fair this year will be in the Corn Market with a café.

Please come along and enjoy the weekend and take part.

For further information please contact Julie Farmer on 08458591720

Extended Schools project - 23/6/06

In response to the government initiatives and local needs the Faringdon Schools Partnership is preparing a development plan for extended Schools services.

The aim is that all schools will implement full access to:

1 High Quality Wraparound Childcare (8am to 6pm all year round)

- 2 Varied Menu of Activities
- 3 Parenting support including family learning
- 4 Community access to school facilities
- 5 Referral to specialist support services

The aim is that access to these services will be sustainable as schools will have the management, relationships, resources and financial arrangements in place to achieve sustainability.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT PLEASE JOIN THE COMMUNITY NETWORKING EVENT ON THE **19 JULY AT 7PM AT THE FARINGDON ENTERPRISE GATEWAY** OR CONTACT RACHEL KENYON 01367 240375

Community Networking Event - 23/6/06

FAP (Faringdon Area Project) are holding a community networking event on the 19 July 2006 at the Faringdon Enterprise Gateway at 7pm.
If you are involved in any community event/group or would like to find out more about the groups in and around Faringdon please call Julie or Anna on 0845 859 1720

Faringdon Community College gets a new £3m science faculty - 21/6/06

Oxfordshire County Council's cabinet has approved a plan for a new nine-laboratory state of the art science building together with a main school entrance and visitor reception at Faringdon Community College. The new building will create a striking new image for the school with a feature glass entrance and stairways. be part three storey and part two storey.

A new bus drop off area and additional car parking provision is included in the plan.
See [nypressrelease.htm](#) for more info

We may lose the Heyfordian bus - 21/6/06

It appears that we may well lose the Heyfordian Bus service between Faringdon and Wantage from this winter. Faringdon TC are making representation and are petitioning local interest.

[Poster Quote] "Oxfordshire County Council is considering the withdrawal of Bus Service No. 67 and 67A (Faringdon - Wantage direct and Faringdon - Wantage via Uffington) These withdrawals will take effect on 9th December 2006. Faringdon Town Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council are strongly opposed to the withdrawals. Faringdon Town Council have started a petition and this is available in the Corn Exchange, Faringdon Library and The Community & Tourist Information Centre (Pump House).

If you will be affected by these withdrawals or wish to object for any reason, please either sign our petition or send your objections to: Mr. Tim Darch, Public Transport Assistant, Oxfordshire County Council, Speedwell House, Speedwell Street, Oxford OX1 1ND (e-mail: tim.darch@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS IS FRIDAY 7th JULY 2006"
I hope you are able to support

Battle of the Bands - 21/6/06

The Battle of the Bands competition was so successful last year that the Faringdon Arts Festival have decided to run the competition again this year.

The competition will take place on the 6 July 2006 at the Faringdon Community College. The doors open at 7 pm and there is a small fee for the tickets of £3.00 each.

The winner of the competition will be given a '20 minute slot/gig' on the 7 July in the Market Place and asked to open the weekend festivities. If you are in a band (age from 11 to 18) and would like to take part in the competition please contact Julie Farmer on 0845 859 1720.

Why do young people still think it's cool to smoke? - 20/6/06

Every lunchtime I see a number of kids from Faringdon Community College hunched in little groups lighting cigarettes for each other. These kids are intelligent (well perhaps not judging by this behaviour!), healthy human beings with long lives in front of them - why do they want to fill their lungs with tar and put their futures at risk in the mistaken believe that they look good doing it?

It beggers belief! The kids I saw today must only be 13 perhaps 14 years of age at the most. They must go back into their classrooms or home smelling of smoke - isn't there something that can be done to help them?!

Whilst on the subject perhaps the group of staff that can always been seen huddled together smoking outside the school aren't exactly setting the best example are they?! (plenty of fag butts all over the pavements along Fernham Road if you need evidence!)

Controversial comment I know, the hardened smokers amongst you will probably be up in arms, but I find it very depressing!
Name supplied

Folly Park Easter Quiz result - 20/6/06

19 families took part in the Folly Park Easter Quiz

We awarded prizes and certificates to 7 children Over eights joint winners were Tamara and Michaela Williams
2nd prize went to both Joe Butcher and Rachael Bond .

We have learnt that the over eights were quite wide in age range and both the 2 second prizes were awarded to children who were just over 8 and gave equally good answers whilst the winners were a lot older.
The under 8' s were easier to mark with Declan Campbell first, Gemma Campbell 2nd and Meghan Bond third.
Margaret Broadberry

More Folly Park - 20/06/06

I have just been to see the vandalism in the Folly Park. The people who did it are obviously from a different planet and trying to understand or communicate with them is pointless but they have probably boasted about the damage they have caused.

There must be a few normal people in Faringdon who know who they are. So my words are to them... You cannot possibly admire what has been done, no-one in their right minds could.

It didn't take any real effort, brain power or bravery Just a bit of brute strength and a box of matches. Hardly rocket science.

You and your friends may well laugh at or encourage the individuals who did it but you should remember that in some ways you are more responsible than your delinquent mates because you REALISE they are mental cripples and they probably don't.

No one expects you to tell tales (or should I say Grass) but how hard would it be for you to keep an eye on them and try to divert them the next time they go off the rails.

And they surely will if you don't do something to stop them. Think about...you know it makes sense.

HGM

Folly Park Vandalised - 20/06/06

For the first time in ages we went for a walk in Folly Park on last Sunday - lovely wild flowers and grasses and nice mown paths to walk around. It was so sad to see one of the picnic benches had been burnt, the stone information point by the lake has been demolished and one of the statues destroyed.

What a shame that this lovely peaceful park is being ruined by a few mindless people.
name supplied

More About Litter - 19/06/06

Further to my missive of 23/5/06 (see below), we have now had our inaugural meeting and the first event (of many, hopefully) is a litterpick on Saturday, 8th July. If you're interested in making an impact, please come along at **10am and meet at the Old Town Hall** where we will be dispensing litterpickers, bags, etc.

If you could let me know if you're coming along we'll be able to order enough litterpickers (those long poles with a claw on the end to save on our backs...)

We'll also be manning a stand at Ecoday in the Corn Exchange on 24th June, so come and meet us then.
Andy Hayter

If you can't beat'em, join'em... - 17/06/06

HGM I'm with you on this - I too log on to Talking Points on a several times a day basis and have wondered what has happened to everybody this week! If only we'd realised that Poetry was the answer to all Faringdon's problems - clearly the good folk of the town are all esconced in their houses with pen to paper in an attempt to become the next Faringdon Laureate! (the poems are very entertaining though so keep them coming!)

Parking, Poo and Planners are no longer an issue, instead trying to find something to rhyme with Faringdon is the topic close to everyones heart! Right I'm off to find some Poetic Inspiration.....well if you can't beat 'em join 'em!

William Wordsworth

There's gold in them there quills! - 17/06/06

Oh Harry your funny, you really are,
Let me tell you the story so far,
"Oh Jim",said Hil's, we have no e mail,
and I don't want the site getting too stale,
"Have you a way to push it along?"
"Yes," I replied, "a poem marathon,
I will offer a prize of say, fifty quid",
I opened my wallet,
the Queen blinked, oh yes she did,
Everyone will enter I'm quite sure of that,
From old HGM to old Folly Cat,
A small few will moan but thats OK,
The ideas for mail, anyway,
So come on Harry enjoy the way,
The people are having a different say,
You may win the fifty, I'm certain of that,
And as you Northeners say,
"That's money is that"
Jim Horton

American Tourists' View of Faringdon - 17/06/06

This year I said to Thelma "Let's go see England, Ma
We'll buy a book about it and hire a dinky car"
"It shouldn't take us very long but there's lots of things to see
She said "That's OK Elmer" but she left it up to me
To see the Travel Agent and book us on a flight
(He told us the best value was to travel late at night)
He said you all spoke English but your manners were quite funny
He also said it wasn't cheap so take a load of money
Sunday we did London Town it took almost all day.
Monday we did Chester and Stratford on the way
Tuesday it was Chelt-en-ham but we soon got bored
And so we decided to check out War-ling-ford
At Burford we sure lost our way but then we chanced upon
A festive little market town...you guessed it... Far-ing-don
The market place was full of stalls the sun was beating down

We both said at the same time "Gee. What a quaint old town"
We asked a local where to park just for an hour or two
He said "I've lived here all my life and I haven't got a clue"
We eventually bought a coffee while sitting in the square
And envied people who had time to simply sit and stare
We sure would recommend it. But I think we both would say
To see it at it's best you'll want... a sunny market day
HGM

I'm "name supplied" and I'm an FTPoholic - 17/06/06

Every morning the first thing I do (well almost the first thing) is log on to FTPs..I fight it but can't resist it.
The items usually arouse varying emotions:
I feel sad about missing pet stories, sympathetic about Parking problems, indignant about dog mess and litter
problems and enjoy the petty but generally harmless bickering between individual contributors.

But this past week has been, from my point of view, a cyberspace desert Most of my screen has been taken up
by a double spaced advert for the poetry competition and it seems that the only contributions have been
"Clever poetry".
I am not opposed to the competition..My only criticism is that I didn't think of it !

But has no one out there nothing to complain about or comment on ?
How about having a go at me for complaining .. I'll try not to let your comments ruin my life but at least it will
bring back a bit of interest to the Website.
Some of you might even be brave enough to support my view.
HGM

Poetry Prize- 9/6/06

I'll provide a bottle of bubbly for each of the two poetry winners, who will also be invited to recite their poems at
the next 15 Minute Club.
Martin Phillips (The Portwell Bar)

Jim'll fix it (not) - 09/06/06

Now then, now then, now then, I have been asked if I could fix it for ***** to win the competition, sadly the
answer is no- it is going to be a fair contest..
I have also been asked as to what the prize is to be, well let me tell you, the overall winner, (the people's
choice) will win £30, the one I like the best will win £20.
It may well be that one person will go away with £50, so it is well worth entering

So come on get typing,
So how's about that then?
Jim Horton
Ed: Thanks Jim

A Poetic Encounter - 9/6/06

A few days ago I woke up with a sore swelling on my arm. When it failed to clear up, I went along to see my
doctor. He looked at the swelling.
"That" he said firmly, "Is an iambic pentameter bite". I was nonplussed. "You don't see many of those
nowadays" he added, peering at it closely.
"Hm.." I said "Whatever is that? I was thinking it might be a....."
"Dont tell me what you thought" he interjected sharply, "diagnosis is my job, not yours"
"Is it serious?" I asked him, subdued.
"Not at all" he said. "I dont suppose you even noticed when you got bitten. In fact, iambic pentameters are
almost extinct these days. Most people go through the whole of their lives without seeing a single one, let alone
being bitten by one"
"Oh" I said.

"Yes" ,he continued, "they were all over the place in Shakespeare's time, but not any longer. Actually, though, they can still be quite beneficial"

I looked up, interested.

"But you need what we doctors call an 'open mind' to really take advantage".

"Could I get one of those on the NHS?" I asked him.

"Good gracious, no" he laughed. "You could get them, at one time, at those old fashioned 50s boarding schools, but now.....?" he sighed a long, slow sigh.

He looked at his watch. "So, there we are. Nothing to worry about. Now, just run along, there's a good chap, I've got sick people to see".

Chastened, I walked back through the town. On the way I saw the inviting entrance to the 'Cock & Bull', one of our many local hostelryes. "Now, that's the sort of 'open' that I prefer", I thought, and went in, to order myself a pint.

Name Supplied

World Cup Competition - 07/06/06

For a bit of fun, and to raise funds for Oakwood House, please find [attached entry form](#) for a World Cup competition.

You only need to predict the scores, so no great in-depth knowledge is necessary!

Please email your predictions to PortwellBar@aol.com before the first game kicks off (5 pm on Friday). Multiple entries are allowed, and please feel free to forward on to anyone else you know who might be interested.

Entry fees (£5 per entry) to be received at The Portwell Bar by Saturday 10th

Martin Phillips

Don't forget the "F" word (Football!) is banned in the bar during the World Cup, but is fine outside! A 10p "swear box" (proceeds to Oakwood House) will be waved in front of anyone uttering the dreaded word inside the Bar!

Thrift Shop Watchfield - 07/06/06

Near the old RC Chapel on the Faringdon Road

Wednesdays 1.30pm - 4pm excluding school holidays and half terms\

Selling good clothes, toys, books, games and household bric a brac

15% of takings towards local charities

10 items can be left at each visit

Tel: 01367 782705

Music in Faringdon - 7/6/06

Have a look at <http://www.britpopuk.com/> a website dedicated to music in Faringdon.

You can also find out about Faringdon bands and singers, Looking for Singers/musicians, Kit for sale/wanted/for hire

See also our Whatson pages <http://www.faringdon.org/nvwhatson.htm>. Another Madd gig on 30th June
Ed

Poetry Competition - 7/6/06

I happily admit that I don't appreciate the difference between a Haiku and a Sonnet and I wouldn't understand an Iambic Pentameter if it bit me.

My idea of a poem is the type of Rhyming Couplet suited to the inside of a Greeting Card and I justify this attitude by saying that as a Northerner "I know what I like !"

I think Jim and I have probably the same view of Kipling ...he does make exceedingly good cakes

But the competition so far has been an eye opener.. I'm not certain but I think we have been offered an Acrostic Poem where only the first letters have to make sense, Free verse where nothing has to make sense and

Rhyme and Rhythm are optional extras and an example of Hip Hop which is probably, though not very obviously, extremely clever.

I suggest someone tells Andrew Motion to follow the offerings closely as he may just be in danger of losing his job to an FTP contributor

HGM

NB. JH....Andrew Motion is the Poet Laureate

Police Station Opening Times - 7/6/06

The POlice Station is open from 3pm - 8pm on a Wednesday. All other weekdays it is 10am - 3pm
Gene Webb

Poetry Prize - 2/6/06

I am quite enjoying this seasons attempt at the poetic justice being handed out to the pompous rhetoric and diatribes over "i" after "e" except after whatever. Sometimes you know, one gets such a dander up, one simply forgets that the more intelligent members of our community are applying correction fluid onto their screens in total disgust.

I really hope this site is not going to turn into a postcode lottery, only the ones with new tarmac or the brave and the good to get to voice their opinions.

I have read some fine stuff on here, and only spotted the odd spelling mistake after reading it the forth or fifth time(sometimes you just can't believe what your reading the first time).

Anyway, I am going to offer up a prize of some sort(to be awarded by the Ed) for the best poem that incorporates most of the fun that is to be found on this site

Tipex and quills at the ready, anyone up for a challenge?
Jim Horton

Oh.my God! - 2/6/06

I assumed that the item now known as TIC was posted by the Local Council.

I was not having a Pop at the Editor, she does a great job!

I just wanted to highlight a relevant point of irritation regarding the use of abbreviations. One small grammatical error later and talking points is transformed into something resembling a pedantic English lesson in a 1950's Boarding school with outbursts of self righteous indignation in the form of Pompous poetry.

Amazing!

Well Folly Cat. I've just written a run on sentence which may possibly contain an un capitalised proper noun or two!

Can we now look forward to an entire collection of blistering sonnet's?

Or, hopefully, your Byronic demise. choking on a grammatically incorrect fur ball. Or should I say 'they're' ball!

The Dalek with turrets

More pomes and rhymes - 1/6/06

It seems the time has come, to Faringdon online,
that every letter published has to be in poetic rhyme,
the stalwarts of the web site, with time upon their hands,
lay siege to rhyming couplets and try not to be to bland,
try rhyming the more boring bit's,
now that would be much better,
dog poo, planning, take your pick,
what a far more interesting letter,

and finally, Folly Cat, shame on you,
to swing a correctional stick,
this site is for everyone, every Tom, even Harry, every Dick
Jim Horton

TIC TALK/Reply to Folly Cat..... 1/6/06

What gems!

Keep 'em coming!

However, for the information of the poor 'name supplied' TIC stands for Tourist Information Centre.

All these highbrow 'pomes' and not a straight answer amongst them!

Country Mouse

Reply to Folly Cat - 31/5/06

Dear Folly Cat..

Wot woke you up and made you're whiskers bristle
resulting in the comments contained in your epistle ?

The editors are not to blame for errors in wot we write

They no we sometimes make mistakes but feel we have the right

To air our views for all to see .. and it is no disgrace

To make the odd misspelling or put a colon out of place.

You must be more forgiving and keep your comments hid

We dont all 'ave the skooling like wot you so cleerly did.

HGM

TIC TALK - 30/05/06

Oh naughty, naughty editors, as bad as you could be
for failing to acquaint us with the name of TIC:

- and while we're on the subject of your errors; be they rare,
I'd like to point out one myself, just to keep things fair.

As editors, you have the right to cross out, chop and change
anything you come across which falls within your range;

so why do you when faced with awful grammar, (as you are),
just leave it there for all to see, and cause the text to jar?

Pretty up the prose my dears, and let me keep my hair.

In the previous message, could you change the "their" to "they're"?

Folly Cat

What is a TIC? - 30/5/06

Pardon my ignorance but I have to ask.

If it supports local Businesses then it sounds interesting.

TIC is obviously an abbreviation, not something found sucking blood from a sheep so come on give us a clue!

It doesn't take that much effort to write the full name and a brief explanation of its general function does it?

you never know people might turn up if they know what their invited to!

Name supplied

Ed: See below

Health Walks training - 26/5/06

There will be another training day for volunteer walk leaders on Wednesday 19th July. It will be held in
Bodicote, Banbury and will be from 9.30am- 3.30pm.

The training and a healthy lunch are provided free of charge.

Please disseminate to any colleagues and also your walkers, who may want to go the 'next step' and train as a
leader!

Please can you or they let me know if interested by June 23rd
Many thanks Maggie Maggie Dent, Health Promotion Manager Public Health Directorate North Oxfordshire
PCT Partnership Indigo House, Banbury Business Park Aynho Road Adderbury, OX17 3NS 01295 814185
maggie.dent@noxon-pct.nhs.uk

Faringdon TIC first year anniversary - 26/5/06

June 2nd, in the Pump House,
A familiarisation day for staff from surrounding TICs, and local press. The aim is to raise our profile in the surrounding area and help all our local businesses

June 15th - 17th lucky dip

Everyone who visits **The Faringdon Community and Tourist Information Centre**, whether resident or visitor will pick out a card and if they're lucky will win a voucher to a nearby attraction or a prize

If you're a Faringdon trader let us have some leaflets to help promote you and maybe a small gift for the Lucky dip

tic@faringdowntowncouncil.org.uk

My cat is back home - thank you - 25/5/06

Last Friday my young cat arrived home (having been missing for the previous 24 hrs) looking like he'd just be pulled out of a very, very muddy bog and was in quite a state.

I feel that someone MUST have pulled him out from wherever he was simply because of the state he was in. I just wanted to thank whoever that was and am curious where it happened!

Sarah Oliver

Recycling - 24/05/06

A neat way to recycle unwanted goods, particularly good for electrical stuff and computers now that the charity shops won't take such items.

<http://freecycle.org/>
name supplied

Faringdon Waste Watchers - 23/5/06

I read with interest the comments about litter - well, now's your chance to do something about it.

A couple of fellow residents and myself have formed a group called Faringdon Waste Watchers, one of a number of CAG's (Community Action Groups - www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk/) in the area - others are in Buscot/Coleshill, Witney and Finstock, and we have our inaugural meeting **8.00pm on 8 June at 18 Fernham Road**.

A recent networking event on 20th May gave us lots of good ideas about how to spread the RRR mantra - Reduce, Re-use and Recycle - so we'll be putting these to good practice over the coming months.

One of the events we plan to do in July is a litterpick around town - watch out for news of this in the July What's On.

There are also trips to facilities such as a MRF (Materials Recycling Facility) planned, organised by the Waste Management Dept at OCC: not something that applies yet to our kerbside collections, but it could in future. If you'd like to get involved, please email Andy on andy.hayter@gmail.com

Youth Club - needed - 17/5/06

I find the suggestion of posting up photographs of offending antisocial youth's mildly ludicrous.

You obviously do not understand the mentality of the average bored youth, what better way of amusing your cronies and gaining instant 'Street cred' than having your picture all over Faringdon for smearing a Car with cola and chips and dancing on the roof.. Wot a larff! They would be queuing up to do it.

The only people likely to benefit from that are Chip Shops and Garages.

I stick by my original suggestion about Youth clubs. (Are you there local council with lots of money to spend on community projects?) Successful clubs are, or were, run by trained youth leaders, these are often ex offenders themselves, so tend to get more 'respect' than say the local Vicar or Deputy Head teacher (no offence to either of the latter).

They run the place but at the same time allow the members, i.e. our newly reformed chip smearing car roof dancers to take a lot of responsibility for the club themselves. It's amazing how quickly they grow up and take a pride in things if they are given the chance.

I mean what would all us mature adults do if suddenly all the Faringdon Pubs, Bar, betting shop, 15 minute club etc, suddenly closed? We'd be donning our tap shoes and going off in search of the nearest Mercedes before you could say extra salt and vinegar!

Mr Cornell has a point. The mobile phone using skate boarder who recently nearly sent my Chinese Takeaway flying while hurling down London street at god knows what speed actually apologised... He didn't stop but he did apologise!

Name supplied

Re: Seeing Red over Green - 16/5/06

As much as I believe in and actively participate in recycling that b***** wagon is a nightmare. Apart from the noise pollution it creates what really gets my goat is the mess they leave behind - broken glass bottles on the road just waiting to ambush my tyres, plastic bags that float over the lawns in the breeze, the odd milk container they can't be bothered to pick up that ends up in the border, the box bounced on the tarmac so many times I wonder if it's a competition to see how high it will bounce - I see red everytime.

And as for asking for another box as I would like to recycle more - forget it - two years and I'm still waiting.

So if per chance blokes on said wagon should have their attention drawn to this article - would it hurt to take a bit of civic pride in your work?

In the world I live in if we all displayed a couldn't care less attitude to our jobs we would soon be out of one

Name supplied

Gloucester Street Car Park - 15/5/06

The youth crime rate in Faringdon, according to a chap I talked to who knows about these things, is very low for a town of this size.

The poster who talked about punishing youths before we 'allowed' them a youth club may be talking about keeping particular offending individuals away from such a club, in which case there could be some justification for what was said.

But in terms of the whole youth population of the town, their general behaviour should be very much rewarded.
Paul Cornell

Town Map -13/5/06

I'm looking forward to receiving my Town Map in June but feel it might have been better to exclude the shortcuts.

Faringdonians who need to use them, know them already, and I don't think we really want tourists to know that we are prepared to accept these filthy, rubbish strewn paths as part of our environment.

It is also fortunate that the sign coyly indicating the whereabouts of the Folly Park will never entice any visitor to risk the potholed track leading to the potholed Car Park.

NB..I do like Faringdon but it's like the Curate's Egg..very good in parts.
HGM

Ed: Yes it's a pity if the cut throughs are litter strewn - but the intention of the town map is to encourage people

to walk, rather than drive their cars into town

Community Bus - 14/5/06

RECENTLY RETIRED?

CAN YOU SPARE 2 MORNINGS A MONTH?

Faringdon Community Bus urgently needs more drivers

The only qualifications needed are a normal driving licence and a smile!

Training given. More information on this site on the [Community bus page](#)

Please call Kay Chamberlain 01367 242647 or Frank Callanan 01367 241409 and if we are out we promise to call you back!

Kay Chamberlain

15 minute club - 13/5/06

Maybe you've been to it - but if not, have a read of Paul Cornell's blog- it'll whet your appetite for next month(4th June)

<http://paulcornell.blogspot.com/>

Gene Webb

Gloucester Street Car Park.- 12/5/06

It's probably those same 'feral brats' who recently smeared a parked car with canned drink, fish & chips and dented the roof - most likely jumping onto it from the wall they damaged.

Before we consider allowing them the pleasures of a well organised Youth Club they should be identified and their photographs posted for all to see.

They are worthy of no kind treatment until they are able demonstrate that they wish to be responsible members of society.

CCTV in Gloucester Street car park is to be recommended.

Name supplied

SEEING RED OVER GREEN - 10/5/06

Can someone tell me just what exactly is friendly about the recycling lorry, sorry if this a Victor Meldrew moment but bare with me on this for a moment.

I have reached an age where I need my beauty sleep, and a small lie in on a Saturday morning after a hard weeks work is always welcome, until that is 7.15am,whereupon the squeaky rumblings of the green box truck wake me up,and while laying there. It seems that every bottle in West Oxfordshire is individually smashed one at a time,the larger pieces retrieved, then smashed all over again.

After what seems like an hour but in metric terms is in fact ten minutes, all goes quiet, briefly, I sink back into a wispy dream like trance, only to be shaken out of bed by the whole bloody thing suddenly being tipped up, just to make sure that the contents are well and truly broke.

I should imagine, even an hour later I can still hear the distant crashing and banging from another noise polluted part of Faringdon.

Do the people involved take bets on how many times they hear the phrase "shut the **** up" uttered through bedroom windows, I personally said it seven times last week as it was a lovely morning and had a window open.

I would like to ask those in power to supply the morning trucks with old mattress liners to soften the impact of a "chucked " bottle, and perhaps some slippers for the operatives to stop them kicking the boxes along the pavements prior to the ritual "chucking", right.

lets all get back to talking about dog poo again.....cattle prods on the genitals of the owners is my preferred solution.....

Name supplied

New Band - 10/5/06

We'd like to announce our new band website www.boogie-me.co.uk.

We've been putting together a Rhythm and Blues Orchestra (think Jools Holland, Bessie Smith, Ray Charles, Commitments etc.) and we currently number 12.

We'll be playing at the Arts Festival this year and also hope to be hosting a hootenanny over New Year's Eve. We're looking for trombones and trumpets and would kindly request that interested musicians call us or email us via the website. www.boogie-me.co.uk

Jon Lane
jon@boogie-me.co.uk

More dog mess - 8/5/06

Yet again, the problem of dog mess on our pavements has reared its ugly head.

This problem is not limited to London St where many of the recent complaints have come from, but any street that is used regularly to walk dogs to or from our country paths.

In Church Street, the problem became impossible about a year ago and we leafleted over 100 homes nearby pointing out the health and other hazards and reminding people that this is an offence liable to a fine. The problem seemed to stop, but has now restarted.

It is up to all of us, dog owners or not, to identify the culprits and report them. To those responsible pet owners who do not cause this problem, please excuse me if I watch them suspiciously as they pass my front door. I know they find this problem as unacceptable as I do!

Incidentally, has anyone ever been fined for causing this nuisance?

I doubt it.
Steve Wright

Sorry Folly Hill! - 7/5/06

It's probably the same herd of feral Brats we recently had the Police kick out of our car park in Gloucester St after they'd damaged the wall left a mess and spat everywhere. Why do they do that?

To their credit, the Police responded very quickly, confiscated the drink, took names and addresses etc.

What can be done about the problem?

My suggestion, the humble youth club? There is nowhere to my knowledge, for them to go and 'socialise'. We had these facilities in my youth open three times a week, Run by people who knew what there doing and dare I say it, funded by the Council!

They worked very well. Coffee bar/ meeting place, Table tennis, Football, Skate boarding, Music.

You could even have an easily hosed down room where they could go and spit everywhere.
just a suggestion.

Name supplied

More Folly Park - 6/5/06

Exactly the same message as I was going to write !.

I also was saddened to see the mess and fire damage left behind by these idiots. Also, by the statues, lots of empty cans and bottles.

Funny, they manage to carry these things when full but find it too difficult to carry them, when light and empty, to the bin....proves that drink must be bad for you !.

The same thing happens at the Folly Hill, they can walk the drink up there but can't take the rubbish back down. They are obviously too young to be in a pub, so when they go home I wonder if their parents ask why they smell of drink and what they've been up to ?!.

Name supplied

Folly Park - 5/5/06

It is such a shame when there are so many people in Faringdon trying to make it a better place to live - the

Madd May Fest and so on - that mindless idiots can still ruin everything.

I have just taken my dog for a walk and swim (no fishing in May!) at Folly Park to find one of the picnic benches covered in rubbish and beer cans and that someone has burnt the top of the picnic table. Next to it is an area covered in broken and half burnt bottles and the remains of another fire.

I cleared what I could and threw it in the bin but it makes me so saddened and disgusted that a few louts spoil things for everyone else and it just seems to be happening again and again. What can we do?
Name supplied

Madd Festival - 3/5/06

.. a Musical Feast -with so many portions! What a great weekend! What a diverse and interesting line up! Ok, audience attendance was at a premium sometimes, not good you might think but this was a case of less is definitely more.

All who came and supported this unique event with an open mind and matching ears, really enjoyed it. Hardly surprising considering the high standard of Musicianship coupled with, notably, superb technical support producing sound quality and lighting which was second to none.

There can be few opportunities to hear Faringdon's Belarus, have a chilled afternoon with the amazing Julia Bier and in the evening regress to being a teenager again with Eddie and the hot rods, one of the most energetic rock bands on the planet. If you've never heard a Kora played You'd have heard it played expertly on Sunday along with top reggae band T and Latouche.

Then dance till you drop in the evening with Osibisa. And there was more. dessert on Monday with Colvin Quarumby and bringing the whole thing to a finale the quite brilliant Pentangle.

All this for a few pounds and a short walk to the Junior School! A big thank you and congratulations to Sam and Hillary Prince who put the whole thing together with dedication and a touch of pure genius!

Do it again Sam... GF

Free town map - 2/5/06

Look out for a free colour town map with your June Whats On (Yellow pages).

The Faringdon Walkers and Cyclists group have produced a definitive map of Faringdon - showing all the street names, the cycle routes and the cut through paths(shortcuts) between housing areas.

This is the second output from the project (the first being a pack of walk cards on sale at Faringdon TIC, White Horse Bookshop and White Horse Countrywear)

Every household in Faringdon and many of the surrounding villages will get a map brochure delivered with the next Whats On at the end of May

The aim of this project is to get more people walking and cycling- so do look out for the map - and make use of it

Gene Webb

Messy Faringdon- 2/5/06

Having lived in Faringdon for nearly 5 years now, I have to say how much dirtier the place has become in that time.

While I agree about the amount of Dog Mess there is around, the disgusting amount of litter far exceeds it. I am not sure who should be clearing up the lager cans, sweet and crisp wrappers, condoms and general household rubbish (apart from those who put it there!), but with having a new leaflet about to be produced marking all the footpaths in town I feel it is about time a concerted effort was made to have a jolly good clean up.

Helen Chapman

400+ new houses - possible benefits for the town - 27/4/06

A development of this size is a rare occurrence - so we must be sure that it delivers what the community needs. With this in mind a group of us met to discuss the Community needs. We were representatives of FTC, Chamber of Commerce, Fap, Far, Retailers group - and we used the Healthcheck action plan document to produce our list.

Which, in our priority order is:-

Car parking - to encourage existing and new residents to use the shops and facilities in the town- huge money needed

A Skate Park to be located in the country park possibly near the new cricket ground £5k

Youth Club to be located in the old bar in the Community Centre/Pump House, £30k

Tucker Park Development.- rugby pitch - estimated cost £15,000- A Trim Track - estimated cost £17,000 An all weather sports pitch - estimated cost £200,000

Additional Community Bus and paid driver, £100k

National Coach Pick Up Point- in one of the planned bus stops on Park road

Disabled lift in the Pump Rooms- £30k

Faringdon Guide - for all residents - definitive information about the facilities in the town, £10k

Performance venue, £50k

It is expected that grants will be available for the skate park,sports and performance facilities - so figures above are for pump priming

It seems highly likely we won't get everything - **and we may not get much unless we influence VWHDC** - you'll see from the [Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) that the officers have ideas of their own.

Please do make your views known - [VWHDC have provided a form to do this](#)

The closing date of the consultation is 4/5/06 , so not much time left

Gene Webb

Thanks - 26/4/06

We would like to record our grateful thanks to all who helped after our accident on the Highworth road out of Faringdon on Saturday 8th April. We were very shaken up but physically unharmed; the motorcyclist who hit us is recuperating in Great Western Hospital with both legs and his pelvis broken.

Without mentioning names, our thanks go to the lady driving behind us who immediately rang for the ambulance, others behind us who rerouted traffic from Faringdon and the family driving towards us who stopped and rerouted traffic from Highworth. Also the couple returning to Stanford Road from walking their dogs at Badbury, who were so kind to both Sandra and the motorcyclist.

We apologise to other motorists for the inconvenience of finding the road blocked and thank both emergency services for their help and efficiency.

We have had no car since, and will probably have to buy another, so our heartfelt thanks go to a well known gentleman in Faringdon who unhesitatingly offered us a car "for as long as it takes".

Whenever there is a problem the good people of Faringdon always pull together, we are proud to be part of such a caring community.

Peter and Sandra Wheeler

Moondust - to be published in 3 weeks - 26/4/06

A pre-review

The corn dollies did it. Meandering through the Internet late at night in search of undiscovered straw work, I was drawn to these innocuous sentences: Across the chimney-surround hung a polished teak board with a collection of [read more](#)

Cleveland W. Gibson

Folly Park Fishing - 24/4/06

I have to say, I've been rather surprised at the amount of fishing that seems to go on at the park.....many times from the 'No Fishing Side' (by the picnic benches).
I think that more obvious signs stating the rules are needed.

As for dogs swimming...why not ?. It's a park belonging to everybody and I only wish that the fisherman would worry more about the amount of mess they leave behind (take a look next time....bottles, wrappers etc) and leave responsible dog owners to enjoy some time there too.

Name Supplied

Ed: Sounds as if the fishing club needs to be contacted - anyone know who? how?

Much ado about nothing? - 24/4/06

With reference to flights over Faringdon

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) does not keep specific records of the number of Aircraft passing over the Faringdon area in the new air corridor but any using it will never be lower than 11.000ft (over 2 miles in old money).

These aircraft will be climbing to their cruising altitude of about 30,000 ft and the route will only be used in busy periods.

Although some complaints were received by the CAA before the start of the new system on March 16th very few have been received since.

HGM

Ed: Time will tell??

18 Coxwell Rod development - 23/4/06

At the beginning of 2003 an application, GFA/4905/1, was submitted to knock down the house, fill in the swimming pool and tear up the tennis court. The intention was to build a number of houses on the site.

Objections resulted in GFA/4905/2, then 3, then 4, then 5, then 6. We now have version 7 so for those who may have missed it or who are unable to visit the FTC offices between 0900 and 1230 Mon to Fri or make an appointment to view at Abingdon here is the latest version:

Application number GFA/4905/7 for Cover Construction Co Ltd (Computer number 06/00438/REM) Proposal: Erection of nine houses with garages and road.(Reserved matters application ref:outline application GFA/4905/6-X)

NB There is no mention, on the notification I received, of the proposed access road but version 6-x involved access between Nos 16 and 20 Coxwell Road

If anyone wants to make a comment on this latest version please write to: Mr Martin Deans at Vale of White Horse District Council, Abbey House, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 3JE before the 11th May 2006 or send an email to planning.dc@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Previous comments are probably gathering dust in Mr Deans filing cabinet so a reminder of your own views would not be out of place.

HGM (Self confessed NIMBY)

PS VWHDC have confirmed that emails will be treated the same as letters. They assure me that this is the case but senders should give their names and addresses as replies will only be sent by snail mail (normal post).

ED: You can see this planning application of the Vales online planning system . Looks as if access is from Coxwell Road

Folly Park - and dogs - 23/4/06

I have been intending to write on a similar subject myself for a while now.

I too walk my dog at Folly Park occasionally and like the previous contributor also always pick up any mess. The fishing on the pond is a nuisance - the litter left behind, including discarded fishing line, hooks etc, never mind the remains of their picnics, is a disgrace as well as a danger to the wildlife.

It is my understanding that Folly Park is for everyone to enjoy and that fishing is allowed on the pond not the other way around - that the fishermen have total control over what happens at Folly Park and the rest of us fit in around them.

I don't think there is anything wrong with a dog taking a swim and I would strongly object to well behaved dogs having to be kept on a lead. It would be a dreadful shame if families feel unable to use Folly Park for fear of upsetting a few fishermen - I would suggest it a much better idea to ban the fishermen - especially as some of them don't even come from Faringdon as evidenced by the logos on their vans!

I would like to say please don't let them win by making you feel that you can not take your family to the Park again, for fear of being abused by ignorant individuals.

A fellow responsible dog walker

Ed: The pond was used for fishing when the area was all waste ground - so I guess old habits die hard- not that that makes it acceptable

folly park - 23/4/06

ive just come back from taking my kids and the dog over to folly park with the hope of feeding any ducks on the pond, obviously the dog wanted to have a swim and because the guys fishing were over the over side, not the picnic area where there is no fishing allowed i thought it would be ok, but no, the group of men, probably in there late 30s started shouting and swearing at me because they were fishing "there"

how was i to know thay had cast there lines to this side?

i dont use bad language infront of my 5 year olds so it makes me angry that other people should, and as there is no signs i could see to say dogs have to be kept on leads in the park, as these people so impolitely infomed me i was forced to take the kids and dog home ruining what should have been an enjoyable sunday afternoon, the kids were left distressed with the language and behaviour from these people and my dog couldnt get the excersise she needs.

i AM a responsible dog owner, my dog is well behaved and i always pick up any mess, so could somebody please tell me if dogs ARE allowed off their leads in the park and can they have a swim in the picnic area where fishing is NOT allowed?

if not PLEASE can we have some fore warning before anybody else has to put up with the verbal abuse me and my family have had today.

Annoyed family man

More flights over Faringdon - 23/4/06

I was reminded that the new flight path is now in operation. has anyone noticed more planes, or perhaps they actually haven't started using the new route yet

Has anyone noticed anything. Does anyone know anything??

Gene Webb

Belarus, Eddie and the Hot Rods, Osibisa and Pentangle.- 19/4/06

All playing on one weekend on Faringdon?

Surely some mistake.

Not so, the MADD Mayfest at the end of the month offers an amazing opportunity to check out these and other bands, musicians and solo artists on our doorstep.

It's all happening at the Junior School

.

So whether you want to hear contemporary sounds, furious rock and roll, African rhythms or folkly sounds it's all here.

Come with an open mind. I can't believe it!

The Barking Dog

Road works - town centre- 19/4/06

I wondered what they are doing and why - so asked. I was told that the blocks 'had failed' so were being replaced with tarmac.

I was also told that the contractor was footing some of the bill - but another chap said all of it.

I didn't think to ask if the other blocks in the square were also to be replaced

I suppose it creates work for our councils

Gene Webb

FAP Cafe Old Town Hall, 26/4/06 6pm - 8pm

Come along and see and discuss the 106 possibilities that FAP and FTC are putting forward to VWHDC

Have your say, make your views known- essential if we are to get the facilities that we need

An opportunity to influence VWHDC

Read the background on this section - 18/3/06 and the [Supplimentary Planning Guidance](#)

Please do come

Gene Webb

Traffic Calming - 17/4/06

The traffic calming road bumps by the Infants School are wonderful - it really slows the traffic down.

Perhaps some measures for Canada Lane could follow - too often at school drop off times drivers get very aggressive and drive far too fast.

They even drive on the pavement when the children are right beside them.

Joy Hay

Craft Fair - 16/4/06

Congratulations and thank you to those who organised the Craft Fair on Saturday.

I hope sufficient people showed enough interest to ensure that it becomes a regular feature.

I hope also that this Thank You message helps to force the Dog Poo article off my screen.

HGM

Dog Poo - 14/4/06

While I agree that we need to see some dog waste bins around the town, but the fact that they are not yet there shouldn't be an excuse for not 'scooping' litter (distasteful though it is).

Furthermore, it should also not be an excuse for collecting the poo in a bag and then leaving said bag by the side of the road or at some convenient (for the owner) drop off point.

If anything this habit is almost worse than not bagging it at all since it makes the stuff even more visible and collects it in one place.

In addition, it prevents the poo from decomposing or being washed away by rain, which it would do if it were left in situ

Name supplied

Careers Exhibition - 11/4/06

On Monday 24th April, from 10am to 3pm, FAP in conjunction with Faringdon Community College will be holding a Careers Exhibition at the College.

A number of employers have offered to come and provide students with information about their line of work and to explain what qualifications and expectations businesses in their field may have with regard to potential employees. The aim is to show students that there are a variety of career paths open to them and we hope that we might inspire them as to which particular path suits them, whether it be apprenticeship, further education, entering the forces or setting up their own business.

Approximately 400 students from the college will be attending the exhibition (brought in in class groups throughout the day) We would also encourage any one else up to the age of 20 from Faringdon and the surrounding villages (those for example who have left school but have yet to settle upon a career path that suits

them) to come along to the event.

If you are a local employer (whether you work for yourself or a larger company) who would like to be involved in this event please contact Julie Farmer on 0845 859 1720 or email julie.farmer@fap.org.uk.

We would also welcome help from people who have retired from industry, volunteer sector workers or anyone who feels they have something to offer on the day! We are hugely grateful to all those who have already volunteered their services.

We are sure that the event will prove very valuable to those who attend and very much hope that it will become an annual event.

Anna Marlowe

Flora London Marathon - 23rd April 2006 - 11/4/06

If anyone has been walking between 7 and 10 in the evening, or has been up at 7.30 in the morning at weekends you may have seen me running the streets of Faringdon.

Since 12th December 2005, I have run 737 miles, including 3 x 22M, 1 X 20 and 2 x 19M. I have worn out two pairs of running shoes, and have run 6 days a week, with only one exception (I was ill for two days - so had an extra day off). I am hoping to complete the race in under 3 and a half hours.

So where is this going.

Well I was hoping that I could seek some sponsorship from the good folk of Faringdon. The cause that I am running for is not one of the main stream charities, but the "Sam Waters Memorial Fund".

The Fund is set up in the memory of a little boy who sadly died at the age of 10. [More details](#)

If you do feel able to pledge a few pence, or even pounds please email me at petedking@tiscali.co.uk , including your name, address and the amount that you can pledge.

Many Many thanks

Peter King

Holiday Accommodation- new pages on this site - 9/4/06

Do you own any holiday accommodation that you want to let - if yes- you can now advertise your property on this site - free of charge.

Have a look at [lholidays.htm](#) and use the add an entry form

Gene and Hil

Dog Mess - 9/4/06

I am one of the seemingly few responsible dog owners in Faringdon who walks with an endless supply of nappy bags to clear up after my dog.

I too think the mess on Faringdon's pavements is disgusting and irresponsible owners should be penalised.

I would however also like to point out that in order to encourage owners to clear up after their dogs we desperately need more doggy bins - there are very few around and I frequently find myself walking around carrying a warm bag of poo which is far from pleasant as I'm sure I don't need to say!!!

Perhaps an active campaign for more of these bins is what's required?!

They cost money and need to be emptied regularly but with enough voices it's amazing what can be achieved.....

Name Supplied

Extract from FTC Valentines meeting - 8/4/06

Just in case anyone may have missed it.

The latest on the Coxwell Road Building Programme indicates a possible merger of the two proposed adjoining developments resulting in about 30 new dwellings replacing the two existing ones at Numbers 18 and 26

Fortunately it seems that some clued up members of the Council seem to have realised that 30 dwellings could generate between 30 and 60 extra cars using Coxwell Road at peak times and the following comment was

made:

Due to the weight of traffic exiting onto Coxwell Road. It was suggested that officers should investigate the possibility of developing a one-way road entering at No. 18 and exiting at No. 26 to prevent traffic blockages within the estates and on Coxwell Road itself

It was also mentioned that one letter of support for the 26 Coxwell Rd project was received...I wonder who that was from ?

HGM

Rob the Cheese - 7/4/06

Sadly the gentlman who took over Rob The Cheese from Rob Blackburn is unable to continue with the shop due to ill health.

You'll find that Matthew in the Butchers opposite and the charming couple in the Sadlers can sell almost all the products that Colin sold.

Best wishes to Colin from his customers and friends.

Name supplied

Dog Poo - 5/4/06

I would guess that pavement doggy loo-going occurs mainly before and after office hours, as no-one seems to spot the phantom crappers. Hang about the accident black spots in the early morning and after six pm, and you may be able to catch them at it.

Take a camera, get a shot of the action with the dog and owner, and you will have your evidence to make a complaint.

A longer term solution might be to persuade the relevant council to

- a) provide more dog mess bins;
- b) empty them regularly
- c) advertise and enforce the existing regulations.

Torbay council have cracked the problem with just such a regime.

Trouble is, it all costs money, and no-one wants to pay.

Folly Cat

DOG Mess in London Street -5/4/06

Rub the owners nose in it, that would sort the problem out.

Failing that report them to the district Council so that they can be prosecuted and served an ASBO, fined or something.

Failing that go round their house and cr*p on their carpet, see how they like it.

Please note this is not aimed at those very few responsible owners who take great effort to tidy the mess up. I say very few, because the evidence is on the streets, footpaths, verges in fact almost everywhere.

Devils advocate

Dog Poo Again!!! -5/4/06

Dog mess in Faringdon is disgraceful. I've complained several times on this site and written to the local council too who, to give them their due, stuck tons of stickers up all over the lamp-posts around London Street and Stanford Road.

The problem did improve for a few weeks but quickly returned to normal.

I don't think it should be down to us law-abiding dog owners either to accost these lazy sods. These fines of £1000 - how are they handed out? Why can't we have someone patrolling folly hill, park and slapping out fines for a week or so? That'd cut it out for a time.

My own mother-in-law doesn't clean up after her dogs as she says she doesn't like it!!! - This is hysterical - I mean, who the hell enjoys picking up dog poo??? Thank God she lives outside Faringdon...

Mel Taylor

15 minute club - 5/4/06

Thanks very much for your kind comments regarding The 15 Minute Club at The Corn Exchange.

I am humbled, but the praise should be extended to the following:

- David Reynolds, who started the 15 Minute Club with me at The Portwell Bar, and does such a wonderful job as compère
- Tim Cartwright and Rod Green, who work tirelessly for the best part of 8 hours on the day, controlling the excellent sound and lighting systems respectively
- The musicians themselves, many of whom willingly allow others to use their instruments and kit
- The local residents who suffer from the poor soundproofing at The Corn Exchange (this is being addressed by Faringdon Town Council)

The 15 Minute Club started in January 2005 at The Portwell Bar, and attracted about 6 acts and an audience of around 20. We realised by September, when the audience of about 100 were overflowing the tables and chairs outside the bar, that we would have to find another venue!

Since moving to The Corn Exchange in December we regularly attract dozens of musicians and a friendly audience of well over 100.

Although the artists are mainly from Faringdon and surrounding villages, they have come from as far afield as South London just for their 15 minutes of fame.

The youngest musician to date is Jack Lockwood at 14, and the oldest Mervyn Penney at somewhere over 80!

The 15 Minute Club is now firmly established on the first Sunday every month, thanks again to all involved.

Martin Phillips

0800 reverse - 4/4/06

Just noticed the comments about 0800 reverse in the December Talking Points.

If you ring 0845 0 779 000 you can block such calls permanently.

Hope this helps.

Name supplied

Dog mess- London St - 3/4/06

Hello, I live in London Street and have noticed that there seems to be quite a bit of dog poo on the pavement. I never see any stray dogs around so can only assume it's owners who happily let their dogs do this.

I've spent years living in London and Manchester and can confirm that the only place where I've seen this is in Faringdon.

Has anyone got any ideas how we can stop this - public humiliation perhaps?

Ray Philpott

15 minute club - what a success!! - 3/4/06

Congratulations to Martin Phillips of Portwell Bar - the 15 minute club, now in the Corn Exchange as it had outgrown the Portwell Bar, is a real success and has helped put Faringdon on the map.

There must have been at least 200 people in the Corn Exchange on Sunday evening - from Faringdon and much further afield - musicians/would be performers who came here especially to have their 15mins of fame. Quite a range of performers too - very young groups earlsh in the evening as well as clearly very accomplished performers- guitars, saxophone, flute, mouth organ, drums, singers, poet

It looks as if the Corn Exchange will be outgrown soon too - maybe the next step will be a weekend event

I am impressed - and I enjoyed it

Gene Webb

400 new houses, more employment land - Planning Gain - 2/4/06

The additional housing development in the town has the potential of providing contributions to some much needed facilities in the town. It is normal practice for developers to provide money for facilities under a 106

agreement

The VWHDCs Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), currently out for consultation includes:

For VWHDC

- The town's leisure centre (extension to gym and car park)
- An additional football pitch (possibly an artificial pitch at the community school/leisure centre)
- Youth facilities (skate park) (I understand the plan is to buy additional land for this, rather than make use of space in the Country Park)
- Community Art. (I'm told this could be landscaping) and from FTC
- Faringdon Community Centre
- Faringdon Community Bus.

The Healthcheck action plan identifies a number of facilities of various sorts that appear to have been ignored by VWHDC in the SPG - these were recently discussed at a meeting of FTC, FAP, Chamber of Commerce and other groups.

Their list of requirements in priority order is:

- Car parking - to encourage existing and new residents to use the shops and facilities in the town- huge money needed
- A Skate Park to be located in the country park possibly near the new cricket ground £5k
- Youth Club to be located in the old bar in the Community Centre/Pump House, £30k
- Tucker Park Development.- rugby pitch - estimated cost £15,000- A Trim Track - estimated cost £17,000 An all weather sports pitch - estimated cost £200,000
- Additional Community Bus and paid driver, £100k
- National Coach Pick Up Point- in one of the planned bus stops on Park road
- Disabled lift in the Pump Rooms- £30k
- Faringdon Guide - for all residents - definitive information about the facilities in the town, £10k
- Performance venue, £50k

Sums suggested take account of the fact that government grants would be applied for ie Skate Park, Youth Club, Sports facilities

If you feel that it is important that Faringdon more directly benefits from the proposed housing it is imperative that you make your views known through completing the [Consultation form](#) by 4th May. The email address is given on the form

You can see the full Supplementary Planning Guidance on [VWHDC website](#), or [here for your convenience](#)

If VWHDC don't hear our views they are liable to negotiate for the facilities they have identified - Gym and car park extension, and football pitch at the Leisure Centre - their premises - and without due regard for the Healthcheck that Faringdon spent much time and effort in producing.

FTC are wanting around £100k (I think) for an additional community bus, plus a paid driver to transport workers to the new business area that is to be created. (I'm not convinced of the worth of this) and monies for the Pump Rooms - OK but FTC, as a council, don't have the range of grants available to them, so any money here may be best available to an independent group.

There is no way we will get everything on the list - the developers need to make a profit. It seems to me that while more car parking is so necessary for the town, it is unlikely that this development will be able to provide it- where would it go, and it is reckoned it would cost £1m+++. (It should be remembered that contributions to schools, library, water, roads etc are a given under this sort of scheme)

I am hoping that all this will be discussed at the FAP AGM on 10th April, Sudbury House - so please do come to that meeting but whether you do or you don't **please, please, complete the consultation form with your views of what Faringdon most needs. This is a never (at least not for ages) to be repeated opportunity**

Gene Webb

Coxwell Rd : Eagles wall - 2/4/06

As a resident of Eagles who is badly affected by the removal of the wall between Eagles and Coxwell Road, I am perturbed about the views expressed in the Faringdon Folly "that the process has been moved to its conclusion."

Eagles - a quiet cul-de-sac mainly occupied by elderly people - is now exposed to being used by school children and possibly cars as a short cut. Within one day, my garage had been entered.

The owners of the wall - D G Lewis Estates of Solihull - have been vague in responding to residents' concerns, but have mentioned that a fence may be put up at some time. I believe that this is an unacceptable alternative to a wall due to insubstantiality and lack of sound-proofing.

I am concerned for the safety of the cul-de-sac and also for the additional noise from traffic from Coxwell Road.

I have been unable to contact the owners by phone, but have now sent a letter together with a copy of the Folly article setting out my grievances. I have sent a copy of this to Matthew Barber, as Vale of White Horse Councillor.

I await proper action as soon as possible

Jill Dean

Scroll down for Talking Points prior to July 2006

Petition - where can I sign it? - 29/7/06

I've looked at the Portwell Bar a couple of times recently to try to find the entrance as I really wish to sign the petition about the 15 Minute Club closure.

Is it the door to the right of the Crown driveway and if so, when is it open so I can sign the petition?
I also thought that the suggestion that the petition could be signed on-line was great - but I suppose that this website has to remain impartial

Name supplied

Ed: It is the door to the right - down some steps. I'm sure it's open in the evenings. Perhaps lunch times vary depending on the day of the week.

Signing online is too techy for us!!

15 minute club - 28/7/06

Can I just say that I am very grateful to Cllr Steve Leniec for being the only Councillor so far willing to risk the wrath of Faringdon and the Town Council by posting his comments on the site. The points he makes are on the most part extremely valid. I say on the most part because I am the unnamed poster who he, rather patronisingly, states 'obviously has no working knowledge of how we operate in Faringdon Council'. Trust me Cllr Leniec, I actually have a considerable working knowledge of how you operate in the Town Council - I have lived in Faringdon for a long time and have had (and continue to have) many dealings with the Town Council in various different guises. I have also attended several Council Meetings as a volunteer in a number of different community sectors and, like most of the councillors in the town, I have a vested interest in social and economic development of Faringdon.

I would like to point out that our town councillors are all volunteers and the fact that they are prepared to put time and energy into their community is commendable and should not be undervalued. However, that said, it is very frustrating as a resident of Faringdon to see decisions, such as the closure of the 15 minute club, taken without adequate public consultation.

Cllr Leniec states that agendas and minutes are correctly published prior to meetings and I have absolutely no doubt that the Town Clerk and her deputy ensure that this happens - my apologies if I implied that this was not the case. I will say though that the level of publication is clearly the very bare minimum required to keep matters within the law and this is surely unacceptable for the year 2006?

A huge majority of Faringdon residents work and as a result must find it very hard to access Town Council offices, only open weekday mornings, or the public library. I can only trust that the notice board is kept up to date as I rarely get the chance to see it - it is hardly a prominent, noticeable feature in the town centre.

In the case of the 15 minute club the closure was not on the agenda and as a result the decision to close was simply not legal. The chair of the meeting should have ensured that the agenda was adhered to but on this occasion didn't. Human error is entirely excusable - it would just be nice if those involved would be brave enough simply to admit their mistake and issue an apology for the upset caused. This would surely alleviate so much bad feeling?!

I am really pleased that a meeting has been arranged for 8th August where the proposal can be properly discussed with representations from both sides of the argument. I only hope that the complainants are also given a fair hearing as they have as much right as anyone else to their views regardless of whether the majority agree with them or not.

Faringdon Town Council and the local community have the same interests at heart and need to pull together if the town is to stand any chance of progressing. If the community were adequately informed and consulted every step of the way we would not end up with the kind of rift developing that has here, and very much more could be achieved.

Cllr Leniec made reference in his posting to the Willes Close Skate Park proposal and I quote how 'it is an example of councillors investing considerable time and energy over more than a year only to be denied by a

possible challenge by a few residents - sound familiar?' I think this is very disrespectful to those residents both in Willes Close and elsewhere, who had genuine concerns over the viability of the proposal, and illustrates once again that far from being a partnership with the community the relationship between Town Council and local people is strained to say the least.

The Willes Close issue it is actually a prime example of the Town Council having a great intention but not listening to and respecting the views of local residents, and actually putting time and energy into a project that was simply not viable.

As a result a few volunteers with support from the Town Council are still having to fight hard to get a Skate Park. It is wholly unfair for Cllr Leniec to blame this on local residents - the Town Council has to take responsibility too.

I would like to urge Faringdon Town Council to please drag themselves into 2006 and get the website regularly up-dated. Advertise Council Meetings in other establishments in town, make use of local newsletters and other publications. Please ensure that consultation does actually involve everybody and lets not have this kind of scenario developing again.

My apologies for the long posting and thanks to anyone who actually bothered to take the time to read it!
Name supplied

15 minute club - support from Barcelona - 27/07/06

Hello, my name is Jemma, you may all know me as Dee and Martins daughter, and I worked at the Portwell Bar. I live in Barcelona now, (bad news travels fast huh!) and even though I am not in Faringdon to enjoy the benefits of the 15 minute club anymore, I am absolutely disgusted that the council would even think about trying to stop this event. T

he 15 minute club has done so much for the town, and is one of the main reasons I had made so many friends there. Its the only regular event that really brings everyone in the community together and showcases all the unbelievable hidden talent that faringdon and surrounding areas have to offer.

I cant be there to fight the good fight, but I say go for it, don't take this laying down.
Residents of faringdon; stand up, unite, and take on the council and the two residents that want to spoil such a fantastic event in a great town.

Faringdon wont be the same without the 15 minute club, and I dont need to be there to know that.

Good luck everybody, I hope you get the results you want.
And Mum, martin, if your reading this, dont let the b****ds grind you down! if anyone can fix it, you can.
Go 15 minute club and go Portwell bar!!
Hello to any friends who might be reading this, I miss you all!!
Love Jemma Lockwood

15 minute club - action - 28/7/06

OK - so we're all against this decision for a variety of reasons, and from what is being said, there is a chance of over-turning it.

But we will all need to do something ourselves in order for this to happen. Voicing our opinions is a great start, but we do need to take action as well.

If anyone knows of where we can sign a petition (is the Portwell Bar an obvious starting point? or what about this great website...?) - that would be a great start.
It only takes 5 secs of our time to add our name, but shows a weight of support that cannot be ignored.

As Cllr Leniec has suggested, why don't we make sure that we meet the Councillors attending the 15 minutes club on 6th August and let them know how much this means to Faringdon.

If there's 15 minutes of public speaking time on 8th August - let's make sure that it is used. I'm not sure I fully understand about the possibilty of "asking previously notified questions" - does that mean sending something

to the Council before 8th August?

Has anyone got any thoughts as to how we can go about making sure that this decision is over-turned?
Sarah Allen-Stevens

15 Minute Club : Petition - 28/7/06

In response to all the positive feedback received so far, I am please to announce that a petition is available for signing at the Portwell Bar.

Please, everyone, come along and add your name to it.

Our intention is to hand it over at the council meeting on the 8th August.
The petition will also be available at the (possibly?) final 15 minute club on Sunday 6th August.
Thanks
Simon Holmes

15 Minute Club - 28/7/06

It always seems surprising to me that whenever someone (or two) develops a good idea, some one (or two) seem Hell-bent on stopping it.

So let us consider the mechanics of the 15 minute club.
The two entrepreneurs applied to use a public building. The application was accepted (I assume) as it fell within the guidelines of acceptable usage.

The venture proved a success.
It proved a success for the majority of people in Faringdon (a small but never-the-less and hither-to democratic place). It proved a success for the youth of the town. It proved a success for some of the more wrinkly members of the town. It proved a success offering additional employment in town. It proved a success providing pleasure and enjoyment for hundreds of the town's people.

However, the success of 15 minute club must have lead to huge cries of dis-satisfaction as I understand that the town council have vetoed use of the Town Hall for the purpose for which it is made available to the town's population on a Sunday night.

I have since learned that the huge cries of dis-satisfaction are actually from one (or two) residents who appear not to have shouted loudly - but very quietly is some-one's ear.

This would not seem to be a democratic way of processing a "dispute" and I wonder if it is a legal way of processing a dispute.

I am president of the Chamber of Commerce. I and my colleagues spend much of our time supporting the businesses of the town to make Faringdon a more vibrant and wealthy place. The 15 minute club is one of Faringdon's success stories. I do not think it acceptable that three people out of several thousands should consider themselves authorised to prevent legal trade within town without reference to anyone other than themselves.

I also run a business in Faringdon and live in Faringdon and as a mere member of the democratic populace would like each of the councillor's who voted to stop the 15 minute club to explain to me their understanding of that word - democratic.
Nick Elwell

Shocked about the closure of 15 minute club - 27/7/06

On behalf of my band, Surface Noise (four 14 year old kids from Faringdon), I would like to say we are shocked about the closure of the 15 minute club.

How many people visit the 15 minute club? definitely more than 2!!

The club is an excellent place for bands to start and to improve their performing skills.

We are very disappointed.

Jim Duffen (Surface Noise)

Opposed to the closure of the 15 minute club - 27/7/06

I would just like to add my voice to all the others opposed to the closure of the 15 Minute Club. It has been fantastic for the town. Its closure would be an unbelievably short-sighted move and a terrible loss.
David Janata

Please don't close the 15 minute club - 27/7/06

hi

i feel that stopping the 15min.. should'nt be allowed to happen because not only does it keep youths off the street but at the same time its giving young bands of faringdon well know and boosed their confidence!!!!!!

if you do end up closing the 15 min club then PLEASE replace it with something like it 4 young and old people to have fun!!!!

from William Luce (drummer for SURFACE NOISE)

15 Minute club - 27/7/06

Thank you to those who have responded positively to my post, can I assure you that many of my fellow councillors share my concerns.

It would be impossible for me to respond to all the points and critisms posted on this site in recent days, however I will reply in general and update you on the current situation. I find it very frustrating that one decision taken by three councillors on one evening has been taken as the normal operating mode of council.

The un named poster who criticised council procedures obviously has no working knowledge of how we operate in Faringdon. Council meetings and committees are always correctly called and advertised. I accept that our web site is poor, but a schedule of meetings is posted together with agendas on the council notice board. Council and committees always provide a slot on the agenda for public speaking and questions from the public. We also hold Town meetings to discuss the annual precept and an annual town meeting as a report on the past year. Minutes of all council and committee meetings are available for inspection at the council offices and in the library. Councillors often find that the decision making process of local government is frustratingly slow with frequent checks and balances to ensure that public money (your money) is correctly spent and accounted for. Often we take a project and invest time and energy only to be frustrated at the final hurdle. The proposed skatepark on council land at Willes close was an example of councillors investing considerable time and energy over more than a year only to be denied by a possible challenge by a few residents - sound familiar?

Now onto the update on the 15 Minute Club situation. There will be an extra ordinary meeting of Council called for the 8th August at which a motion under notice will be debated, seeking to overturn the decision of the Venues committee and reinstate the Sunday club meetings.

As I have already stated meetings of Council are open to the public with the possibility of public speaking time. This is normally limited to 15 minutes in total shared between the speakers, it is also possible to ask previously notified questions. It is quite possible that on this occasion the Chair would allow time for speakers from either side of the debate in the interest of natural justice.

The reason these are previously notified is to allow a full answer to be considered. This meeting would also be the best opportunity to hand over a petition with maximum effect.

I am still trying to encourage as many councillors as possible to visit at least part of the club night on the 6th August. I look forward to meeting you there.

Steve Leniec

15 Minute Club - 27/07/06

I am gob smacked at the news of the 15 minutes Club...!! This is not just an event for the good people of Faringdon, but I know of many folk from Wantage who regularly put the 15 minute club on their calenders.

Why did the Chair of the Town Council committee not stick to the agenda? How was a vote able to have been passed when the agenda did not call for a vote? Were the protestors also council members?

I would like to add my full weight of support to the 15 minute club and to the organisers and to the future of art events in Faringdon. Where's the nearest petition?

I would also like to add a vote of thanks to Cllr Leniec for speaking out so frankly. And to Dee Lockwood for letting us know that these residents had obviously made up their minds no matter what steps Martin or David took.

I echo someone else's comments - are these the same residents that stopped the monthly youth event in the Corn Exchange?

I understand from the Town Council offices that an extraordinary meeting of the Venues committee is being considered for 8th August?

Does anyone know anything further?

Sarah Allen-Stevens

Town Council Regs/15 Minute Club - 26/07/06

In all fairness - Cllr Leniec did not suggest that the decision concerning the closure of the 15 minute club was illegal; but that he did not think that it should have been taken that evening.

He did say that he was confident that the meeting was correctly called and advertised publicly (as they had always been) on the notice board outside the corn exchange.

It is regrettable that the council website has not been updated regularly, but there is nothing in the regulations to say that information must be published *on a website*, merely that it should be published.

Cllr Leniec explained why he did not usually reply to issues on this website - it will only confirm his fears if his words are misinterpreted.

Why not address a coherent written question to the council, and SHOULD the proposal and its subsequent vote prove to have been contrary to statutory procedures, there are grounds for the decision to be overturned

Or/and - simply ask for the closure to be reconsidered at the next appropriate meeting in the light of the considerable opposition by the town. After all, nothing is set in stone.

Hilary T .

Uvillia - 15 minute club - 26/7/06

The 15 minute club was our first gig as the band Uvillia and it was a great opportunity to share our musical ability to kids and adults alike.

we feel that other young bands like us should have the chance to play in such a great atmosphere, with such a warm and enthusiastic audience.

They really made us as a band feel the vibes of success!

We find the situation an absolute disgrace that the council can bow down for just two complaints from local residents living near by. The closure of the 15 minute club will enable other young bands such as our selves to experience what we felt as a band.

Over the years there has been a dramatic increase in young musical talent and you're taking the candy from the baby.

We would also like point out the fact that the council got many complaints from the young people that had no where to hang out (Skateboard) and still nothing has been arranged. This seems stupid considering that only two people from our community managed to persuade the entire council to stop such an special venue.

So much support and help went into organising the 15 minute club its a shame to never be able to play again.

IN CONCLUSION IS IT SO THAT THE COUNCIL LACKS SO MUCH BRAIN POWER THAT CLOSING THE

15 MINUTE CLUB WILL BE LIKE STARTING A PUBLIC WAR.

Yours sincerely
Uvillia

Town Council regulations - 15 minute club - 26/7/06

For those wishing to know a little more about Town Council regulations the UK Government website states the following:-

'Every council must publish a 'forward work plan' listing when key decisions will be taken. They also publish meeting papers at least five working days beforehand. The minutes of the meeting summarising decisions made must also be published. You can attend most meetings of the council, although usually you will not be able to speak at them.

While the full council (a meeting of all members of the council) is theoretically responsible for all the decisions made - in practice most of the work is delegated to smaller groups of councillors or council officers (paid employees).

Councils have different ways of making decisions. Since 2000 most councils in England have had a small executive group that is responsible for the overall business of the council. Its decisions are subject to scrutiny by a different group of councillors meeting in overview and scrutiny panels.

Most smaller councils have a committee structure dealing with separate aspects of the council's business, rather than having executive and scrutiny panels'

I have had a look at Faringdon Town Council's website - according to the list of scheduled meetings for 2006/07 there have been Venues Committee meetings on 11th April 2006 and 14th July 2006. However the last agenda published (and its title actually states Corn Exchange and Social Committee but one has to assume they are the same!) is for the meeting on 11th April 2006 and the last minutes published are for 14th November 2005.

Cllr Steve Leniec is clearly absolutely right to suggest that the decision made to close the 15 Minute Club is not legal (and thank you Cllr Leniec for giving us the hope that someone in Faringdon Town Council does understand local government procedures!) - in fact judging by the distinct lack of information on any recent committee meetings I actually wonder if any of the decisions made by the Town Council are actually legitimate?

The Town Council states in its aims and objectives that it has five guiding principles:-

- Communicate and Consult
- Provide Civic Leadership and Civic Pride
- Enhance Local Facilities
- Provide Necessary Services
- Foster Community Development

Someone please tell me where Communicate and Consult came into the 15 minute club decision?! I would be more than happy to stand corrected if anyone can give me any other evidence but isn't it about time some changes were made and that basic principles of Local Government are followed in our town?!

Name supplied

The closure of the 15 Minute Club - 26/7/06

..... is a disasterous move on the Committee's part. It has taken a valuable community driven event away from the town simply because of pressure from a particularly vocal minority who essentially highjacked the agenda of the meeting. They have ignored the wishes of those that regularly enjoy the event and thrown the democratic handbook out of the window.

Let us not forget that if the 15.M.C. had been taking place in a private venue, then there would be absolutely NO useful or permissable evidence that would persuade a Licensing Committee that the premise should stop the event from running.

Not only did i enjoy the event on an occasional basis, I was also extremely envious that such an event does not occur anywhere near where I live. The committee should be able to recognise that they rushed their decision and have the courage and humility to admit that they were wrong in the first...something that most

politicians fail to be able to do
Oli Wright

15 Minute Club - 26/7/06

I have now lived in Faringdon for over 8 years.

When I moved in there was nothing going on, it was a place to sleep and leave in the morning. At weekends it was a place to get out off. Nothing went on, there was nothing to do, and in fact it was boring. Over the last few years things have started to change.

We had the Faringdon Arts Festival this month which was a great success with over 800 people attending on the Friday night alone. Saturday and Sunday the stage was full of talented people from Faringdon. It was great to have the 15 minute club part of the Arts Festival giving other residents the opportunity to get on stage and show us what they can do.

The young kids in Faringdon are always being told they are a waste of space and rude and obnoxious, yet every month they line up and take their turn on stage. What wonderful training they are getting or should I say were getting.

With over 150 to 200 residents attending the 15 minute club on a Sunday evening surely demonstrate that this event is an important and enjoyable club within our town.

So how on earth can two residents dictate that the 15 minute club should close? They moved into their houses with the full knowledge that an entertainment venue existed round the corner from them. (If they didn't know then they need to sue their surveyors). This venue has been around for many years and it is the only venue we have in Faringdon to host this type of event.

Are these residents going to start to complain about the cars using Gloucester Street or Marlborough Street on a Sunday? Will they start to complain about the shoppers using Budgens until 9 pm. If these residents are that unhappy with the environment they live in then they should leave. Faringdon has worked too hard and the people of Faringdon are working to hard to let two people dictate what should and shouldn't go on in and around Faringdon. Will they want to stop Festive Faringdon next, after all Father Christmas comes in on Thomas the Tank Engine and that makes just as much noise, especially with all the kids getting over excited.

Bah hum bug to you two residents - shame on you
Name supplied

15 Minute Club-26/07/06

I have attended most of the 15-Minute Clubs, and find the closure very sad. It was a place where people could congregate safely, nobody got particularly drunk, there were no drugs, and no fights. These days that is rare indeed - even some wedding receptions can't boast that, but they won't be banned!

The club is also one of the few venues in Faringdon that people on their own feel they can go to. Women, and men, on their own have an opportunity to get out once a month and enjoy live music in a safe environment where everyone is friendly. The range of different acts has always been interesting, and of very high quality. Where will all these talented people go now? How will the young kids get started, getting experience of playing in front of an appreciative audience?

Faringdon is losing one of its best innovations for many years, and on the say-so of so few people I can count them on the fingers of one hand. The Council should explain why they voted for the closure, ignoring the wishes of the masses, as well as the Environmental Health Officer's findings.
Joyce Wright

Budgens - 26-07-06

The reason we got Budgens and not something bigger and better is that not enough people live in Faringdon. As more dwellings are built, no doubt we shall get the Tesco, Sainsburys or whatever we lust after at the edge of town and then Budgens will decline and fall, like -er- the Roman Empire - alternatively become a

giant charity hypermarket.

Then TP will be swamped with complaints about the fact that out-of-town supermarkets are killing the centre of town. Eventually of course we will all shop online - Folly Hill will be dwarfed by a slab-like grey shed of a warehouse - we shall have everything delivered and complain that the roads are choccer with vans and there's nowhere for us, or them to park.

But before that happens Budgens could be turned into a super duper state-of-the-art soundproofed performance space with its own dedicated car park, and the Corn Exchange, hopelessly outdated as a performance venue could become a trendy wine bar/eatery with a high level walkway from the 'theatre'
Now there's a thought!
name supplied

15 Minute Club-26/07/06

OK so the 15 minute club is under threat of iminant closure.

What I need to know is what can I do about it?

Are there petitions and where? Is there a named person I can send a protest letter to, who and where?

Has anyone got the local press and radio/TV involved?

I'm sure I'm not the only one who would like to voice an opinion and make a differance, but never having done so before, I haven't a clue where to start.

There's no doubt the 15min club is worth saving.. lets make our protestations effective.

name supplied

15 Minute Club-26/07/06

Good on you Cllr. Steve Leniec for putting your head above the parapet.

However, whilst you say that the item was correctly called and advertised on the notice board as usual, you say that you understand that the item was actually to discuss quotes for sound proofing. Clearly, this misrepresented the item.

If the Town Council has any decency and sense of fair play the item should be taken back to the next committee for proper consideration.

Has anyone looked at the TC website recently, its absolute rubbish.

It is not updated, and there is no mention of the committee.

It certainly cannot be that hard to post committee agendas on the web site so that all can be informed of what the TC do and do not do.

Devils advocate

15 Minute Club-26/07/06

15 Minute Club : Wow! As the one who started this whole debate, can I just say how overwhelmed I am to see such a fantastic show of public opinion. It shows that there are many people in the town who really do care what goes on.

I have to say that every opinion I have about the whole situation has already been more than adequately represented by others, but I'd just like to say thanks to you all for having your say, and I hope you will all make these points to the town council as well.

Lastly, but by absolutely no means least, thanks to Cllr Steve Leniac for taking the time to read our views and respond to them in this forum. I find it reassuring to know that we aren't just talking amongst ourselves, and I hope this whole stream of conversation will make a material difference to the town.

PS. Thanks to Gene and Hilary for keeping up with the pace of all these postings !

Simon Holmes

Budgens - 26-07-06

Just a little clarification on an earlier issue which is obviously almost as controversial as the 15 Minute Club closure...I did (and still do!) support the view that Budgens is 'rubbish' but would like to clarify that this is not directed at the staff but at the chain itself! I'm not going into the why's and wherefore's now as it's not the issue at stake but my criticism lies with the 'big-wigs' (for want of a better word) in Budgens HQ, not those in Faringdon who are all just doing their jobs (often beyond the call of duty as you say Hill!) - just thought I'd say that before more people take umbrage!

No offence was meant and my apologies if it was caused!
The still frustrated resident!

15 Minute Club-26/07/06

This is really sad.

We have now been living in Faringdon for the last 3 years and I also believe this is the best thing that has happened to this town since we have been living here.

I can not believe that the complainers did not know that the Corn Exchange is a public venue from which they can expect noise.

You can almost compare it to moving close to Heathrow Airport and after moving in, start to complain about the noise level.

Complainers, you knew what the Corn Exchange is about before you moved in.

For me the 15 minute club is the best thing that has happened to my and my family.

My son is now a regular performer at the 15 minute club and before the 15 minute club he would not have dared to get onto a stage and perform.

The same I can say about my wife, who is now also a regular performer.

Please do not take the 15 minute club away..

Raoul van Eindhoven

Budgens - 26-07-06

Budgens... Sainsburys online shopping.....no need to enter any supermarket again. Marvellous!
name supplied

15 Minute Club-26/07/06

How genuinely delighted I (and I expect many other townspeople) are that one of our councillors has responded publicly to the debate about the 15 minute club. It is truly frustrating to read/hear about a seemingly incomprehensible local authority decision and not be aware of the real circumstances surrounding it.

I quote -

"Whilst it is entirely correct for the committee to consider the views of objectors on issues, I do not believe that a decision to close the club should have been taken that evening. The fact that a proposal to close the club was not on the agenda denied both the founders, residents and pro-club councillors an opportunity to express their views"

Could not the fact that the proposal to close the club was not actually on the agenda be a convenient/face saving way to invalidate the decision - at least until the organisers of the events have had a chance to represent themselves adequately? Could this be debatable?

Cllr Leniec you must be congratulated for responding to this issue in the face of considerable hostility. The very fact that you have written (rather than spoken) ensures that what you say can not be taken down and misconstrued.

FC

Budgens - 26-07-06

Budgens. OK, so it's not the "best" supermarket in the world (although the meat counter is terrific) but just

consider what life is like elsewhere. Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, in Swindon, Cirencester, Wantage, Abingdon etc. Have you ever queued at any of those at Bank Holiday or Christmas? I rest my case.
Steve Wright

15 Minutes - the reason why.-25/7/06

Why is Faringdon such a great place to live? I moved here 3 years ago to join my partner, now wife, in what I would consider to be the friendliest place I have ever lived.

It has character, charm, lovely people and since the start of the Arts Festival and one of its spin offs, the 15 Minute Club, a vibrant music community.

There are many of us who are involved in this event, from David and Martin, through to the bar staff, Rod the lights man, Tim for sound, some of us as just "roadies" to ensure it all works - plus, of course, the artists of all ages and persuasions - and I am one of them too.

My musician friends from Swindon and Cirencester regularly attend as there is nothing like this in their own locality. It is simple - it is just a wonderful experience to see folks get up and "do their thing".

Others have already put forward arguments in favour of retaining this event and I would add just one comment. Don't kill what is for many, an enjoyable, uplifting, entertaining and, for the artists of all ages and levels, a challenging night out ONCE A MONTH.

Steve Wright - Roadie, gear provider and (when I can) musician

Budgens. - 25/7/06

OK, so it's not the "best" supermarket in the world (although the meat counter is terrific) but just consider what life is like elsewhere.

Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, in Swindon, Cirencester, Wantage, Abingdon etc.

Have you ever queued at any of those at Bank Holiday or Christmas?

I rest my case.

Steve Wright

15 Minute club closure.- 25/7/06

I am not normally moved to respond to postings on this site, as a councillor I have learned by long experience that anything one says can be taken down and misconstrued in evidence, however on this occasion against my better judgement...

From the outset I should stress that I am not a member of the committee that took the decision to close the Sunday bookings of the 15 minute club after August. That said I am confident that the meeting was correctly called and advertised on the notice board as is normal. I understand that the agenda item on the 15 minute club concerned quotes for sound proofing and it was under this item that a proposal to close the club was debated and passed. It seems that the principal objectors were present and put pressure on the committee to take action.

Whilst it is entirely correct for the committee to consider the views of objectors on issues, I do not believe that a decision to close the club should have been taken that evening.

The fact that a proposal to close the club was not on the agenda denied both the founders, residents and pro-club councillors an opportunity to express their views. It is my opinion that this decision flies in the face of all that the town council has tried to do to encourage the regeneration of the town. Consider that we have given grants to support the MADD fest and the Arts week, that we resolved at our last meeting to work with the Youth Service to provide a room for youth activities, that we have agreed to lease the old theatre as a music workshop and then... we close the 15 minute club!

Yes, it is right that we consider objections and seek to mitigate any nuisance; but in my view the remedy lay in the tight control and discipline of the club which Martin had introduced, in conjunction with the council, following initial complaints. When I visited the club in June the noise levels both inside and in Gloucester street seemed relatively unobtrusive for a music event. As has been reported, the Vale Environmental Health Officer felt that there was no statutory nuisance when he took readings. I have urged all of my fellow councillors to come to the club on the 6th August to experience it for themselves. I for one do not want to

loose such a vibrant addition to the towns growing reputation as an arts venue and will fight within council for it to continue.

Before you attack (lobby) individual councillors please remember that many could be sympathetic and if we get another vote we will need as many as possible to support the club.

Cllr. Steve Leniec

Poor Budgens - 25/7/06

Oh, poor Budgens - please don't drag them into this - it's insulting to the local staff, who are kind and courteous to a fault.

OK so it isn't Waitrose, or some other posh store with lots of PR and up-market lines - but where else would you find a supermarket whose manager would send out the van (in the absence of any police presence) to rescue the senior citizen who had taken a wrong turn and was weaving along the A420 in his invalid car? and whose staff would run up the road after you when you absent mindedly left your card in the machine?

It isn't their fault when the supplies run out, or the van isn't there on time, or when the company doesn't pay enough for comfortable staffing levels, so don't be so hard on them.

They do their best.

Hil Taylor

15 minute club closure - 25/7/06

I was dismayed to read of the council's decision re the fifteen minute club, and wondered if the following might be of any use in getting the decision reversed.

Firstly, Faringdon Town Council have never been noted for their strict adherence to procedure - if they haven't published their agenda for a public meeting (I believe committee meetings are still 'public') in reasonable time for you to see it - and I think there will be something statutory about that - then you have grounds for appeal. Likewise any other minor infringement of the rules. They are not obliged to consult you (organiser) personally, though, even though you are involved with the events, only to publish the agendas - and if their website is anything to go by - these are well out of date.

Secondly, it's worth writing straight away to the council with a complaint about the way the decision was taken, ie not enough weight given to the advantages of continuing to hold the events, etc. - If you make a formal complaint they are obliged to deal with it in a timely manner, not more than about twelve weeks from them receiving it. (in writing)

Thirdly - if you feel that they have not dealt with the matter satisfactorily, you can appeal to the local government ombudsman. I'm not sure whether the matter would come within the remit of the ombudsman service if they've followed the rules properly, (and I bet they didn't) but it's worth rattling the cage if nothing else works. There's nothing that local councils dislike more than trouble from above, and unwelcome publicity/scrutiny.

I haven't checked all that out recently, but I think it's still valid, you may know it anyway, so just trying to be helpful. I have found in the past that a combination of persistence and pedantry can work well. Trust me - I have employed both in the past and won by just wearing 'them' down.

Alternatively - I have discovered some wonderful comfy earplugs, they work a treat - available from Boots, - just ask for 'soft' ear plugs.

Buy a gross for the critics.

name supplied

Paris to London Cycle-a-thon: September 14th - for the Shooting Star Hospice - 25/7/06

Life's a laugh - so make the most of it and don't feel too bad about the rest of the world.

Just do a little to help every now then.

I will drag my sleek and streamlined body from London to Paris on two unpowered wheels. Now those of you who know me well will appreciate the true enormity of this challenge. I will do this thing to support Greg Scott - who lost his son to the ravages of a particularly nasty cancer (not that I've ever met a nice one!) and has put into place an ongoing and living memorial in the form of this annual challenge.

Donating through this site is simple, fast and totally secure. It is also the most efficient way to sponsor me: Shooting Star Children's Hospice will receive your money faster and an extra 28% will be recovered from the revenue. Just Click Here! <http://www.justgiving.com/Nick-on-bike>
If you prefer, you can send a cheque payable to The shooting Star Childrens Hospice
c/o Bordengate-Insurance (www.bordengate.com) at 14 Market Place, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, SN7 7HP. Tel 08456 580510

Thanks - in blind hope and maximum anticipation.....
Nick Elwel
08456 580510

15 Minute Club. - 25/7/06

Personally I think its time for some accountability.

Given that the Town Council have effectively taken away an important facility from the residents of Faringdon, they should justify their position in the context of seemingly knowing better than the professionally appointed Environmental Health Officer.

The Town Council owe it to the residents of Faringdon to explain the decision that they have taken. In fact they should morally answer the following questions:

1. Why were representatives of the 15 minute club not invited or notified of the meeting, but the objectors were.
2. What qualifications do the two councillors who voted for closure actually have which make them capable of reaching a negative conclusion against the advice of the Environmental health officer?
3. Why did a councillor abstain, what is the point of being a councillor if you have no balls to vote either for or against? If you have no views why be a councillor in the first place?

So the gauntlet is laid down.

However, I very much doubt that the above answers will be addressed by the mayor, chair or any of the councillors. If answers are given, they will at least have retained some respect. Then again pigs may fly.

In as far as the residents who have complained are concerned, there should not be a witch hunt, they are entirely at liberty to object to the club as many times as they wish. And if their amenity is so affected to cause material environmental health issues then all this talk about the masses against the few is misplaced, health issues must prevail. However, this would not appear to be the case in these circumstances given the environmental health officers position.

Its not a case about hundreds of supporters against only two objectors, its about whether there really is material harm generated. I personally would take the advice of a professional who knows about such things, and expect them to monitor the situation in the future.

A medium term solution is to run for a position on the town Council and elect pro 15 minute supporters. I would do it myself, but I'm inclined to take an opposing view just to address any imbalance.
Devil's Advocate

Outraged of Faringdon - 25/7/06

I am outraged but not in the least bit surprised to hear that once again some members of our Town Council have made a ridiculous undemocratic decision that has caused outcry in Faringdon and upset a huge number of the residents who they are supposed to represent.

The Fifteen Minute Club has been a superb addition to Faringdon and has really helped to put our town on the map.

For far too long Faringdon Town Council has been constituted of Town Councillors who have their own

agendas and not the needs of Faringdon residents at heart (I know this is not true of all of them and do not wish to tar them all with the same brush, but decisions always seem to come down to the same old faces and I for one am sick of it!) Any new comer who stands for council seems to end up leaving because they get constantly voted out by the 'old-timers' who don't seem to know when it's time to move on.

Unfortunately we have not had a democratic election of councillors in Faringdon for a very long time, as there are never more candidates than places. As a result we keep seeing the same faces over and over again. I whole-heartedly agree with Cllr Alan Hickmore's comments in July's edition of The Folly that we need to see enough candidates stand next year to enforce an election - only then will Faringdon residents be fairly and democratically represented. Please all of you who read Talking Points think seriously about standing, or plague anyone you know who might be interested in becoming a Town Councillor to stand, so that we can see some healthy changes made in Faringdon's governance!

People are so quick to complain about the lack of social activities in the town for young and old alike, yet seemingly when motivated and enthusiastic individuals work hard to rectify this situation, they receive no support from the Town Council who's actual role in the Town is to help see it flourish not die a death.

I daresay the two residents that complained constantly are the same residents who complained when Martin tried to organise a monthly Youth Club in the Corn Exchange and as a result prevented it from happening again. Might I suggest that these residents go and move to a field somewhere where they can complain until they are blue in the face about the lowing of the cows and birdsong in the mornings without anyone else suffering from their selfishness!

Finally I would like to thank all of the organisers of the Fifteen Minute Club for working so hard to bring something really positive to the town! I look forward to seeing a copy of the petition so that I can sign it along with several hundred others. I would like to add that I have never actually been able to attend the club on a Sunday night but unlike the five people who's voices unfortunately have been heard I fully understand how important this event is to Faringdon and do not want to see it go!

and yes Dee, I'll support you in your protestations about Budgets it is indeed rubbish!!
When's the next TC meeting?!

A very frustrated resident!
Name supplied

15 Minute Club....Well done Dee! - 25/7/06

You have just about summed up everything that the majority of people in Faringdon think about this disgustingly undemocratic decision to close down the 15 minute club. Considering the way the whole thing was processed, I question the degree of legality in this ruling? Perhaps someone of legal standing can advise.

For those who don't know, I am David Reynolds' wife, but i am not taking sides on a personal level. I actually sometimes resent the amount of time he spends on all his "projects". However, I recognise the fantastic contribution he, Martin and others make to the Town. Faringdon needs events just like this.

The town was dead when we first came here 7 years ago but now is fast becoming a buzzing, vibrant community.

Thank goodness people such as the complainants, and councillors who can't possibly have the best interests of the town at heart, are in the minority, else this town would never have dragged itself into the 21st century.

I'll sign any petition going about this.

Lets exercise a bit of people power!

Trish Reynolds

Dear Residents of Faringdon - 25/7/06

I write on behalf of the Faringdon Area Project (FAP) at the closure of the 15 minute club.

FAP has spent the last few years championing good and vibrant projects to ensure that our Market Towns is a vibrant and thriving community to live in.

Over the last few years Faringdon has gained the reputation as being a town full of artistic talent. We are known for the Faringdon Arts Festival, the MADD May Fest and Festive Faringdon to name but a few. We are also known as the town that gives voice to our talented residents in Poetry, Music and Dance.

FAP has worked long and hard with numerous volunteers putting in long hours to improve our community and ensure that we are a Market Town that moves towards a brighter future and not a sleepy town that ends up becoming a dormitory. It was this reason in 2002 that Faringdon conducted the Healthcheck and created the Action Plan that so many people have worked so hard on.

The closure of the 15 minute club is in many ways taking a step back. This event started in the local Portwell Wine Bar and out grew the Portwell in a matter of months. The obvious location to move the 15 minute club to was the Corn Exchange a public facility that generates an income for the Town, provides a valuable service to the community in providing employment and an evening of entertainment that is enjoyed by families. This venue has been used for these purposes for over a 100 years.

Whilst we understand that the noise of the 15 minutes club can become an annoyance, we can not stand by and let our only performance venue become eroded by a minority of people who do not understand the implications and the importance of this valuable venue to the future of Faringdon and our community.

Julie Farmer
Managing Coordinator
Faringdon Area Project

Music in Faringdon - 25/7/06

Music is what Faringdon does best.

Over the last two or so years Faringdon has been overwhelmed by fantastic professional, semi professional, and amateur performances supplied by both the Madd Mob and the Festival organisers in Faringdon. Everything I have seen has been of the highest order, and I know what I am talking about as I have played in bands since 1972.

My repetition of the word "Faringdon" is not a mistake, this has all happened in Faringdon, not Abingdon, Witney or any of the other towns in this area where everything seems to "happen". We have all moaned "nothing ever goes on in this dump" it was the main cry of young and old alike for many years,

now we finally have something which seems to suit all ages and what happens, it gets banned, ye gods!!!,

start a petition and get this stupidity stopped, present it to the five councillors, or whoever turns up, let them know its the majority that needs to be listened to for once, Faringdon does music best, don't let moanin g become better.

Jim Horton

JUST TAKE 15 MINUTES... - 25/7/07

Forgive me Martin for you know not what I do! Your loud-mouthed Northerner can keep quiet no more. Deep breath!

I am Martin Phillips's fiancé, because of this I almost did not post. I'm bound to defend anything he does aren't I? (..you should ask him that question!)

In this case that fact is incidental, I love the 15 Minute Club. Nobody could possibly argue the popularity of the 15 Minute Club, or the fact that it has indeed put Faringdon on the map. This town has never felt so vibrant.

Martin Phillips, David Reynolds and friends (Tim Cartwright, Rod Green and a host of passionate volunteers, too many to list, not to mention the supporters and musicians) have added to the music scene, and Faringdon is fast becoming the place to be. From the feedback we are receiving the feeling in the Town is very strong from young and old alike. Even the students of Faringdon Community College are up in arms. The 15 Minute Club will be a great loss to Faringdon.

I have no hidden agenda, this is a blatant attempt to rally support from all those who support the 15 Minute Club and/or love Faringdon. (Yes, I will say that in the same sentence.) Martin's partner or not, I am furious! I have lived most of my life in big cities. Forgive me, but on my arrival I found Faringdon one of the most pleasant and friendly places on the planet, but a little ..dead. The biggest issue at that time was the

apparently 'offensively large' lizard sign above the pet shop (WHAT?!!!) But enough people spoke up, and the sign stayed.

Nobody wants Faringdon to be anything like a big city, but just to find the right balance. The 15 Minute Club was very much a step in the right direction. Unfortunately two residents complained, constantly. Environmental health were called in, but informed the council that they were satisfied with the noise levels. Then the two residents complained some more.

In an attempt to try and please everyone, after a meeting with the council Martin and David agreed to have all the louder bands and musicians finish by 10.00pm, leaving the solo acts and those needing no PA to the end slots (which he and David Reynolds did). The two residents agreed, saying they did not wish to see the end of the 15 Minute Club, but just to find a satisfactory compromise. This was done.

Then the two residents complained some more. Said residents then tried to rally support to stop the 15 Minute Club (???) but were met by opposition from their 'own neighbours'.

Then the two residents complained some more. On the afternoon of the last 15 Minute Club, the two residents telephoned Martin and stated again that they did not wish to see the end of the 15 Minute Club, but just to find a satisfactory compromise. That evening the event finished half an hour earlier at 10.30pm.

Then they complained some more. It was then suggested that the 15 Minute Club finish at 9.00pm ..would there be any point!

At another meeting, whereby Martin was asked to attend in his role as the 'bar franchisee' at the Corn Exchange, supplying the standard monthly report, and not as one of the organisers of the event receiving complaints, or the hirer of the hall, a surprise vote as to whether or not the 15 Minute Club should continue, was sprung on him. He had no forewarning, had not been given the opportunity to prepare a valid argument in support of the 15 Minute Club or any supporting facts, rally any speakers or supporters or even inform his 15 Minute Club partner David Reynolds. (As David rightly said, how did the two residents know when the organisers did not?) This vote was not even written into the agenda given to Martin for this committee meeting. He arrived, the two residents were given the floor, Martin wasn't given the opportunity to defend, and the vote was taken.

End of the 15 Minute Club. (..pending soundproofing. Sure. Posts, moving and goal spring to mind.

I would ask everyone to consider:

- *As has been said, do five people (just two residents?!!!) have more say than the masses?
- *Did anyone ask the masses?
- *The two residents chose to live in these properties in full knowledge they were in close proximity to the town's main venue for events.
- *Environmental health were satisfied with the noise levels.
- *The 15 Minute Club is held for just one evening per month, not every weekend!
- *Is this the opening of the floodgates for any individual in the town to whinge to the council and put a stop to anything that may provide enjoyment and entertainment to the majority, or perhaps have Faringdon recognised further afield than the signpost on the A420?
- *Do all the members of the Town Council really have Faringdon's best interests at heart?
- *Do the Town Council not need this extra revenue?
- *Since the start of the 15 Minute juniors at 5.00pm, is there anything else to replace this for the youth of Faringdon ..a skate park perhaps?!
- *Is there any other venue which gives both budding and experienced artists, musicians, poets, children and adults alike (from 10 to 84 so far) the opportunity to expose their talents and grow in confidence? Or for the folk of Faringdon and beyond to experience and enjoy this?
- *Is this really going to encourage others to make efforts in providing anything in the direction of growth or entertainment in Faringdon?
- *Does anyone really believe the Corn Exchange will be soundproofed before the next ice age?
- *Are we to be forced to take the 15 Minute Club out of Faringdon, defeating the whole object?

If you feel passionate about the closure of the 15 Minute Club, if you want to continue enjoying or participating beyond the last scheduled event on 6th August, then you need to make yourself heard by the Town Council. I simply want to make sure that enough people are informed of what they are losing (and how unjustly), to enable them to speak up. (It's a shame our Town Council didn't think the same way.)

On another note:

I would like to complain that Budgens is a rubbish supermarket. I need just one other person to complain with me to the council so that we can have it closed down.
Any volunteers?

Dee Lockwood

Undemocratic demise of the Fifteen Minute club - 25/7/06

Copy of E-Mail sent to venues committee Faringdon Town Council. Other supporters may wish to do likewise.

I would like to express my objection and severe disappointment at Faringdon Town Council's decision to exclude the Fifteen Minute Club from the Corn Exchange. The action appears to have been made on a very small minority decision at a meeting which, to put it lightly, was not widely known about and hence prevented any representation by supporters of this very popular Monthly community event.

The Fifteen Minute Club has grown out of the efforts of a small group of hard working enthusiastic people who have strived to provide this Town with an opportunity for it's wealth of Musicians and entertainers of all styles and ages to perform in front of an enthusiastic and supportive audience. It is a unique, often Family event which despite being licensed has never been the instigation of any trouble.

The organisers and supporters of the Club are very much aware and sympathetic to the problem of noise nuisance caused to nearby residents and the distress that it can cause. I reside within yards of the venue and am familiar with the sound levels created at the FM Club and other more regular events. However I also have to appreciate that the Corn Exchange is a Music and entertainment venue and living nearby requires a degree of tolerance.

The Council have a responsibility to protect residents from excessive noise nuisance and there has been 'talk' about the installation of sound proofing in the Corn Exchange, but on this occasion the Council appear to have taken an undemocratic and financially undemanding solution to the problem.

Graham Fletcher

Town Council- and the 15 minute club - 25/7/06

I would respectfully request that the Town Council should revisit their Aims and Objectives, as published on their website:

Mission statement

Our Mission is to ensure Faringdon is a desirable and thriving place in which to live and work by facilitating and providing quality, sustainable and affordable services which accord with the community's needs and aspirations.

Corporate objectives

1. To enable residents and visitors to enjoy high-quality social, recreational, environmental, educational, economic and cultural facilities within the town, and to seek the continuing improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by the residents.
2. To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town, including the hinterland agricultural and rural surrounding areas.
3. To protect and improve the high-quality environment of the town and promote sustainable development of the town and its economy to meet the needs of present residents and visitors without jeopardising the needs of future generations.
4. To preserve the ancient traditions and unique identity of this Market Town.
5. To work in partnership, or otherwise, with other statutory and voluntary bodies, groups, agencies and individuals to ensure an improving standard of services to meet the needs of residents of the town.
6. To represent the views and wishes of the citizens of Faringdon.
7. To help to create a socially inclusive and

caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, culture, income, race or religion, and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual co-operation.

Approach and Principles

To achieve this, the Town Council has five guiding principles :-

- Communicate and Consult
- Provide Civic Leadership and Civic Pride
- Enhance Local Facilities
- Provide Necessary Services
- Foster Community Development "

They may wish to reflect on whether they are truly aiming to uphold these - or is this just spin?

The closure of the 15 Minute Club surely flies in the face of their guiding principles, not forgetting the wishes of a significant number of Faringdon residents

Anita van Eijndhoven

Fifteen Minute Club - 25/7/06

This is very sad news.

Something that brings pleasure to so many being stopped by so few.

I could understand complaints if it was every night until the early hours but we are talking about once a month and the plug is pulled at 11pm sharp.

People buying houses in a town centre in close proximity to a venue such as the Corn Exchange know what they are getting before they move in.

Residents surrounding the venue should turn up their TV's, move children to the rear of their properties and allow this important source of income for the town to continue.

It's only once a month! I urge everyone who supports the Fifteen Minute Club to sign any petition but also to write to the council.

Name supplied

15 minute club closed - can it be so? - 27/7/06

Can it really be so? The closure of the 15 minute club because of two people. Democracy?

I don't think so.

Were the views of the people of the town sought? Not mine.

But lets not worry, at least we are getting another charity shop to go with two pet shops, antique shops, piano shops, gift shops.....etc, etc.

Please think again.

Let local politicians take ownership of letting Faringdon people enjoy an active social enviroment WITHIN Faringdon.

Ray Hunt

About the Closure of the Fifteen Minute Club - 25/7/06

The Fifteen Minute Club is, in many ways, the best thing Faringdon does. Consider the many fine young bands that have begun playing at the Community College (*eight* of them were in competition against each other the other day). The only regular venue for their work outside school: the early evening alcohol-free-bar sessions at the Fifteen Minute Club. Thanks to those they have a clear route to progress along, from working with their music teacher, through playing to the public, and then on to, hopefully, recording.

Then take the other end of the spectrum: Mervyn Penney, 84 years old, winner of prestigious folk music prizes, always welcome on the Fifteen stage, and a reflection of the vast diversity of that audience and talent. There's everyone from my wife Caroline, a stalwart of Churches Together, singing her country rock songs, to Abby, who always gets up to sing 'Streets of London' and is always loved, to Bobby Moore's Shorts, a rock

band entirely trained in the atmosphere of friendly rivalry that the Club produces, now supporting any big band that plays in town.

The Club makes musicians work harder, means that Faringdon has a vastly more active music scene than a town this size should have.

And it's not just about music: anyone looking to nurture any sort of talent can get up on that stage. We've heard poetry, I've read from my novels.

It's not just the fact that acts are already being attracted from as far afield as London. Through the internet, those who know about Faringdon in distant parts have started to know about it as a place where music is made and art is produced.

There must have been a point in the history of, say, Nashville, when the population realised that music was what that town did. Did they also have, I wonder, a little committee somewhere, a handful of councillors who were cut off from knowing what was going on in their town and, if they did know, didn't care?

It's not just about the wishes of two people overturning the happiness of an audience of many hundreds, it's about not letting them put a stop to art in this town.

There's going to be a petition going round, it's going to be enormous, may I respectfully suggest that the best way to stand up against what's going on here is to sign it.

Paul Cornell

15 minute club- lost for words- 24/7/06

I am lost for words that after August, there will be no more 15 Minute Club at the Corn Exchange. The club provides an opportunity for my whole family to have an evening of entertainment together, and to enjoy the talents of the many who take a slot.

For many participants it is a chance to share something which they are deeply passionate about, and to have the chance to work creatively with others.

Often, the outcome of spontaneous collaborations is extraordinary, and performers and spectators alike end the night on a high. The 15 Minute Club is a large part of why I tell people I love living in Faringdon. Why do the council seem determined to put a stop to this unique and valuable source of entertainment? I can't see how they intend to finance the soundproofing, when they are terminating a prime source of income. Perhaps the Council would be good enough to share their justification with the people they claim to represent?

It seems obvious, but maybe those who crave silence so much should contemplate whether the town centre is really the place they ought to live?

In the meantime, I would like to thank David Reynolds for the professional organisation and superb musicianship he provides at the Faringdon 15 Minute Club - those who attend certainly appreciate it.

Anita van Eijndhoven

Poem winner - 24/7/06

Wow

It's hard to type a message
When I'm dancing on cloud nine -
To think that one or two of you
Should like my little rhyme.

The competition proved diverting -
I was feeling non to hot,
When asked what chance of winning
I confessed - well not a lot.

But luck was on my side
And so I think it about time
I thanked those of you who voted
For Rapunzel here On Line.
Sarah Fuller

Closure of the 15minute club - 24/7/06

The closure of the 15 Minute Club is indeed a sad blow to the town, artistically, socially and economically. The club which runs once a month on the first Sunday regularly attracts an enthusiastic audience of 200 and performers from as far as Swindon, Oxford and even London. The club also provides employment for local people and, of course, produces revenue for the use of a public venue that would otherwise be closed on a Sunday night.

Presumably the complainants noticed that such a public venue was in close proximity to the homes of their choice in the centre of a busy market town when they moved there. However, their protestations clearly outweigh the views of the masses.

I am told this is "democracy"; to me it smacks of everything but... I will also add that I am an organiser of the 15 Minute Club and I was not informed that this issue would be discussed at the venues meeting and consequently was not there to put forward an alternative view. Which, begs the question...how did the minority protestors know that the issue would be discussed when the organisers did not? The outcome may well have been the same. However, the process leading to summary execution in absentia is highly dubious!

If anyone, including the protestors who have never even spoken to me, would like to make contact please do so on 0771 421 8825.

David Reynolds

15 Minute Club Closure - 24/7/06

I don't believe it!
What kind of lunatics are running our particular asylum. ?
Even I wouldn't object to a bit of extra noise once a month.
Victor Meldrew

15 Minute Club - 24/7/06

I understand that due to two complaints from nearby residents regarding sound levels, the monthly 15 minute club at the corn exchange can no longer take place after August, until the corn exchange can be adequately soundproofed (timescales for which are unclear).

This decision was reached by the council in a vote, after representations from the two people concerned about the noise levels. Having attended the vast majority of the 15 minute clubs since its inception, I feel we are losing a valuable addition to the town's arts and music scene, which has been well attended by musicians and visitors alike. It seems in this case that the wishes of the minority have overruled the wishes of the masses.

I would be very interested to hear other peoples opinions on this
Simon Holmes

Ed: This is very sad - the 15 minute club was really putting Faringdon on the map. How can something that happens only once a month be considered a noise intrusion!

I've heard that it was the Venues Committee that took the decision - 6 councillors were there (possibly Cllrs Mrs M J Barker Mrs D England (Chairman) J England J C W Gillman A V Hickmore), 3 voted for closure, 2 wanted it to continue and 1 abstained.

So this decision that so affects Faringdon has been made by 5 people!! I wonder how many local people would have said NO to it's closure - had they been asked

Was anyone asked - other nearby residents?? Will a campaign help?

Stupid, Stupid, Stupid - 24/7/06

Just a quick note to thank that stupid, stupid, stupid woman driver who almost knocked me off my bike on Sunday (at about 5:45pm). No disrespect to women drivers, it would have been stupid, stupid, stupid man driver had it been a man.

The extent of the stupidity is quite unbelievable, and had I not been so shook up I would have got the number plate and reported her to the police for dangerous driving. I was riding my bike south on Coxwell Road, to go to the play area in Great Coxwell. As I was approaching the traffic calming at the edge of town (next to what was called the Red House, but now painted yellow) a metallic blue Peugeot 307 decided to overtake me and as I was almost level with the narrowed area, she then realised that she couldn't make it and almost skidded into me. She then just drove off looking straight ahead to avoid any eye contact and didn't even check that we were ok.

Yes I say we, I had one of my little girls (18 months) in a bike seat and the other on a trail rider attached to the back of my bike. They were clearly visible and I would have expected some additional caution to be given by a driver, over and above a normal and required level of caution. I didnt get the number plate as I was more concerened with the well being of my children.

There were a couple of vehicles entering Faringdon at the time, if you happen to have got a number plate please advise. Anyone know a really stupid middle aged woman who was driving a metallic blue Peugeot 307 through Faringdon at about 5:45pm.

If you are that woman, then with respect, you are very very stupid, inconsiderate and you could have caused a very nasty accident.

Oh yes and thanks for stopping to check that we were all ok.

Name Supplied

Anti-poo Poster - 22/07/06

Dear Mrs Oldtyre, (and other interested parties)

Please feel free to download and print the posters, Which are A5 size, - two on one page, and place them where appropriate.

Laminated versions are available from Mandy's Pet Supplies, London Street

Personally I think they have more impact than the council ones.

HT

[download poster](#)

From Lois in Canada - 20/7/06

The worthy folk of Faringdon

Appear to all be having fun.

The joys and trials of life in town

Have now achieved world-wide renown

The Saunders net casts far afield

As our edresses are revealed!

The question springs to mind, of course

Now that I've voted, which one was YOURS?

Ed: Thankyou Lois

Illegal parking - 19/7/06

Why is it that since the repainting of the yellow lines in Coxwell Street, the illegal parking there has got worse. And the Police Community "support" Officer ignores this.

If you use the short cut, Skinners Alley into Ferndale Street you quite often can't see anything clearly because of illegal parking.

The disabled bay in the Market Place is also rarely policed as well.

I know Faringdon is only part time policed which considering the amount of poll tax we pay is disgraceful. I also lay the blame at lazy and inconsiderate drivers who should know better.
Colin Eddy

Premiership Competition - 14/7/06

The World Cup competition resulted in resounding success, jovial camaraderie and guffaws all round, so by popular demand we're naturally starting a Premiership competition for the forthcoming season, again raising funds for Oakwood House in Faringdon

Details of the competition and the distribution of prizes can be found at the Portwell Bar(too long to include here)

£5 per entry (multiple entries are allowed).

We need about 100 players to make it most worthwhile, so please fspread the word

Martin Phillips

Arts Festival photos - 15/7/06

Great photos from Al Cane

[See them here](#)

Canine excrement!! - 14/7/06

As a long standing resident of Faringdon, I feel I must put pen to paper to alert my fellow residents to the shocking levels of canine excrement in and around Faringdon's streets.

Frankly the amount down London Street and Stanford road reaches biblical proportions at times. What kind of animal produces such amounts? What are their owners feeding them on, and why aren't they clearing it up?

I thought it was illegal to allow your dog to foul the footpath but the Vale of White Horse clearly does not consider this to be the case, in fact appears to positively encourage faeces to be plastered all over the pavements in some kind of poo festival.

There are some humorous stickers applied to some lamp-posts in the environs mentioned, indicating a £1000 fine but clearly this is a joke since it does not appear to be policed nor fines to be applied.

I await enlightenment

Mrs Trotty Oldtyre

Cat found - 14/7/06

Just to let you know we have found our cat, (Tigger)

He had been involved in traffic accident, still very poorly but a least alive!

Hope others whose cats are missing have some luck.

Name supplied

Love Is In The Air....and Park ! -13/7/06

Apparently Hanna P loves Adam C !. Isn't that lovely ?!.

Unfortunately, they chose to announce it by writing it all over the best of the picnic benches in the Folly park by the lake (best because it failed to burn as easily as the other one).

Perhaps Hanna P & Adam C (his surname is actually written in full but maybe he is unaware of Hanna P's attraction to him !) could help us find the other vandals.

If nothing else, could Mr & Mrs P and Mr & Mrs C have a word with their youngsters and ask them not to ruin other property.

Anyway, I wish them much happiness for their future together

Name supplied

Another lost cat - 10/7/06

I'm not sure if you publish lost animals on the web site?

Our cat has gone missing. He was last seen on Friday 7th July. He is black and white, mainly black with white paws. He's just over one year old and is called Tigger. Last seen in the Park Road area of town, Never gone missing before always comes back.

If anyone has info call us please on 01367-241516

Name supplied

Faringdon Arts Festival - 10/7/06

From all the artists concerned, thanks to David, Julie and all the many helpers for putting on another fantastic event and thanks to YOU ALL for being such an appreciative audience.

Let's hope we can do it all again next year.

Steve Wright

Missing Cats - 10/7/06

Do you know of any cats gone missing in Faringdon over the last week?

I myself have a missing cat and was told by someone in one of the shops that 5 went missing last week which looks as if they have been stolen!

Name supplied

Doubting Thomas? - 10/7/06

Hmmm Doubting Thomas you may have a point!

Those postings all seemed to appear at the same time yet they make reference to each other (my apologies if I'm incorrect!)

Great poem Hils and Gene but to (slightly mis-)quote a famous play

'The ladies doth protest too much, methinks!' T

he plot thickens.....

Name supplied

Ed: Best think again!!

In case you're wondering - 9/7/06

I am me
and she is she
and me 'n her
and her 'n me
are we. 'N we're
not them
or he.
Hil 'n Gen.
we're us
you see.

Faringdon Arts Festival - 9/7/06

I would like to be one of the first to congratulate David Reynolds, Julie Farmer and all the Arts Festival Team for yet another superb weekend of entertainment in the town! The atmosphere in the Market Square throughout the weekend was fantastic and the variety of entertainment on offer meant that there was something for everyone to enjoy.

I have seen first hand what a massive amount of work goes into putting on this event from a few committed volunteers - behind the scenes many nails have been bitten trying to arrange insurance, road closures, emergency services, performance licenses and the rest (the list goes on!) in order for all of us to enjoy quality entertainment free of charge.

I think Faringdon should be very proud of this event and of the people that organise it and I hope we get to enjoy many more Festivals in the future. For now though I hope all the team put their feet up with a well deserved glass of whatever they fancy and have a jolly good rest!
Well done guys!!
Anna Marlow

Doubting Thomas, (or just a bad bout of the DTs) -8/7/06

I never knew Mr HGMs letter was to be publicised, expected it yes, but that was all, I am though, Pyscho-ceramic, which means I am good with crack pots like yourself, and I'm also tele-pathetic, (ask me anything about the t.v).....I can assure you though that I am a single individual who is not a big fan of pomposity,or arrogance, this site is open for everyone, whether they can spell or not is immaterial, it should be about everything and anything, young and old alike, that way we all gain something valuable, other peoples opinions, whether we like them or not,

they are all valid, except yours of course.....
and as for my " indignant squeal" I think you and I should meet behind the bike sheds at breaktime!
Jim Horton

A clue for Doubting Thomas - 8/7/06

I know it may not be obvious to the casual reader but the fact is that Jim and I do not always agree.Sad but true.

However I feel it is only fair that I confirm his assertion that he is a single individual.

So lest there be doubt: JH is Jim and I'm not him !!!

HGM

The Greater Faringdon Mystery??? - 8/7/06

As a recent arrival to the Internet scene I enjoy browsing through town sites though most have about as much going for them as the average Church Notice Boards..But Faringdon.org with or without a Poetry Competition is not dull

HGM's recent sanctimonious criticism of the poetry competition was obviously intended to provoke a response from JH and JH's indignant squeal in defence was predictable. But didn't anyone else notice how quickly the defence appeared after the criticism ? The dates were different but both articles came out within hours of each other .

Almost as if JH knew what was about to be written.

Could it be that HGM and JH are the same person or are acting together trying to add an extra bit of interest to a rather dull cyber summer ? The Editors could solve this problem but they have a kind of client confidentiality situation whereby ANY comment from either of them would discourage anyone from writing in under the Name Supplied shield.

It must be frustrating for you but try to live with it ladies for I am sure you would NEVER abuse the trust placed in you.

What next ? A supercilious objection from HGM or a comment from JH with the usual spelling mistakes. Or could it be, heaven forbid, that Gene or Hil or both are in fact HGM/JH...Now that would be wicked but I wouldn't put it past them ! Would you ?

Agatha Christie eat your heart out !
Doubting Thomas

Harry and the sound of bells(or have you dropped another clanger?)- 6/7/06

I am sorry your bell was not rung Harry, but the competition was not about you. It was a chance for other people that read all the fine words of our learned residents and feel like they are slightly left out, because it either doesn't concern them or that they will be ridiculed by the regulars.

Anyone can throw a few words together and call it a poem, and I am quite sure many of the poems are by people who would not join in as a rule.

This time of the year is also a time when you have to do something different just to see something new on the site, as most people spend more time over the joys of summer, rather than sit over a keypad.

Also, at no time in the last few weeks has other letters been left out because of the "poems" as you can see Harry you would not have had to much to read about would you, one month out of twelve is not such an imposition is it?, we will soon be back to talking about dog poo, planning regs' etc.

I for one intend to keep this site as diverse as possible, I am more than happy to embrace others ideas, but you have to have one in the first place, as with everything about Faringdon, people moan when they have nothing, and moan just as loud when they get it!!!

James Horton

Faringdon Arts Fest - Help needed - 5/7/06

Faringdon Arts Festival urgently needs volunteers to help marshal at this weekend's events. We also need people to help run a Cafe in the Corn Exchange during the Craft Fair.

If you could help us out for any amount of time over the weekend we would be very grateful!
Please contact Julie on 0845 8591720 for more details.

Many Thanks

Oh Dear !!! What happened to "A light hearted look at FTPs" ? - 5/7/06

For three long years I have been an FTP supporter and sent in many comments in that time. Some I thought were funny, some I know were not, and some of them I tried to write in rhyme. Some folks disagreed with me and made it very clear that my comments caused them much offence. Others were less critical, some were on my side, (though very few leapt up in my defence) So now we have a contest based on the FTPs supposed to be light hearted, even funny. The winner of this contest will get a splendid prize.. a great big chunk of Jimmy Horton's money. But now I have a problem which some of you might share though others will say I've a narrow mind. Some poems make use of language which I don't feel is "nice" and some sentiments expressed are far from kind.

But I'll keep writing stuff like this when I'm in the mood and hope that Folly Cat will do as well. So Jim . I think your competition was a great idea, but sad to say. It doesn't ring my bell. And now I'll wait for your response....Am I wrong or right ?

But one thing you must admit.....This should liven up the site !!!!
HGM

PCT Forum open meeting - 5/7/06

The South West Oxfordshire Patient and Public Involvement Forum are due to hold a Meeting in Public in Faringdon Corn Exchange on Wednesday 12th July from 2.00pm-4.00pm.

We welcome members of the public to join us at the meeting, where there will be an opportunity for you to ask questions of the Forum and to hear how your local Forum serves the Patients and Public in South West Oxfordshire.

For further meeting information, how you could become a Forum member, or to request a meeting agenda, please contact: Sarah Baston, OBCPIH, Hanborough Business Park, Long Hanborough, Oxfordshire OX29 8LJ. Tel: 01993 886643

Email: sarahbaston@oacppih.org

Re Water shortage - 30/6/06

Dam!

You write your humorous Poem, think you've covered all the best topics on talking points and soon as you send it in, along comes a little gem like this!

Name supplied

Water shortage - 30/6/06

Following the previous correspondent's message I'd like to add some food for thought.

The fact that there is a water shortage is, arguably, not the fault of the water companies. However, it is most definitely NOT the fault of the consumer.

Why then do we continue to pay exactly the same for a much reduced service? Shouldn't there be a refund?

Are we within our rights to withhold payment?

Any legal observations would be welcome!

PS Apologies for moving away from the poetry...I could always write you a song though!

David Reynolds

Ed: Please do!!

Water Shortage - 27/6/06

Following recent press reports into the hosepipe ban affecting our town I am writing to offer to share my water requirements with my fellow residents.

I have been for some time, observing official guidelines such as not flushing the toilet unless absolutely necessary and so on but unfortunately, every-time for me is absolutely necessary so I must find other ways of conserving resources in the spirit of the community.

I have been living for some time on the contents of my neighbour's compost bin (kindly purchased at a discount from Vale of White Horse district council) and this has yielded several hearty soups and stews over the previous few months but following my neighbour's annual mulching of their flower beds, this particular avenue of supply has dried up.

I therefore would like to offer on a weekly basis, several gallons of my bathwater, used once only and perfumed lightly with Norfolk Lavender bath elixir for whoever would like to re-use it.

Is it too much to ask for a reduction in my council tax bill in recognition of my continued commitment to preserving resource?

Yours sincerely

Mrs T Oldrye

New Youth Centre.... Town Council response... - 30/09/06

I am bewildered by the Town Council's response to the news that the County Council is planning to turn the Cromwell Centre on Highworth Road into a youth centre. "Dismay" and "disappointment"!

Surely it is in the interest of every resident of Faringdon to see that young people finally have a safe place to meet and welcome the County Council's increased investment in the town.

After running a few evening sessions with young people in the Old Town Hall centre earlier this year I realised what a disaster it would be to have a youth venue in the town centre. I think the recent incidents around All Saint's Church would bear witness to this.

The Cromwell Centre is in an excellent state of repair and, if planning consent is gained to change the use of the building, could be open in 6 weeks. What is more, the County Council would meet the cost of any repairs and maintenance to the building.

Come on Faringdon Town Council see the bigger picture.
Allan O'Connor

Disclosure - 30/09/06

If anyone wants a ticket for the final for disclosure please speak to one of the band members as they need as many people to go as possible because its done on votes thanks
name supplied

StreetScene- Report Street Problems Online - 28/9/06

I've just discovered this. You can report any problem online -to do with anything on the list below. You need the postcode of the location you're reporting, or you can click on a map to pinpoint it exactly. Click on www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/StreetScene/DetailPage-9151.asp

Pretty Good!!
Gene Webb

Abandoned Vehicles
Animal Fouling
Dead Animals
Stray Animals
Anti-Social Behaviour
Bridges Dangerous Structures
Flyposting
Flytipping
Grafitti
Manholes
Dangerous Pavements
Obstructed Pavements
Paving Stone Thefts
Pot Holes
Public Conveniences (Toilets)
Road Gritting
Flooding on Roads
Obstructed Roads
Vegetation on Roads
Road Markings
Road Signs
Snow Clearance

Spillage on Roads
Street Cleaning
Street Furniture
Street Lights
Litter Bins
Traffic Lights
Vandalism

Are you over 45? - 26/9/06

Do you want to turn your life around?
Have you thought of going into business?

Then come along to "PRIME time for Business" Special Business Awareness Workshop at the Faringdon Enterprise Gateway next Tuesday 3rd October from 10 - 4 (free lunch provided) and find out how to make better use of your talents, get some motivation and find out more about yourself.

This project receives funding from SEEDA.
Places are limited so book now!
Phone Jane Haynes, Gateway Co-ordinator on 0845 458 3080

Faringdon Arts Festival 2007 - 26/9/06

7pm . Brunel House, Volunteer Way

Those who care about the future of FARINGDON ARTS FESTIVAL are invited to a meeting to discuss involvement and activities in preparation for 2007.
Contact Julie Farmer 0845 859 1720

Vote for Disclosure -24/9/06

We need as many people to vote online for the bands playing in the botb in Nottingham in October(most votes for Disclosure of course!), as this will help a great deal to determining the winner.
Disclosure have a great chance of winning and need your support to enable this.

If you would like to help, then register your details (its easily done!) at:

<http://www.liquidisco.com/Under18s/Signup/014.asp>

then follow the instructions from the website.

After accepting the confirmation email, log in with your new username and click on "click here to vote" under The Internet Vote category.

You will have one vote per band and you will have the choice of three bands every 60 hours, you will see how much time you have left on the page to vote. Voting starts 29/9/06

For more info go to: <http://www.liquidisco.com/Under18s/005.asp>

A BIG thankyou to everyone who takes part in the voting and to those who support Disclosure~help them to go all the way!....

Sam French

Local band winner - 120/9/06

Congratulations to our young local rock band 'Disclosure' for winning the area heat for the under eighteens at Abingdon and then going on to win the south west regional heat at Bristol.
The final will take place at Nottingham on the 14th October against eleven other bands.

A special thank you to Lyn Waugh for all her hard work in organising and managing the band also for the use of her

soundproofed garage.

We believe all the competing bands will be on www.liquidisco.com shortly and you will be able to vote on line.

Good luck Disclosure.
Rod and Sue French

Missing Cat! -20/9/06

Left home just before summer break has not returned

Tabby cat and answers to the name fluffy.

Please return it if you find it to 3 marines drive. it will make 3 children very happy.

Name Supplied

WANTED for Charity - 19/9/06

Clothes, toys, books, videos, DVD, bric a brac, small furniture for a Jumble sale 4/11/06
in aid of Parkinsons Disease and riding for the disabled

If you have anything to donate, Contact 01367 241753, 240130, 242117

New Reservoir - East Hanney - 14/9/06

Heard about the new reservoir planned for the East Hanney - Steventon road?

See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/5343646.stm> and
http://www.thameswater.co.uk/UK/region/en_gb/content/news/news_001196.jsp

This has all the plans

http://www.thameswater.co.uk/UK/region/en_gb/content/Section_Homepages/Multi_Download_000684.jsp?SECT=Multi_Download_000684 including the location map
http://www.thameswater.co.uk/en_gb/Downloads/Office_Documents/UTMRD_Concept_Plan.jpg

Tim Koder

Ed: Thanks. I had a quick look 'Thames said the site near Abingdon, Oxfordshire, would be the biggest built in the UK in 25 years, holding 150 billion litres of water.

Note from Tourist Information office: We have a small but well researched book ' A brief History of the Abingdon Reservoir Area ' written by ' Vale Man ' Mr Spinage, I believe, for sale in the centre. In view of recent news it may be of interest to local people.

Faringdon Folly paper - 14/9/06

I have copies of all (I think all) the papers since it started - late 80s/early 90s??

Does anyone want them??

Can anyone suggest where they might be of use(polite suggestions please)

Gene Webb

Lets drink to a load of Scat! -14/9/06

Thank you to Alice Chenneour Randall, her of dipsomaniac pretensions, for her suggestion that most of the recent contributions made to talking points can be loosely related to excrement.

Of course you are very welcome to your opinion, but at least some of the posts have raised a grin amongst fervent readers and are, in my humble opinion, considerably more entertaining than the celebration of research into a long defunct local booze shop!

That's no disrespect to Angela of course, for whom, I'm sure, the long cold winter months must just fly by .
Here's to excrement free future postings.

Cheers, down yer leg.

The Mad Hatter

*Ed: Definition:Scatology - "Preoccupation with obscenity, esp. with references to excrement"- thanks to contributor.
Not a word I can make use of I feel.*

Coffee House - 13/9/06

It's the husband of the wife here..... If I may I would kindly refer back to my original talking point posted 29-Aug-06 as titled by Ed as "Charging to use the Loo".

It invited comments to help me "determine if I was out of touch with the current ways of the world".
On balance from the responses it has generated I obliviously am.

It was never about whether the £1.50 was high or whether it was a justified policy to combat people walking in off the street as "non-customers" to use the facilities. Neither was it anything to do with the general quality of the service or the price of the goods, my wife and I have gladly used the Coffee House for years.

It was simply to ask whether it was acceptable (at least in our local community) to postdate a punitive charge to a regular, well known but disabled customer to use the loo.

Not a regular event or even a regular intent - it was the first and only time.

Made even more difficult to understand when that person is by the Coffee Houses' own description an actual friend, which indeed we were.

Many thanks to all those who made the effort to state their views and trust the matter has now naturally exhausted itself.

Name Supplied

Ed: In casual conversation I came across a number of people who felt that the charge was high, and that applying it retrospectively was not a good move- they didn't write to the website. But enough/no more- from anyone!!

Additional houses - Planning Gain - 13/9/06

I went to a meeting of the Town Council's Planning and Highways committee last evening, chaired by Alan Hickmore. Following the usual domestic planning applications dealt with by this committee, there followed a discussion about the hoped for Planning Gain from the developers. Apparently Bloor Homes, the developers, have met with the Town Council about the benefits wanted by the town.

So here is my understanding of what FTC is asking for. (Note - asking for - we may not get it all)

- 1 Location and foundation for Skate Park in the Country Park, Jespers Hill, plus maintenance for 5 years
- 2 New Cricket ground and pavilion - to be ready to use as soon as the existing becomes unavailable. ie before house build
- 3 Contribution to Community Bus, on the basis of providing transport to encourage new residents and people employed on the new Industrial Estate to come into the town centre. £30k/£40k was mentioned
- 4 Contribution to a performance venue - this could be to update and soundproof the Corn Exchange, or towards a new theatre at the Community College
- 5 Contribution to a Youth Venue. FTC were thinking of using this to update the room at the rear of the Pump House for it to become a Youth Club. However a member of the public indicated that the County Youth worker for Faringdon had secured the use of the Cromwell Centre on the Highworth Road for a use as a youth club. It was agreed that 2 Youth clubs were not a good idea. So the contribution made by Bloor Homes will be used for the Youth club, wherever it turns out to be located. It was mentioned that Lord Faringdon has offered £5k towards creating a Youth Centre in the Pump Rooms - I'm not sure if this is on offer for any Youth Club.
- 5 £15k is requested towards a professional parking study to cover the town centre, schools and the Leisure Centre
- 6 Disabled access for the Pump Rooms, plus a contribution to refurbishing room at rear as recreational space, plus improved toilets. £20k to be asked for

There are other facilities that Bloor Homes will be asked to provide - see [The adopted SPG Faringdon](#) (pdf, 112kb)

Other points

Country Park will triple in size- and will include a measured jogging track

18 % increase in population - 1000+ people?

Bloor Homes are to arrange an exhibition showing the plans for the new development - thought to be sometime in October 2006

FTC, VWHDC, Bloor homes are to meet at the end of this month to discuss the detail further

Gene Webb

At last- a new subject - 12/9/06

Thank goodness that Angela has stepped in with her request for info about Fergusons, the wine merchant; the scatalogical thread that has woven it's way through the thoughts of contributors to this on-line forum is threatening to drive me to drink.

Bring back Fergusons - all is forgiven (and WH Smith and all those fine shopping institutions which we could lay claim to in Faringdon!!!!!!)

Alice Chenneour Randall

Fergusons, Faringdon - 12/9/06

I am a collector of out of print and second hand wine books.

I have recently come across some old wine lists for the wine merchant Ferguson's whose head office was in Reading. I see from your site headed 'Businesses Old and New' that there was a Ferguson's wine shop in Market Place, Faringdon. (This was one of 12 regional shops)

I would be grateful of any information you could give me in relation to this wine merchants - length of time in town etc as I am now interested in researching this wine merchant.

Thank you

angelamcmahon@waitrose.com

Careers Event -11/9/06

Faringdon Community College, in conjunction with the Faringdon Area Project are planning to hold a Careers Opportunity Week for our local youth. This event will take place throughout the week beginning on Monday 13th November to Friday 17th November.

We are hoping to provide students with information about a variety of careers from a number of local businesses. We would like local employees to explain what qualifications and expectations businesses in their field may have with regard to potential employees. We are therefore looking for organisations that would be willing to participate in this event. Either present as a main exhibitor on Monday or lead a seminar on your companies speciality. T

he Community College will be holding various events throughout the week that will provide students with skills such as CV writing, letters of application, where to look for a job, how to complete a job application form, interview techniques and career coaching.

If you are interested in taking part of the careers fair would you be so kind and email Anna Marlow on anna.marlow@fap.org.uk or call Julie Farmer on 08458591720.

Anna and I would like to thank you in advance for your help and support for this event.
Julie Farmer

Foster Home - for a dog!! - 9/9/06

Would you like a sort of Foster Aunt for your dog?? I really miss having a dog around but don't yet want another one full time.

I would be more than happy to provide some care and walks - occasionally - not on a regular basis

So if your dog is friendly, gentle, biddable and you'd like to have some help now and again, do get in touch

Gene Webb
genewebb@nildram.co.uk

Faringdon Arts Festival - 9/9/06

Those who care about the future of FARINGDON ARTS FESTIVAL are invited to a meeting to discuss involvement and activities in preparation for 2007.
7pm Wednesday 4 October. Brunel House, Volunteer Way.
Contact Julie Farmer 0845 859 1720

Another Mad Hatter Vote - 8/9/06

Hey, Mad Hatter might get my vote too!
Can't think why!

David Reynolds

Mad Hatter For Mayor - 8/9/07

Mad Hatter for Mayor! - you'd get my vote!

Mel Taylor

Coffee Shop - 7/9/06

in reply to the gentleman with the scathing remarks about the faringdion coffee hse.

My husband and I have been patrons of TRACY AND Darrens COFFEE HOUSE for many years and the cleanliness and courtesy plus the excellent fare they produce is beyond compare, and had the man concerned asked about them having to charge non customers the use of their toilet facilities, and how the last non customer rewarded their kindness by stealing over £2000 and lots of personal property , he might begin to understand.

How dare that customer to be disloyal to the wonderful establishment that faringdon is so fortunate to have.

My husband and I have visited many coffee shops and by far the best anywhere is The faringdon Coffee Hse. They have both worked so hard in refurbishing it to the high class eaterie it has now become and faringdon town is certainly reaping the benefits by all the tourism that their establishment has generated.

Instead of being so petty minded and critical, perhaps your reader would like to open his toilet facilites to the general public and clean up after them as Tracy and Darren have to. Theirs is not a public convenience and never has been.

The Faringdon Coffee House with the wonderful owners of Tracy and Darren, should be supported and Faringdon is so lucky to have them and their unique english coffee house.

My only comment to the gentleman who complained would be GET A LIFE!
Mr and Mrs J O'Hara, Wroughton

Never a dull moment - 6/9/06

Well! Coffee shops charging people with disabilities extortionate amounts of dosh to use their loo.
Convivial junkies offering a warm Pharmaceutical welcome to prospective new residents in the public loo.

The Coffee shop's garrulous response to outraged posting in the shape of an unassailable collection of grammatical errors and not a poem in sight!

Missing cats? Presumably including the Folly one, or is it still licking its wounds from the last eruption of verse.

Did I overhear, in our much-celebrated rubbish Supermarket, that the damaged sculpture in Folly park will shortly be replaced, at great expense, by a statue of David Reynolds?

Will the next fifteen minute club feature Dalek Rap accompanied by a ten piece Reggae Bagpipe ensemble dressed as medieval knights?

There's never a dull moment. or maybe the tea and cake served on that women's institute chutney 2006 weekend in Amsterdam hasn't worn off yet.

The Mad Hatter

Adult comic from Faringdon Man - 6/9/06

Just thought I'd share something I'm finding exciting. (And thanks to everyone who congratulated me on coming third in the Hugo Awards, it's so nice that so many people were interested.)

I've just done a deal with Forbidden Planet International, the bigtime comic suppliers, to distribute the Marvel comic I've got coming out in November (it's called Wisdom, being the adventures of British intelligence officer Pete Wisdom against the supernatural), off a one-off website at a special price, the intention being to get people who don't normally buy comics to take a chance on something relatively inexpensive and easy to get.

British readers only at the moment, but I'm looking for an American distributor to do the same thing.

Please bear in mind that this isn't for kids. It's an 18+ rated comic, and while it's all very tasteful and mature, there are what they call 'adult situations' and some (serious) swearing.

You can take a look at the offer on my blog page: <http://paulcornell.blogspot.com/>

I know, the older I get the more shameless I get!
Paul Cornell

Coffee Shop - 6/9/06

I really don't understand why the Coffee Shop is getting such bad press - just for charging NON-PAYING-CUSTOMERS to use their toilet facilities.

Personally, if I was caught using a business for my 'business' I'd be embarrassed and certainly wouldn't tell the world about it !. I don't really see the fact that this lady often dined there as relevant and to offer to pay a charge would have been polite.

Is it really any different to somebody hiring a skip.....and the neighbours filling it up with their rubbish ?!

As for the ridiculous comment (under - Consideration For Others) that cafes, pubs and restaurants should expect to clean toilets on their premises - of course they should, and do.....but why should they clean up after people who aren't buying anything ?. Staff, cleaners etc....they do have to get paid you know !.

The Coffee Shop isn't a charity.
Name Supplied

Faringdon Skater selected to skate for Great Britain.- 6/9/06

If you have any Euros left from your holidays Please can you donate them to support Nathaniel in his dream.

We need to raise £500
Thankyou
Contact Dee England 07738173958 deeengland2@aol.com

Faringdon Artistic Skater selected to skate for Great Britain - 6/9/06

Nathaniel Williams travelled to Watford on saturday for the trials to skate for Great Britain.
Nathaniel will travel to Paris on the 31st October for 5 days and skate in the Cup of Europe.

We are asking for financial help to support this young man in his dream of representing his country. The event including travel, accommodation and clothing will cost £500.
As Nathaniel is part of a one-parent family this amount of money is far beyond their means.

Please help Nathaniel to achieve his goal and represent his country. Therefore, if you would like to offer part or whole of this amount please contact Dee England on 07738173958 or email deeengland2@aol.com

Consideration for others - 6/9/06

I do feel that people with disabilities should be assisted and supported wherever possible in the same way that I would stand up for a senior citizen on a bus or a pregnant woman on a train.

I apologise if this offends a small minority of people with disabilities but it won't change what I understand to be right. If the rest of you agree that what happened was fair then I'm saddened that a bit of reason, common sense and straightforward concern for fellow man are not virtues to be encouraged in Faringdon.

I believe the coffee shop were wrong to charge so much
I believe they were wrong to charge a regular customer on a one off visit, disabled or not
I believe that cafes, pubs and restaurants should expect to clean toilets on their premises

So shoot me.
Mel Taylor

Public Loos - 5/9/06

We are considering purchasing a property in Faringdon, during a break from viewing my wife went to use the public toilets behind Budgens, two young ladies sitting on the floor partaking of their drug of choice were very friendly and tried to make her welcome; my wife declined.

The facilities were filthy anyway.
Name supplied
Ed: Contact waste.team@whitehorsedc.gov.uk to report problems

Coffee House - 4/9/06

The people of Faringdon should take a long hard look at themselves and see what they are doing... why has everyone decided to be rivals and mistreat the good points of this town?!

The Faringdon Coffee House draws many tourists to this town from all over the world... as proved by their visitors book! They have provided a great service for so many people! Why is everyone now deciding to run them down?

They have put many signs up to show that there is a charge for the toilet for people who are not customers on the day. They also go into detail about what these charges go towards (the cost to run a toilet, i.e. water, electricity) as this becomes expensive due to the amount of customers who use it throughout the day, seven days a week!

I think that £1.50 is a reasonable amount for them to charge as someone can easily become a customer for a lot cheaper, for example, a glass of fruit juice or a pot of tea. You wouldn't expect to walk into a pub or restaurant to use their toilets when there are public ones a mere 300 yards away, so why should a coffee shop be treated any differently?!?!

People of Faringdon... sort yourselves out!
Name supplied

Angry of Marlborough - 3/9/06

Can I say how angry I am?

I have spent my life having to explain to people I do not need their help!

Why?

Well you see, I have cerebral palsy. I get stared at a lot, but what is most annoying is being treated differently. I am just a normal person but with a physical disability. I have a wife, a job and my own home, But reading the comments from the gentleman who's wife has a cognitive disorder, I can't help thinking that perhaps her feeling are being left out! If she has been a long-standing customer, is she happy not to go back to the coffee shop, or is the husband stopping her from going to a place she seems to enjoy?

It seems to me that perhaps she is being made to suffer for the sake of her husband's argument!

It is annoying too that Mel Taylor thinks that a disabled person should have preferential treatment! I do not want people to feel sorry for me, or any disabled person, I just want to get on with my life without feeling mollycoddled.

A message to the husband of the disabled lady- if you haven't done so, ask your wife what she wants to do and respect her wishes, she is a person after all!!

Name supplied

Public Loos - 4/9/06

I can understand why people would prefer to use the coffee house toilet, in fact any toilet other than the stinking dirty pit behind budgens.

I cant recall one instance when I have taken my children in there when I wasn't confronted with some dirty persons doings, in the form of wee or worse on the seats.

Are the gentle folk of Faringdon incapable of shooting straight.

No wonder the coffee house are pee'd off (no pun intended), if they have to deal with similar conditions.

Perhaps the real issue here is the state of the car parks loos.

If they were clean, and in my experience, they are not, people would use them.

Just a thought to add to the debate.

Devils Advocate

Ed: A few years ago I was told by VWHDC that these loos were inspected/cleaned many times a day, every day - it was hugely costly. Perhaps this is no longer happening

15 Minute Club (Sun Sept 03) - 4/9/06

Was that a 15 minute club or what....

From Rock to 9 Ukuleles to Bollywood to a Happy Birthday for Martin.

What more do we want...

As a lot of people have said. Last night must have been the best 15 minute club so far..

Name supplied

Coffee House - 3/9/06

Oxford Dictionary Definitions:

CUSTOMER . noun - A person who buys goods or services from a shop or business.

TOILET . noun - A large bowl for urinating or defecating into, typically plumbed into a sewage system.

Faringdon Coffee House IS infact a business, that provides beverages, refreshments and foods; They appreciate their customers and thus provide the additional facility of "Customer Toilets" which are clearly labelled as "Customer Toilets".

They are kept in good functioning order and cost money to run and maintain, to use the facility whilst showing complete negligence to the clearly stated "Customer Toilet" signs is taking a liberty, and the "Customer toilet" policy is consistant throughout most other establishments.

I dont think its the £1.50 charge that should be at debate, as that is a deterrent to the general public that are not customers of Faringdon Coffee House.

Alternatively there are "Public Toilets" 100 yards or so down the road, which also cost money to maintain, and are funded by the council (Taxes!).

Are you people that are against the toilet charge policy suggesting that Faringdon Coffee House, and other such establishments employ a similar strategy to the council and increase the prices on all products sold, as to fund the maintenance of the toilet; thus making everyone pay for the costs of the toilet maintenance.

On a final note, i would like to say that the toilets are infact FREE if you are a Customer of Faringdon Coffee House when you decide to use the toilet.
Bish Bosh

Twining - 03/09/06

Should Faringdon now be twinned with Clochemerle?
name supplied

Faringdon Area Project Community Cafe - 3/9/06

Many people- around 300- visited the exhibition of old photographs in the Corn Exchange yesterday, 2nd. Wonderful photographs of Faringdon gathered from various sources such as English Heritage and Oxfordshire archives.

Well done to Anna and Julie who put in all the hard work

Wouldn't it be nice if the Town Council displayed such photos in Public places - the Old Town Hall, the Pump House??

Gene Webb

Coffee Shop - 2/9/06

The last time i looked, the public toilets were in the car park behind Budgens! I have certainly never seen a sign indicating that they had moved to the Coffee Shop!

I was incensed to read the completely unjustified complaints about the use of toilets in the coffee shop! What a cheek these people have to assume they have the right to use someone else's toilets just because they happen to be there. I have always struggled to like Faringdon, not least because of people like these complainants with a narrow minded, small town mentality who think the world owes them!

But it is now slowly but surely becoming a good place to live in, thanks to people like Darren and Tracy who combine working extremely hard to earn a living with providing a great friendly and relaxed venue for all to enjoy. They contribute to the wonderful continental atmosphere that is emerging here. They run a food establishment, they are not here to provide toilet facilities for all and sundry.

Would anyone assume they could just walk into The Nut tree, Presentation, Deacons or any other shop and demand to use their toilets just because they have been a customer at some point? I think not! Why should the coffee shop be any different?

If the whingers are too lazy to walk to the car park to use the PUBLIC toilets, they will just have get by being a little damp!

Trish Reynolds

Coffee Shop - 2/9/06

You know, I've bought a house through Perry, Bishop and Chambers, a newspaper in Martins, jewellery in Deacons and a bow-tie at Cariad and never once thought this gives me the green light to use their toilets whenever I choose!

PS. thank you for the words of praise from name supplied about the performance at the Portwell Bar.

My wife is worried about me getting my head through the door!

David Reynolds

Portwell Bar Music - 1/9/06

Last Sunday at the Portwell Bar..... Fantastic, brilliant evening, throughly enjoyed the music

..And.... Dave Reynolds you' re great!!!!!!

Name supplied

Coffee Shop - 1/9/06

Coffee Shop I think that is an excellent idea to have a key for the toilets!... They actually do that in some places in Oxford.

And while on the subject of the coffee shop I have found it takes a long time to get served at times..... I turned up one day in my lunch hour and waited half an hour to be served!!..(this was when seated outside in the warmer weather)

Would it not be better to give your order and perhaps a table number at the counter before taking your seat?

So to get your order quicker?....

Having said that, I think they both do a grand job!!...

And I do love sitting out there on a summer's day. Such a continental feel!!...

Name supplied

More support - 1/9/06

I feel I have to agree with the Coffee Shop!

It would seem that people think they are always owed something in life, indeed more than they have to pay for.

If someone is a regular customer, does this mean they have bought into the business and are entitled to use the facilities when ever they choose? Perhaps a free cup of coffee could go on their menu for frequent customers?

Surely a business has a right to charge for a 'service' if it is a non customer using it.

I know how expensive toilet roll is in the supermarket, I daren't think how much a place that serves food must use!

Name Supplied

Support for the Coffee Shop - 1/9/06

I would like to lend my support to the Coffee House - I have always found it to be a delightful and reasonably priced place to eat - and wee for that matter.

As to the comments by one contributor about cleaning toilets coming with the territory - what a ridiculous statement - as you say they are running a coffee shop not a public toilet - and I believe I am right in thinking that by running a coffee shop they are obliged to provide toilet facilities for their customers not the community as a whole.

If I used a toilet in a premises where I had not made a purchase (and lets face it who hasn't at some time) and if I was asked to pay I would consider it a fair cop and be somewhat embarrassed about my cheekiness - why should they clean up after people who are not paying customers!

On a completely separate note, does anyone know who is responsible for clearing weeds on the pavement - if the ones outside the Infant School get any higher there is a real danger that the children may not be able to find their school next week!!!!

Name supplied

Ed: Weeds are usually the responsibility of the County. Have a look at

<http://www.faringdon.org/tareportproblems.htm>. Probabaly worth indicating there is a safety issue!!

Coffee Shop - 1/9/06

If the number of people using your loo by just walking in off the street is as bad as you say, can I suggest that you have a key for the loo behind the counter so that people have to ask to use it. This happens in many places abroad and is fair to everybody.

I'd like to add also that at least you have a loo that can be used !. I was with a friend and her toddler daughter some time ago in the other popular coffee shop nearby. We were inside (the weather wasn't good), coffees and danish naughties paid for and eaten, but when my friend asked if she could take her daughter to the loo she was told she couldn't.

The loo is outside and it would have meant unlocking a door/gate or something.

Anyway, we were too suprised to hang about and we had to make a quick dash to the Southampton St. toilets !.

Name supplied

Coffee Shop again - 1/9/06

Thanks for your response Coffee House.

Wow!! There is a lot of pent up anger there on a range of issues it seems. I'm not quite sure that I understand all of what you say and I don't wish to escalate the matter beyond its own importance but: -

It appears that the strategy you thought to adopt was to charge my wife for the use of the toilet 3 days after the event hoping that it would be seen by me to "encourage" a discussion. I guess the net ambition of the discussion you wanted was to stop my wife from using your facilities outside of paying for goods in the process. Your intent was then to return the charge.

A grand scheme for dealing with a first offence.

I'd ask you now to stand back from your paranoia and re-examine your methods because the result has been to lose a regular customer (and her husband), their direct and associated trade along with the friendship you considered you had.

But at least you have discouraged one person from "walking in off the street" for a wee and of course gained £1.50.

I'd also suggest that you might want to consider "customers" as people waiting to be served rather than only those you take money and make profit from.

My wife has been a customer of the Coffee House for a very long time. She just didn't buy anything on the day.

Name supplied

Re Coffee Shop - 1/9/06

Sorry but having to clean up toilets on the premises comes with the territory of running a cafe, bar or pub and I know of no-one else locally who would charge someone they know as a regular customer, especially someone disabled. Adding the charge to a receipt, with or without VAT with the purpose of opening a discussion seems a bizarre method to enforce policy.

We live in a small market town with a clutch of wonderful independent businesses, including the coffee shop, which we all want to succeed and prosper to enable the town to move forward and prosper as a whole. We are not prepared to put up with nonsensical unfair charges, discriminatory at worst, excessive at best just as we were not prepared to stand for the council closing the 15 Minute Club.

I think a written apology and perhaps some flowers for the lady concerned would be in order.

Mel Taylor

Gravel Walk Traffic

Could be the lorry drivers' way of avoiding the Shrivenham by-pass road works on the A420?

Name supplied

Reply from Faringdon Coffee House - 31/8/06

This is a response to the unfortunately judgemental comments by people including the husband of the wife concerned, who refused to let us discuss the situation with him (the husband) due to him putting the phone down on us twice!

The £1.50 charge is high to do exactly what it is intended to do - stop people continuously walking in off the street to use our facilities. It has done exactly that - just discouraged. We are trying to keep the toilet free for our customers use.

Most of our customers have passed comment to us on seeing our signs in the toilet with disbelief that people use our toilets without being a customer and are surprised that people can be that disrespectful. What is sad is that the ways of the world have come to mean inability to talk to someone and disrespect and no one is allowed to stand up for themselves anymore.

In response to our 'prices being steep for a while' - our prices have been static for four years and despite the price of gas and electricity increasing extortionately we have continued to keep our prices the same. In fact, increasingly customers are asking us when we are (and customers tell us that we should) increase our prices because they are too cheap!

We do have the decency and guts to discuss charges with our customers at the time. We also have signs up in the toilets to ask for respect that if they use the facilities, all we ask is that they make a purchase. How informative, fair and more decent can that be. It is a shame that we had to take the 'policy' that we have but for the first five years we were at The Faringdon Coffee House we continuously let people walk off the street and use our toilets. Hundreds walked off the street all the time to use our facilities. It was customers who had a go at us when excessive time was spent in there by people who customers saw as non-customers making them wait who had less right to use it. We were also burgled by one of these people who took £2,000 worth of goods from us by using our own security system to watch us out front working hard one busy Saturday afternoon. We know that not everyone is a burgler and we are in no way suggesting this was the situation the other Saturday but it has made us angry and protective of facilities that cost us a lot of money and hard work to build in the first place and to continuously maintain. It isn't marble, gold, fresh flowers and free perfumes we are asking people to pay for. A lot of people would be surprised to read how we frequently have to fix (as actually was the case on this occasion), mop up urine, clean excrement from the walls, replace stolen perfume (which does exist in the cupboard) and stolen toilet rolls which do not even fit a standard household roll holder.

It would seem that some people reading this site think everyone is being charged for the use of the toilet. We would like to point out that it is a charge to discourage non customers, not those that are dining in our premises on that day. It is very sad that the gentleman who has offered this for public debate could not even speak to us about the matter. This is the only time this charge has been applied to someones bill. It was discussed at the time the lady was paying and it was hoped that the bill would be seen on getting home, to encourage a discussion with the husband too. We fully intended for the charge to be reimbursed and only added it to encourage a discussion since we were ignored on the day when she regularly spoke to us but ignored us twice when spoken to on the day. Would it have been too much trouble for the husband who we considered to be a friend to come up and say hello whilst standing around waiting rather than make us feel used. Instead the phone was put down and when we tried to call again the phone was put down again. To put straight those who have judged us as gutless - we made several attempts to try to talk. There was nothing underhand or unprofessional about the way this was dealt with

. ...and by the way, VAT was only included rather than added on as we are required to do so by law as it is a service charge. T

racy worked with various disabled groups for twelve years and never used a person and their disabilities as a reason for using and abusing a facility provided by a private company. Even before owning our own business we respected that we should only have the right to use a facility as a paying customer at that time.

What is wrong with the public toilets we all pay for in our council tax? Where the husband waited for his wife was at least the same distance to the public toilets at the rear of Budgens carpark.

We were very grateful for last years petition signatures in support of the outside seating but the attack on what threat they came under was underhand and spiteful, something we have not been on this occasion. For those who are thinking our pockets are being heavily lined, we work long, hard hours to try to provide a service of quality food and drink.

The costs involved in running a business like this a lot of people do not know unless they have done it. What is wrong in Faringdon at the moment? Everyone seems to be enjoying attacking someone or other.

Where has peaceful, respectful, harmonious living together in a small town gone?
Faringdon Coffee House

More lorries along Gravel Walk? - 31/8/06

Can anyone shed any light as to why the traffic, particularly heavy articulated lorries, has seemingly quadrupled in the last few weeks along Park Road and Gravel Walk?

As a long term resident on Gravel Walk, I have noticed a massive increase in this very heavy commercial traffic along the road in just the last couple of weeks, particularly during what were the quieter parts of the day.

Is there a diversion taking these lorries off the A420 that I don't know about?

Is there a major new commercial enterprise warranting all these loaded lorries?

More worryingly is this a permanent new route for traffic that seems more suited to the A420 than through the middle of town?

If anyone has any ideas I would be very interested to know.

Lindsay Lewis

Faringdon Coffee Shop -31/8/06

£1.50 - now that really is taking the P...!

Name supplied

Another charity shop/Walk to school - 31/8/06

Another charity shop for Faringdon, and another supporting good works in Africa as does our existing charity shop alongside the Corn Exchange!

What is going on?

I'm still hoping that someone out there can throw light on the revised walk to school plans and clarify at what point along Gloucester Street the children will cross over to the school - am particularly concerned that they might be expected to cross in front of the entrance between No 25 and the large green house opposite the library (there are some marking outside the library which indicate that there are plans to drop the pavement).

This drive is in regular use and the cars pulling in and exiting (sometimes having to reverse into the street) could present a real hazard to children.

Name supplied

Faringdon Coffee House - 31/8/06

I'm shocked! Faringdon Coffee House - you should be thoroughly ashamed of yourselves!

Whilst I wholly understand that you want to prevent people traipsing off the street and using your toilet facilities, to charge £1.50 for this is disgusting - especially to someone who regularly lines your pockets.

Not only that but the way in which you communicated the charge to your customer was underhand and unprofessional.

If you wish to levy charges at your customers at least have the decency and guts to discuss it with them face to face rather than sneaking the charge onto the end of a bill (presumably in the hope that it will go unnoticed)

Finally can I assume that the toilets are now marble lined with solid gold taps, fresh flowers and free perfumes for its visitors? They certainly weren't the last time I was in there but there must have been some impressive improvements to warrant £1.50 a visit!

Bah humbug!

Name supplied

Coffee House Charging - 31/8/06

...not only wholly unreasonable, Ed but extortionate.

Their prices have been steep for a while without their charging a regular customer £1.50 to use their toilet. It's also a bit mean since the locals rallied to assist them when their tables outside (bringing in lots of additional revenue) were under threat.

An explanation would be welcome, to us all who are/were clients of the coffee shop

Mel Taylor

Charging to use the loo - 29/8/06

If I may I'd like to invite comment not least to the owners / management of the Faringdon Coffee House in the Market Place, that will help me determine if I'm out touch with the current ways of the world.

A couple of Saturdays ago whilst out shopping with my wife she needed to use the loo. She has cognitive difficulties since suffering brain damage some time ago but has no trouble with achieving her personal needs. She is a regular user of the coffee shop and is well known by the staff there and as we were close by she took advantages of their facilities.

I needed to extract some money from the Lloyds ATM in the meantime so she went on her own.

The following Monday after her usual lunch there her receipt showed a "Toilet Charge" for £1.50. I was a bit taken aback and decided to phone the owner to discuss how this had happened and came to learn that this was "Policy". Now - I don't really mind the £1.50 but what I need help to understand is whether "Policy" particularly in a small market town like ours, should mean the retrospective charging of a well known and regular customer, and who has obvious disabilities, to take a needy natural break.

Then to top it all go on to add VAT to it as well!!

But perhaps I am out of touch.

I prefer to leave my name unpublished for the sake of my wife's dignity.

Name supplied

Ed: Words fail me. I can understand a modest charge to 'strangers'/non customers - but to make a retrospective (and high) charge to a regular customer seems to me to be wholly unreasonable- but that's just my view

Land in park road -26/8/06

If you wander up by the nursery site there are numbered markers showing the new house placements (presumably).
Terry Ellis

Re: Land in park road -26/8/06

Have a look at this link. <http://www.faringdon.org/pdfdocs/Supp%20Planning%20Guidance.pdf>

Its not that up to date but seems to be similar to whats unfolding.

Does anyone know which businesses might be moving in or starting up?

Name supplied

Missing Cat - 23/8/06

Missing since July 19th - large, fluffy chocolate and cream tabby male cat. Has a very long tail.Lost from Coxwell Road. Answers to the name of Oscar. Any information gratefully received on 01367 240744.

Name supplied

Folly statues - the Vandalism - 23/8/06

Pondering the vandalism at the folly park, in particular the sculpture.

We couldn't help but think if only it had been made from building materials that are natural and proven to stand the test of time, stone for example; stone henge may have been chipped at, knocked over and even drawn on but its still something to visit.

Stone sculptures are perhaps a thing of the past now that we can use asbestos, spray concrete and that really artistic spray foam.

It was just waiting for some heavy handed chap to put a fist through it!

Patrick Walker

Land in Park Road - 20/8/06

There were two houses along Park Road next to the upholstery shop which have been bulldozed.
Does anyone know what the plans are for the site?

Name supplied

Ed: I think this will be part of the new business park development

15 Minutes of Poetry - 17/8/06

I was very impressed by the number of people attending the poetry presentation at the Portwell Bar. Once again Faringdon proves to be a breeding ground for artistic talent.

Any poets are more than welcome to come along to the 15 Minute Club to read their poetry (it's not only for musicians)...or maybe there's scope for a dedicated poetry night.
David Reynolds

Housework? ~ ~ Much Ado About Nothing - 16/8/06

My daughter isn't very well my wife has gone to stay
She said I must remain at home...I'd just get in the way.
So now I'm totally in charge. The house I now will run
It can't be very difficult; in fact it might be fun
The house was spotless when she left and she's coming back on Friday.
She knows that I am capable..I'll keep it clean and tidy.
I won't be cleaning very much for I must confess
the secret is quite simple. I will not make a mess.
I won't be using all the rooms. For this is what I'll do
I'll close the doors on most of them and just use one or two.
And there's no point in cleaning every day she is away
But I'll work hard for one full hour on Friday come what may.
Washing clothes and washing up, household chores, and such
May well appeal to women but don't thrill men too much
Yes, a housewife's job is easy. No one could claim it's tough.
But I think I'll find it boring..
So one week will be enough!

MCP

Ed. Presumably Male Chauvinist Pig

POETRY COMP NIGHT -15/8/06

I would like to say a big big thank you to everyone that turned up, congratulations once again to Sarah and Val for winning the prizes, (I know it wasn't the money that made you enter, it was my badges wasn't it?)

Martin, John, and of course Hilary and Gene, who put the effort into making it all worthwhile, as I said during the evening, it started off as a joke, and ended with a lot of fun, and of course some great poems,

I am more than happy to sponsor this event for as long as people want it, next year an extra category will be added, under 15s.

Seeing as this years batch was of an incredibly high standard, I think I had better start buying my badges in bulk for next year.

Jim Horton

Voluntary Sector Forum Event - 15/8/06

To be held on 21st September at Wantage Civic Hall, to include workshops for organisations recruiting volunteers and management committees.

The Volunteer Centre Oxfordshire (a service of Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action) is also working on an individual basis with organisations in the Vale, to include Faringdon, Wantage, Grove and surrounding village to help develop volunteering opportunities to register with us.

You can visit www.oxnet.org.uk to see how these would be displayed, under volunteering tab on left hand side of the page.

For more information on the Forum event, or an informal chat about any volunteering good practice issues, contact

Frances Duggan on 01865 251946 or email info@ocva.org.uk
This work is being supported by the Vale of White Horse District Council

Free Community Cafe - 15/8/06

Faringdon Area Project are holding a Free Community Cafe on **September 2nd in the Corn Exchange from 10am to 2pm.**

We are focusing on Faringdon's rich heritage and will be exhibiting a large amount of photographs of Faringdon dating back to the 1850's.

We would be particularly delighted to hear recollections of Faringdon from those residents who have lived in the town for many years and who will have seen many changes in our town.

If you have any information that you think might be of interest to us please contact Julie Farmer on 0845 859 1720 or email me at annamarlow@tiscali.co.uk.

Many thanks
Anna Marlow

Poetry Prize Night - 15/8/06

Yes, thank you to everybody involved who made it such a fun event. Nice to put faces to names !.

Thank you to Jim & Martin for the prizes.....the money I've sent off to Cancer Research and the bottle of bubbly.....sadly it wouldn't fit in the envelope !. Sorry !
Chickened out of reading my poem...maybe I should have been given the champagne earlier in the evening !.

Well done Sarah, such a clever poem and good luck with your future composing.
Val

Poetry Comp Prize Night - 15/08/06

It was good to see everyone who came along to the poetry prizegiving at the Portwell Bar.

Special thanks to John Taylor, (AKA Alfred, Lord Tennyson), who made a splendid job of reading many of the poems and entertaining us, and to Martin Phillips who donated prizes and offered the venue, and of course to Jim Horton for his inspired idea and prizes, including the famous 'Jim fixed it for me' badges.

I hope we shall be able to establish the poetry competition as an annual Faringdon event.
Hilary T

Incident at the Church - 14/8/06

I noticed on Kirsty's police report that there was an incident at the church.

Can anyone add more?

I was shocked, perhaps the details were in the previous edition which I failed to read.

Is there an archive we can access.

Its better than TV!

Hope the pink petunias are recovered soon

Name Supplied

Budgens Deliveries -14/8/06

My wife is an employee of Budgens and the comments regarding the lorry keeping the town to standstill have made me chuckle.....

When would you like the deliveries to arrive, lets have it past 8pm when the town is quiet.

We nearly lost the 15 minute club because of noise, how would the locals like the cages coming off the lorry at 9 or 10 pm..... I don't think so !

It has been an issue previously with the store neighbours and the company agreed to deliver earlier in the day.

Lets also think about the employee's, when do you think the shelves get filled so that the morning customer's have reasonably full shelves,(tongue in cheek), yes that's right, after the store has closed until 11pm. When do you want these people to work, until 2 or 3 am I suppose.

The lorry probably couldn't get into position as locals had illegally parked, which I believe goes back to your other points.....

The town is a sleeping giant, but due to the high rental costs, larger stores do not want to enter the town, however if they did, where would the deliveries park, causing more disruption to the town.

Name supplied

FOUND - Chocolate burmese cat. -11/8/06

Thanks to all who scoured their garages and sheds.

He's well (albeit shaky) and home again.

Name supplied

15 MINUTE CLUB. - 10/8/06

A big thank you to everyone who came to the Council meeting on Tuesday.

Thank you also to Martin and David for their patience and understanding after what must have felt like a kick in the proverbials.

I regret that such a meeting was ever necessary, but there is no doubt that at the end of the process the club is stronger for the community support it demonstrated through the last few difficult weeks. The passion and eloquence of the speakers from the floor left councillors in no doubt of the value you place on the club. Thank you also for your tolerance during the debate, true democracy in action.

Whilst I disagreed with Cllr Hickmore's point of view on the club and the attempt to return the decision to the Venues committee; I would defend his right to argue for and represent a minority viewpoint, that after all is democracy. However the club now has the clear and unambiguous support of Council through the vote and a certain future.

Finally, having attended two of the last three Clubs I am looking forward to September and the chance to enjoy more live music.

Thank you all

Cllr Steve Leniec

A massive THANK YOU - 10/8/06

.....to Councillor Steve Leniec for putting forward this motion, and speaking with such conviction on the night. Your name is duly added to the list of people to whom we owe our gratitude for the continuance of the 15 Minute Club.

Also to John Gilman for being so steadfast and supportive and for chairing the meeting so expertly, and to all the Councillors who support not just the 15 Minute Club, but Faringdon and its residents.

Dee Lockwood

Just Give 15 Minutes - 10/8/06

Me again ..is it too late to put in an entry for the poetry competition?

His name is Alan Hickmore

A Councillor no less

Supporting Arts and Music

Is what he claims to do the best.

He speaks for all the residents

Or was it just the two?

Who say ban the 15 Minute Club,

Great entertainment? Poo poo!

An extraordinary meeting
For an extraordinary club
The support was overwhelming
More people than in the pub!

Apparently the noise levels
Were considered way too steep
Councillor Hickmore was concerned
For the 'masses' and their sleep.

"The windows they were rattling
Unacceptable I say!"
Despite the Environmental Officer
Giving the A OK.

As for the imaginary 'masses',
They must have stayed at home
Because among the 70 odd people
Bar 2 - Councillor Hickmore stood alone!

We are your masses Councillor
Do you hear what we are saying?
Let us repeat for clarity
We want the Artists playing!

Little Caleb is hard of hearing
The youngest performer yet.
He feels the vibes like no one else
.and he's more 'in tune' I'd bet

Did anyone know that Abby could sing?
Would you have missed that for the world?
A rough cut Diamond at the start
Now a voice as smooth as pearls

Mervyn Penney and his Banjo
To shouts of 'please play more.'
PowerTrain and their Rock Chicks
Fantastic bands galore!

Saxophonists, guitars and flute
Teenie Rock bands - aren't they cute?!
Bobby Moore's Shorts now supporting big names
Began on 15 minutes of fame.

But then you would know all of this
If you had visited just one night.
You'd understand the passion
And the need to fight and fight.

Credit to one objector
Who at the meeting showed his face
Apparently he was appeased
When supporters put forth their case

He didn't argue 'Legalities'
Of voting on that day
Unlike our Councillor Hickmore
Is that really what I heard you say?!!!

'Speak up Councillor Hickmore'
The residents at the back can't hear it.
'I'm not speaking to you' he says
.that could become a habit.

Few people support the Music and Arts
More than me, he said
So at the words - the 15 Minute Club will not close
Why did he mutter 'Yet'?!!

Well the residents of Faringdon
Insist we'll have our say
The Sunday 15 Minute Club
IS DEFINITELY HERE TO STAY!!!

A massive pat on the back to the residents of Faringdon!

can I continue the thread about Budgens being a rubbish supermarket now

Dee Lockwood
Ed: Yes too late - but why not recite it at the 15 min Plug and play??

The 15 Minute Club - A Big "Thankyou" - 10/8/06

I'd like to say many thanks to all who attended the council meeting last night, to those who couldn't make it but sent their supportive wishes, to those who posted their support on this website, and to those who wrote and spoke directly to the council.

The strength of support was quite overwhelming.

Thanks also to June and Hilary in the council offices for keeping their peckers up whilst on the receiving end of so much correspondence! They do a marvellous job, often without the praise they deserve.

Once it was all over last night someone commented to me what a waste of time it had all been, in the sense that the erroneous decision should not have been made in the first place. Whilst I agreed with the principle, I have to say that the whole episode was far from a waste of time.

Other than the Faringdon Arts Festival has there ever been such a groundswell of public support and sense of community spirit? Not in the 15 years that I've lived here.

From the young lads who plastered the town with clever and imaginative "lyrics" posters (fixed conscientiously with easily-removable BluTac), to the many supportive words we have received from pensioners.

Democracy does rule, and I'm proud to be a Faringdonian.

Thanks again.

Martin Phillips

15 minute club - 10/8/06

Congratulations to Martin and David and well done to all those who spoke in favour of the 15 Minute Club.

Thank God, sanity prevailed (although Councillor H seemed hell-bent on the insanity option).

See you all at the next 15 Minute Club!

Jon and Mel

15 Minute Club -10/8/06

The news that the 15 Minute club will continue is fantastic.

Faringdon is getting socially stronger all the time due in part to a number of dedicated people providing us with a variety of great events like the club, the arts weekend etc.

It's also testament to the great people of Faringdon, their support and their community mind set.

All I can add is that if you haven't been to the 15 Minute club go, there really is something for all ages, and its done and run by real people for all of us.

Andy Patyra

Another 15 minutes wanted - 10/8/06

Now that people are going to get their 15 minutes of fame that they deserve, perhaps the Thames Valley Police could spare 15 minutes each day and sort out the illegal parking!

Coxwell Street is still dreadful as people are just bone idle when it comes to parking. The Market Place is no better with especially R109ERS (Rogers) car parked all day in the disabled bay. Disabled bays in the town seem to get a lot of able bodied users in them.

On a more serious point; on Tuesday the town was brought to a standstill by a lorry delivering to Budgens at about 1730. The traffic was backed up all through the Market Place and up London Street, and people resorted to using the Bus Lane to get through past the Crown. Had to be extra careful then as nearly got run over.

These car users really had no choice as it was entirely Budgens fault but why? Cant they get the deliveries a little later?

The Bus lane I notice doesnt have very good signage and there is no mention of "No Entry" painted on the road. Surely that would help as soon someone is going to get hurt. Perhaps then the Police will do something.

Name supplied

15 Minute Club - 9/8/06

I would like to thank Cllr Leniec's, Dave Reynolds & Martin Phillips for making sure the 15 Minute Club will continue.

Common Sense does Prevail...
Thank you very much

Raoul van Eijndhoven

MISSING Chocolate burmese male cat. - 9/8/06

2yrs. Overdue vaccination and needs vet attention asap.

Very skinny, went missing 8/8 at the top of Coxwell Street (Coleshill Drive). Usually very home-bound. Has collar with tag, and is chipped.

Please can you check your sheds and garages as we miss him very much, my little boy is very sad. Call 07930 490 474 if you see him - please.

Name supplied

Council meeting - 15 minute club - 9/8/06

How good it was to see so many residents at the meeting (50-70?), as far as I could tell largely in support of the club continuing.

There were many speakers from the floor in support and none who spoke to justify the decision to close it. Concerns were expressed about the noise levels that may disrupt nearby residents, so the Council is to pursue the sound proofing of the hall- which wil cost it seems about £15K
The 15 minute club organisers have agreed that the club will close promptly at 11pm, that drum and base guitars will not be played after 10pm, and that statutory noise levels will not be exceeded- all these actions have already been put in place.

One councillor felt that the full Council could not make the decision as it had delegated authority to the Venues committee for the running of the various Council venues in the town.. He believes that as that committee made the

decision (albeit ultra vires - definition - 'beyond strength'; beyond or exceeding the authority of a person, court, etc.) it was only that committee that could review the decision made. This view was not accepted by the Mayor and the Town Clerk, so the discussion took place and Cllr Leniec's motion to have the previous decision rescinded was carried (majority vote)

Thank goodness - the 15 minute club is a huge benefit to the town. Speakers mentioned people from Oxford, Cirencester, London even, coming to listen or participate. The ages of performers ranges from 8 - 84 years, and people spoke of whole families coming to the event
This club has really put Faringdon on the map, and has resulted in many spin off activities and musical groups

Hooray for common sense, people power and the energy of the organisers and performers

Gene Webb

PS - Look out for the full story in next months Folly

15 Minute Club...and now the right decision! - 9/8/06

Last night the Town Council in an Extraordinary meeting voted overwhelmingly to support the continuance of the 15 Minute Club on the first Sunday in every month. Despite the attempts by one Councillor to contemptuously disregard the views of both the public and fellow councillors by shrouding his argument in spurious and uneducated legalities, the Council rightly took the view that the Club is of great benefit to the town and should continue subject to certain conditions.

As an organiser of the event I welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to make sure that it continues to be a valuable contribution to the community as a whole.
David Reynolds

15 MINUTE CLUB - TOWN COUNCIL MEETING.

As promised there will be an extraordinary meeting of Town Council on August 8th to consider the decision to close the club.

The meeting will be held in the Jubilee room at the Pump House* **see above** as we anticipate that there may be a large turnout of residents. Unfortunately the Corn Exchange Hall is booked on the evening otherwise that would have been an ideal venue. The meeting will start at 7.15pm and is a single issue meeting.

The Agenda has been posted on the Council notice board outside the Corn Exchange as usual, however I will include an outline agenda here for your information.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of last meeting : 12th July (circulated herewith)
3. Matters Arising
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Public Question Time

(Questions will normally be restricted to one from each member of public, or a maximum of three per meeting. Written notice of questions must be received by the Clerk at least 3 working days before the meeting.)

6. Public Speaking Time

(Members of the public will be required to state their name and address before speaking and each speaker will normally be restricted to 3 minutes duration. This is not a question and answer session.)

7. Motions Under Notice

Proposer: Cllr. S Leniec
Seconder:

This Council recognises that the Fifteen Minute club plays a major role in a vibrant arts community in the Town. Council recognises that the closure decision taken at the Venues committee meeting on 18th July was "ultra vires" and rescinds that decision.

Accordingly Council supports the continuation of monthly Sunday meetings of the club in the Corn Exchange subject to the following conditions:

- .Strict adherence to the 11.00pm closure.
- .No amplified music after 10.00pm.
- .Council to be notified and agree any proposed change to normal start time.
- .Operation within the limits set by the noise limitation equipment.
- .That statutory noise levels are not exceeded.

For it's part Council will:

- .Continue to investigate and implement any practical noise containment measures in the hall.
- .Request regular noise level checks from the Environmental Health Officer at the VWHDC.
- .Monitor complaints and operation on a regular basis through reports to the Venues committee.

Dated 1st August 2006
Cllr J.C.W.Gillman
Town Mayor

I hope that as many residents as possible from both sides of the argument are able to attend in order to have a full and fair debate this time.

Please note the time restriction on Question submitted and also the 3 minute public speaking rule.

If you met any Councillors on the 6th or before the meeting please lobby them gently!

Cllr Steve Leniec

Crossing Hazard in Gloucester Street- 03/08/06

Can anyone shed some light on the recent plan to reroute children walking to school from the town centre?

I notice from paint markings on the pavement outside the library on Gloucester Street that that the pavement is about to be dropped directly opposite a drive which is in constant use by vehicles some of which often have to reverse onto Gloucester Street.

Surely it is not proposed that the children should cross to and from school at this potentially hazardous point.

If any is aware of what is being proposed then it would be very helpful if they would post what they know.

With thanks.

name supplied

15 minute club - 03/08/06

As a resident of Gloucester Street I deplore the proposed closure of the 15 minute club - I take it that the council will now cancel all the wedding and disco bookings to boot!

And yes we do hear the music particularly on still evenings but being reasonable folk we know that it will begin and end as programmed;

perhaps those complaining folk could direct their energies into putting a stop to the random noise pollution that emanates from some of the domestic residences a mere stone's throw from the Corn Exchange!

name supplied

FOLLY TOWER & CHRISTMAS LIGHTS - 30/10/06

Firstly I would like to thank everyone who enjoys the lights we place on the Folly Tower each year. We try to be imaginative ranging from the rotating coloured cube we made last Christmas controlled by complex computers to just simple lamps placed on a steel framework. It takes a lot of effort and madness to do this, as well as carry all the various bits to the top of the 100ft high tower. We give our labour for this work free of charge to the Folly Tower with the Tower contributing to any materials we have to purchase specially. I also rely on some very dedicated press-ganged friends for their help. The Folly Tower Christmas lights are paid for by the Folly Tower Trust.

As for watts going up this year, yule just have to wait and see!

Secondly, on the subject of the Towns Christmas lights costing us a reported £7,000.00 last year. I find it incomprehensible that it should cost this much, and to add insult to injury, the lights didn't work for more than 5 minutes at a time, and when they did, at best only half came on.

I'd like to think that I speak on this matter with some authority as my business of Faringdon Electrical Services has over 10 years of experience in the installation and operation of Christmas lighting, ranging from helping with the installation of Oxford City Centre lights for several years, Carterton Town Centre lights refurbishment and installation for the past 6 years together with Highworth Christmas lights for 8 years and Wantage and Grove last year. As well as this, in 1995 we worked closely with the Christmas Lights Group in Faringdon who painstakingly raised £14,000.00 over many years to pay for a brand new state of the art long life wiring system together with new decorations, all of which were subjected to an inspection by the NIC EIC under a routine inspection of our work. There after we installed Faringdon's new lights for a further 6 years without any incident whatsoever of lights not working or poor maintenance. Our charge for the installation of the 14 strings of lights, 5 decorations round the old town hall and for putting the lights on the Christmas tree was £700.00 in 1995 increasing to £1,393.00 in 2001 with the addition of the new Christmas tree.

You may well ask what went wrong!!

Well, the Christmas Lights Group was a charity run by volunteers and it was disbanded due to members having other commitments and their work being near completion. So they handed over control of the new lights to the Town Council. From there on we had a real problem with communications.

Basically, they thought it wasn't necessary to listen to the contractor's views on the small amount of work required to complete the good work of the Christmas Lights Group. We were so concerned about the way it was going, we wrote a detailed letter and sent it to 13 councillors and the Town Mayor at the time, Dee England. This still got no response from the Council.

As much as I am saddened not to be bringing my town it's Christmas lights at Christmas and to watch other contractors destroy a perfectly working wiring system and decorations, I find it incredible that our much needed moneys are being wasted away. In fact a brand new Christmas tree lighting system paid for by the Faringdon Rotary Club costing the sum of £1,772.00 has just disappeared into thin air. A realistic cost for our Town's Christmas lights should be around £2,000.00. So, are our lights in safe hands? I don't think so!

Sorry if I have bored you with this, but Christmas is coming and Christmas lights are on my mind.

Peter White

ED: Thanks Peter - we love your Folly lights

Halloween Concert - 28/10/06

Well done to Powertrain and the other bands at last night Halloween concert. An excellent music event that Faringdon has and is becoming know for. Well done to all.

Julie Farmer

Doorstep Charity Collections - 27/10/06

Just a little further advice on doorstep charity collections - you can check the charitable status of the organisations asking for donations by looking to see if they have a charity number listed on their leaflets. Many of these apparent charities are actually individuals who take the items and sell them on at car boot sales for personal profit.

Genuine charities will display their charity number on all their correspondence.

If there is not a charity number listed I would urge people not to donate and instead, as the original poster suggested, support your local charity shops

Anna Marlow

Budgens Car park - 27/10/06

I agree that it's a real pain when car park ticket machines don't give change but there is a button on the new machines which will give a receipt as well as a ticket for your car. Budgens then knock the 40p (or whatever it is) off your bill on presentation of the receipt....so in effect it's free....as long as you shop in jolly old Budgens!

Do any other shops in F'don do the same thing?

The thing is that it should absolutely be free in the first place....but that's what we all would like isn't it!

Name supplied

Re: Southampton St Car Park (behind Budgens) -26/10/06

I have had occasion to go to Abingdon 4 times in the last fortnight on business. I note that VWHDC have not seen fit to inflict these new meters in those car parks. They have been in Wantage for some time and if you get the order in which you do things wrong you lose your money and don't receive a ticket.

Jane Boulton

Budgens and parking - 26/10/06

Budgens take a lot of stick in the town but there is one misconception that doesn't enhance their position. They do not own the car park. It is the domain of the Vale of White Horse District Council and, as far as I'm aware, every penny of our hard earning parking ticket money goes to them!

What really does bug me with these machines, however, is their apparent inability to give change. On the day they were installed I asked the (very pleasant) ticket attendant this very question. His answer....security. It seems that to give change the coins have to reside in the upper part of the machine which can very easily be pulled off (really?). As such the coins drop straight into the lower "more secure" section.

Now, I'm no criminal mastermind but if the top section can so easily be removed doesn't that leave the lower section exposed anyway!

He went away to think it over!

Oh by the way, please don't try it!

David Reynolds

ED: There was a time when if you took a car park receipt (the old machines could produce one) to Budgens, and then spent over £10 (I think), Budgens would refund the parking fee. Not sure if this is still possible

Clothes collections - not a charity - 26/10/06

Several leaflets are being posted through doors around the Faringdon area requesting clothing for 3rd world collection - These are not charity collections

It would seem the clothes are shipped out of the UK for sale?

If you want to check if the so called company is a genuine charity then check out this website :-

<http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/> Or better still give to local charity shops!!

Name Supplied

Service of Remembrance - 26/10/06

As some of you may know, we rely on organisations and individuals to send details of events for publication, and online forms are provided for this purpose. Should the anonymous complainant care to send - or ask the organisers of the Remembrance service, to send the details about it, we would be delighted to include them in the What's On Calendar of Events.

Ed.

Business development - Health Centre - 25/10/06

I too went to the open day at Brunel House to see the proposed plans for the new development of small workshops in Volunteer Way near the Health Centre.

I was generally impressed with the lengths that they have gone to, to come up with a design that will minimise the impact on the adjacent houses and area.

However although they say they have the right to throw out any businesses that are noisy or smelly, such as a panel beaters or engineering works, commercial pressures could well mean otherwise. I can imagine in a year or two's time, if half the units are empty then they will end up lowering their standards to get the units leased - they'll still have to pay off the building costs somehow (government agency or not). If they end up having a hairdressers or similar, which apparently is quite possible, then traffic in Volunteer Way is likely to increase dramatically.

Also the primary heating source is going to be some sort of woodchip burning stove, with gas as a backup. Hardly ideal even if the smoke is clean.

On a more positive note they are hoping to take over maintenance or replacement of the part dead willow hedge which will be at the rear of the new development.

I don't wish to be unduly negative as it could be a lot worse, e.g. if the whole site was sold to a car repair business or supermarket, I just have a feeling that it may be not work out quite as intended.

Name Supplied

Celia Walker festival 2006 - 25/10/06

Please could anyone with information on this years festival and where to get application/registration forms please get in touch

davidtowle_2000@yahoo.com

Careers Week - 24/1-/06

Herewith a reminder about the careers week (13th – 14th Nov) organised by FAP.

I believe that it is a worthwhile venture worthy of our support

They are hoping to provide students with information about a variety of careers with the help of a number of local businesses. They would like local employers to provide students with an insight into their own line of work and to explain, to groups of the students, what qualifications and expectations businesses in their field may demand from potential employees.

If you, or any representative from your company, would be interested in working with FAP on this project please contact Anna Marlow: anna.marlow@fap.org.uk or telephone 01367 241743

Business development near the Health Centre - 24/10/06

I spoke at some length with Jeremy about the development and looked over the plans.

My main concerns are to ensure that it is

- attractive to the "right type of business"
- affordable
- maintained

Trades such as motor repair shops will not be acceptable.

Small hi-tec start up firms will be sought.
The cost has to be affordable or start up businesses will be put off.

Too many small business development areas that I have seen look great for a year and then slowly (or in some case, quickly) decline into a rubbish strewn graffiti alley.

It is important that the residents press hard to obtain guarantees from Seeda that these basic principles are adhered to, in perpetuity, to guarantee their uninterrupted enjoyment of the environment in which they live

Nick Elwell
Wearing my Chamber of Commerce hat

Live Jazz at Carswell - 23/10/06

For the past 5 years we have been running live jazz evenings (with the best of National & International musicians) at Carswell Golf & Country Club usually on the last Friday of every month

Music starts at 8.30pm & food is available from 7pm.
Details/tickets from richard@thespeeds.freeserve.co.uk or tel:01367 710593.

Our next gig is on Friday 27 October with an All Star Uk group of sax/clarinetist ROBERT FOWLER with TIM ASPLAND, DAVE GREEN & BOBBY WORTH.
We round off the year with three great gigs;
Friday 10 November - guitarist PETE DOWNES PDC group with the melodic trumpet playing of DICK PEARCE (shades of Miles Davis);
Friday 24 November - USA saxophonist SCOTT HAMILTON with UK trombonist ROY WILLIAMS + JOHN PEARCE, DAVE GREEN & STEVE BROWN;
Friday 8 December - vocalist JULIA FARINO's quartet + guest multi reedist ALAN BARNES

Catalek/Dalekat ? ? ? - 23/10/06

I don't read lots of poetry... I'm not a literary man.
Sonnets etcetera don't impress ..I'm more a rhyming couplet fan
Metalmorphosis puzzled me and so I asked our Ed
If she could explain in simple words what it was I'd read.
She was very patient and gently told me that
A Dalek had a fight with the Faringdon Folly Cat
The more they fought each other the closer they seemed to get
They formed a hybrid entity..Robot and Domestic Pet.
Does Catalek or Dalekat have legs and furry feet ?
Or does it float like hovercraft as it goes through Market Street ?
The offspring must be puzzled and really rather sad
For the little ***** has neither mum nor dad
I can't think how this came about so can someone one tell me please
Can you explain this union ...in terms of Birds and Bees ?

Name Supplied

Potholes and Hobnobs - 23/10/06

Dear Editor
Once again I am moved to write to my local forum to highlight the growing issue of cracks and potholes in Faringdon's thoroughfares.

Only this week the easterly wheel of my Shopper became lodged resulting in my unfortunate tumble into the path of an oncoming taxi.
Happily, my hobnobs remained largely unbroken but this could easily not have been the case.

The driver of said vehicle was most obliging, even going as far as to sponging down some of the worse affected parts but this is not what I pay my rates for.

To whom should I apply for compensation in the event of broken biscuits and or bones?
I think we should be told

Yours Faithfully
Mrs Trotty Oldtyre

Schadenfreude?? - 23/10/06

I think the poster of 'write on' may have a very valid point.

I am now having to resort to Google searches to understand what on Earth HGM is talking about!
For those of you not well versed in pompous diatribe 'schadenfreude' means pleasure taken from someone else's misfortune (now it makes sense!)

Thank you HGM and thank you Google for today's learning experience. I have actually studied English at degree level but I do feel hugely ignorant when I read these postings - perhaps not a bad thing though!
Name Supplied

Budgens car park - 23/10/06

The new ticket machines are just our greedy council's way of making more money!

As far as i'm concerned, if i have paid for a space for a specified amount of time, what does it matter if i give that ticket with time still to run, to someone else? That space is already paid for!

With the new machines, it means the council get paid twice!
Shame on their money grabbing tactics!
Trish Reynolds

Bonfire night, a plea - 23/10/06

Can i please add to the plea?

It is difficult enough to cope with a terrified dog over the anticipated noisy evenings, so PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE can people think!!!! before setting off fireworks days and weeks before and after the event?

We all love a good firework display, but when you are sitting quietly of an evening outside of what should be the time for them, to suddenly hear the deafening bangs and whistles without warning is so, so difficult to cope with. My dog is totally terrified, she is absolutely beside herself, she shakes uncontrollably and desperately searches for somewhere to cower to get away from the noise, to no avail and i am powerless to help her.

Just for a minute, put yourself in that position, imagine the feeling of absolute terror with no escape, nowhere to hide.

She will not be the only dog going thru this awful ordeal

So all you residents of Faringdon, please stick to acceptable days around bonfire night to let off your fireworks. Please think before you let them off at any other time. You may think it fun to let them off at any time during the year for your birthdays etc, but it is NOT fun for your fellow residents in Town and DEFINITELY NOT fun for their pets.

Thankyou in anticipation of your help.
Trish Reynolds

Faringdon Area Project (FAP) - re Youth Club - 23/10/06

We write in response to the posting by Allan O'Connor (Youth Worker)in order to clarify any misunderstanding that may arise as to FAP's implied involvement in discussions two years ago.

FAP is a non-profit making community organisation that is heavily committed to seeing youth facilities improved within Faringdon and the surrounding villages.

We were delighted to hear the news that Faringdon is moving closer towards achieving this goal with the Cromwell Centre proposals and fully support Allan O'Connor with this project. FAP works closely with Allan O'Connor, the Town Council and Youth Sector volunteers to see that projects relating to Youth are pushed forward.

All of these parties are aware of the importance of these projects and by combining forces so much can be achieved.

A Youth Club is a vital social and empowering environment for our young people and we hope everyone will join us in wishing success for the proposed plan.

Julie and Anna, Faringdon Area Project

Response to Cncllr Leniec - 22/10 06

I would like to respond to the comments posted by Cllr. Leniec regarding youth venues.

Firstly on the question of keeping the town council 'in the dark' I would like to point out that I am not in the market of raising people's expectations nor wasting people's time. The proposal for the Cromwell Centre is just that - a proposal - which has to pass a series of approvals. When I have it on good authority that it is to become a youth centre and no more approvals are required then I will be only too happy to officially inform the community and the town council.

Furthermore, I never requested a motion from the town council on the Pump House Clubroom; I actually said that I refuse to support the proposal for the clubroom without knowing what the proposal is. Passing a resolution, as the town council did in July, to 'explore the possibility of providing the Clubroom.' does not equal providing a youth club. Especially when I raised the issue of the Clubroom with FAP and councillors 2 years ago to be told that it would not be passed, as they wanted the bar for revenue generation. So excuse me if I don't enter fully into the spirit of negotiation with the town council.

Secondly, the youth service can't withdraw from the town centre as it has never been there in the first place. The research Cllr. Leniec refers to, and I have a copy before me, found that young people wanted somewhere safe and warm with an example being a drop in. However, the research also found that young people wanted activities away from Faringdon and this leads me to the topic of sustainability. Trips cost money and take a lot of organising so it is difficult to sustain a programme of activities (I know I run a programme of activities). But how sustainable would a drop-in located in the Pump House be? In my opinion, the opinion of youth workers from the voluntary sector and in the opinion of the town centre youth (and, yes I do work with some of the young people who cause problems in the town centre) it would not be sustainable. In the words of one young person who lives in the town centre "loads of idiots would hang around outside causing trouble".

Now I know that the Pump House is under-used but if you are proposing a youth club open several nights a week some of which will coincide with yoga, a birthday party or a WI meeting then conflict will arise and young people, maybe deservedly so, will be blamed and how long will they be tolerated?

Call me unprofessional but I don't want to be a part of a project doomed to fail.

Finally Cllr. Leniec provides a list of town council grants aimed at teenagers which total £4955 over a 9 year period. Given a population of around 460 teenagers in Faringdon (2001 Census) this equates to approximately 2p per teenager per week. Cllr. Leniec asks what the County Council does for the town, well currently the County delegates a budget of £17,000 per year for the youth service in Faringdon and last year the young people and I raised a further £16,000 to supplement this, which does include the award from the town council and a grant from the District Council.

As a suggestion the town council, like other town councils, may like to fund a detached project to work with young people currently hanging around the town centre, which I would be delighted to deliver.

Allan O'Connor (Youth worker)

Bonfire Night - a plea - 22/10/06

As it is fast approaching Bonfire Night could I use the pages of Faringdon.org to make a plea to the good citizens of the town on behalf of all pet owners in the town.

If you are planning to have a Bonfire Night party outwith 5th November and you live near to the owners of dogs or cats, spare a thought and a few minutes to mention it to them. Fireworks terrify pets - even in the safety of their own homes and I like many dog owners, have to make preparations for the impact that fireworks have

upon my dogs and that means sedating them, before nightfall.

As Bonfire Night is on a Sunday this year, this means my dogs will be sedated during the hours of darkness for three days in order to be able to cope, as you can bet that fireworks will be set off on the Friday and Saturday nights as well as the Sunday.

Spare a thought and pet owners will thank you for it.
Name supplied

WRITE ON - 22/10/06

I would much rather read a funny posting on this site,(wether it be grammatically correct or not) than a pompous diatribe.

I am fed up of people being ridiculed on this site because of spelling mistakes ect. Is this just the domain of the retired professional bore, with very little else to do but to scan how many mistakes a letter has?
no wonder other people don't bother to write in if this is how they get treated!
Name supplied

Reply to Local Resident - 22/10/06

Thank you for your comments which I would like to believe are not just the result of schadenfreude but could you be persuaded to contribute further?

Participation is the cornerstone of the FTPs on this site and you will have gathered from my offerings that strict adherence to the truth is not a necessity and a quick scan of postings from a certain person (no names eh, JH) will show you that you don't need to have a Spell/Grammar Checker (though some do favour the Oxford Comma)

I must admit that some attacks on me are rather upsetting as I am, as a typical Yorkshireman, a rather sensitive soul. But if they are the result of a genuine dislike I can live with that though I can understand what she meant when Margaret Thatcher said that being attacked by Geoffrey Howe was like being savaged by a dead sheep.

Unfortunately another disturbing explanation for the animosity has been suggested which is that it is an attempt to hide quite contrary feelings.... Oh dear. That does bother me !

Now I look forward to more postings from you and anyone else prepared to join in even if only as Name Supplied so how about it ?

Keep warm..winter drawers on ?
HGM (from his Pram)

Plea from a Moped Driver - 21/10/06

We recently bought our Grand-Daughter a Moped for her Birthday. It is an NRG DT with a 49cc engine. She complained that when it was warmed up the RPM never dropped below 4000 so, being a concerned Grandpa, I decided to check it out. I managed to get the full-face helmet on but couldn't unfold my ears inside it and they still have a slightly Royal tendency to protrude. She was right, the automatic choke seems to be stuck and if anyone can offer a solution I'd appreciate it.. The dealer has said he will sort it out.

My test drive took me round Faringdon and I came up Coxwell Road with the throttle wide open and about 7000+RPM on the clock. I know I must have sounded like an inconsiderate boy racer with no baffles in my silencer but the fact is I was only doing 23 MPH.

The other thing I realised was that the pot holes, badly repaired roads and dangerous manhole covers which are a feature of most of our Oxfordshire roads were not just annoying for a Moped driver they were positively dangerous. I was forced to keep well away from the edge of the road where most of these hazards lurk.

So, motorists, please remember that the youngster ahead of you holding you up isn't necessarily being awkward and resist the temptation to give him or her a blast on your horn as you race past at 30mph in your 4x4. That young tearaway might be me !!!

Geriatric Hell's Angel

Winter of Contentment - 20/10/06

HGM and Jim in their eighties?.....I don't think so.

Both sprightly young things!
Always good value though!

David Reynolds (aged 84)

Winter of contentment. -20/10/06

I always know when it's time to turn the heating on, to get out the faithful woollies and to start thinking about turkey foil, the only guide I need to let me know winter is fast approaching is the annual feud between HGM and Jim Horton, keep it up gentlemen, it makes me laugh out loud at some of the responses,

I do though imagine sometimes that they are two eighty somethings waving walking sticks at each other, am I right?, and Jim, I do love the phrase " Ladies of the Site" although imagining the high heels is a bridge to far for me I'm afraid.

Local Resident.

Or me - 20/10/06

Catalek

Don't think you've heard the last of me - 20/10/06

Dalekat

Goldilocks - the true version - 19/10/06

Many years ago my grand daughter asked me if the story of Goldilocks was true.

This poem was the result: Goldilocks...

The true version

Well, Goldilocks entered the house of the Bears...That part of the story is true.
She ate the porridge and sat on the chairs then feeling tired she went upstairs.
It seemed like the right thing to do.

The Bears came home and had a good moan and said what had to be said.
Then they felt tired and followed the script and they went off to bed.
Mama and Papa Bear entered their room and found to their great distress
That someone had tried their magnificent bed...and left it one h*** of a mess.
BUT... now we come in the story to the bit which is quite absurd.
For when baby bear saw what was in his bed.... he didn't say a word.

HGM

Ed: A 100 postings to Talking Points!!! - thanks so much Harry. We wish there were many more regulars!

Metalmorphosis -18/10/06

A mystery I can perchance explain -
the disappearance of the feline bane

of all our lives. One, Folly Cat; he stalked
these pages avidly, alone he walked.

Then suddenly a fierce protagonist

appeared. Protruberences plain, his fist

held high; descended, gleaming, from the sky,
To rent the atmosphere with strident cry.

"I'll brook no criticism" he intoned
as Folly Cat, sharp teeth and claws well honed

prepared for battle. Then a great mêlée
ensued as fur and metal flew each way.

But, in a flash, loins competently girt
Cat vanished beneath Dalek's tinny skirt.

Great blast occurred, and squealing filled the air
As shards of metal, teeth and claws and hair

Did fly asunder. I stood by, amazed.
You might expect them both completely razed;

but no! as phoenix rising from spent coals
a hybrid creature from the gutter rolls.

Stiff limbs, a hard, metallic-furry face
And cuddly bits upon it's carapace.

The like of which I never saw before.
A novel way to difference restore.

With howls bizarre, aggressive-sweet, and shrill
It swiftly disappeared up Folly Hill

It's poignant, haunting cries I hear e'en now.....
..... "**Exterminate, exterminate, miaou**"

Deputy Dog

Poetry pleases, (or doesn't....) 18/10/06

Isn't it amazing, when I and the "ladies of the site" ran the poetry competition a little while back, a certain person (no names eh, HGM) bemoaned the fact that all manner of scallys and inbreeds had taken over, and turned Talking Points into a tedious place with pathetic poems about boring subjects, and that he wouldn't lower himself to participate, I think the phrase "got quite anal" springs to mind.

After being away for some time, I find that, low and behold, two HGM's gems have appeared, well never mind, I have decided that next year's competition will have three levels, Adult, children, and HGMs, perhaps if he wins a prize, he can throw that out of his pram instead.

I now look forward to a winter of discontent

JIM HORTON

HGM - thank you -17/10/06

.....so much for your public apology! But it leads me to admit that it was I who posted the Naughty Jill comment, as I found the coincidence of postings next to each other hilarious!

My attempt at increasing the humour by withholding my name obviously misfired! Anyway, it has been a delight to read your recent poems - as you and others have recently mentioned, it's got a bit dull here lately!
Jill Dean

Budgens car park - 17/10/06

Can anyone please let me know why the parking payment machines have been changed at Budgen's car park?

The old ones worked fine but we now have ones that have to have a number plate tapped in first.
Is ticket sharing so rife in Faringdon that the council thought it necessary?

In my view if we make it easy for people to get into the town then the town and all will prosper
Is this another case of small mindedness or budget spending....
Andy Patyra

Apology to Jill Dean -17/10/06

I hope that the coincidence, and that's all it was, between Jill Dean's complaint and my attempt to lighten the website doesn't cause any domestic upheaval in the Dean household. If it does then my apologies but just to set the matter straight here is my reason for writing:

For thirty years I travelled and have seen most tourist places.
I've seen some funny costumes and multi coloured faces.
I've seen the Southern Cross and I've seen the Northern Lights
I've even been to countries where they don't have any sights.
But I've seen Niagara Falls and the beach at Waikiki.
I've crossed the Rocky Mountains and even tried to ski.
I've seen turtles at Masirah laying eggs in tiny caves.
I've seen the baby turtles as they scamper for the waves.
I've seen the crabs on Christmas Island digging in the sand.
Their fighting claws are awesome and they could nip off your hand.
I've spent time in Las Vegas where every one was hearty
And some girls I'd never seen before said would I like to Party.
I've water ski-ed in Canada, I've snorkelled out in Gan.
And though I'd like to claim I have, I haven't seen Japan.
I've had great times in Hong Kong..I even liked the smell.
I've spent time in the Congo where Baluba natives dwell.
In short I've been to places other people can't afford.
But when I think about it..quite often I was bored.
And so I started writing poems to pass the time of day
But if you think they're rubbish
then .. just throw the things away !!

HGM

Great poem HGM - 16/10/06

.....and so good to see something completely different on this site. I think we must all need a little inspiration at the moment Talking Points has been alarmingly quiet!

On another tangent altogether, has anyone else noticed that Earthline lorries seem to be on a mission to take over the world?!
Where do they all go and what do they all do?
Intriguing.....
Name Supplied

Faringdon Arts Fest 2007 - 16/10/06

Faringdon's most successful Arts Festival is about to start preparations for the 4 year.

The Festival aims to enthuse, encourage and demonstrate new arts to the community of Faringdon and surrounding villages of Oxfordshire.
We will have a battle of the bands competition and will take over the Market Place of Faringdon for a live music concert on Friday 6th July from 7pm.

On Saturday and Sunday we open the stage to members of the public to demonstrate their talents, if you would like to take part contact us at info@faringdonartsfestival.org

We have created our first blog for the Arts Festival this year, so if you would like to put your view forward, take a look at some of the acts that we would like to take part this year please feel free to voice your opinions.

<http://faf07.blogspot.com>

Name Supplied

Naughty Jill? - 16/10/06

HGM - I hope your poem about a rather naughty Jill was not inspired by the name of the person who posted just before you!!!!!!

Name Supplied

Poem with no message - 16/10/06

I check the website every day but have missed the 'poems'.

Where have all the poets gone or do they, like flies, tend to disappear in Autumn. It may be that only poems with a message are acceptable to the Eds and they have a recycle bin full of offerings like the following so if this poem appears it will show that they are broadminded about the content.

In which case Folly Cat, Devil's Advocate etc how about a bit of gratuitous nonsense?

Here goes and you will see this has nothing to do with Youth Clubs, Boy Bands, Robin Hood etc

Do you really believe that an intelligent lad like Jack in the nursery rhyme expected to find water at the top of a hill? Give him a bit of credit. Here's what really happened.

Jack and Jill Jack went up the hill with Jill, but I think you'll find
Fetching pails of water was the last thing on his mind.

He'd led a very sheltered life and read a lot of books

But Jill somehow surprised him and it wasn't just her looks.

She couldn't climb a tree like him, she couldn't really run

But Jack found out that watching her was really rather fun.

He suddenly lost interest in throwing stones at trees

And now he felt embarrassed that he had such dirty knees

He started dressing carefully and taking extra care

To clean beneath his finger nails and even comb his hair.

But Jill had been around a lot and shared with him her knowledge

And Jack was heard to mutter that "We weren't told that at college"

So when he went back home for tea he thought he wouldn't say

What he had been up to and how he'd spent his day.

He knew he had been naughty doing things he didn't oughter

So he told a stupid story ~ about a pail of water.

HGM

Litter - 15/10/06

Why is Park Road - from JDS to the A420 - strewn with newspapers/magazines this morning (Sunday)?

Jill Dean

Battle of the Bands - 15/10/06

Congratulations to our local band Disclosure for their brilliant performance on the night and achieving third place at the UK under eighteen rock finals at Nottingham on 14th October.

The twelve finalists bands were all very good so the competition was enormous.

They also reached the nomination stage for their songwriting.

Two coach loads of supporters arrived back in Faringdon at 1am weary but excited. Once again a special thanks to all concerned in helping the band especially Lyn Waugh. Well done.

Rod and Sue French

Robin Hood on TV - 14/10/06

Just a note to say that the first episode of the new Robin Hood that I've written will be on next Saturday, the 21st, BBC1 at 7pm.

If you catch it, I hope you like it.

Cheers. -- Check out my blog at: <http://paulcornell.blogspot.com/>

Paul Cornell

Faringdon Community Music Centre - 14/10/2006

As reported in this month's Folly, Lord Faringdon's solicitors have approved in principle proposals to convert the old theatre building behind the Pump House into a fully sound-proofed music rehearsal, recording and performance venue.

Plans include provision of a fully equipped studio for recording or rehearsals, and the main hall for rehearsals and performances. All facilities will be sound-proofed.

Expressions of interest are invited from any individuals, bands or organisations who may be interested in using the new facilities.

Please email PortwellBar@aol.com or write to The Portwell Bar, 26a Market Place, Faringdon SN7 7HU, stating which facilities you may be interested in, and possible frequency of use.

Thank you

Martin Phillips

New Youth Centre- Town Council response.- 14/10/06

This response is NOT a Town Council response but that of an individual councillor.

Allan O'Connor's (Youth Worker) requests that the Town Council "See the bigger picture" and I hope that as Council we do. However it is difficult to see that picture when kept in the dark on such a major development when another option both sides had considered a possibility was dropped and council find out through a third party. In early summer this year I put a motion of principle through council at the request of the Youth Worker to demonstrate our commitment and the terms of a possible arrangement. Broad terms were that the council would provide the clubroom for exclusive use of the youth service at a peppercorn rent, with council renovating the fabric and the youth service/young people being responsible for internal decoration and furnishing. This was then communicated to the Youth Worker and the response was silence. This at a critical time when 106 Agreement money coming from the new housing in the town has to be bid for and deadlines have to be met. Despite the official silence and in light of the rumours council agreed to "bid" for money for a youth centre WHEREVER it may eventually be.

Our dismay has been in the unprofessional way our genuine offer was treated and the way we eventually learned of the Cromwell Centre proposal.

Personally I am suprised and disappointed that a decision has been taken to withdraw the Youth Service from the Town centre to a building on the outskirts of the town. Having worked in cooperation with previous youth workers in the town it was their professional opinion that the only way to engage with the youth of the town was through a town centre drop in. Town council sponsored research by a youth worker (Tracy Charlton) which demonstrated that the youth who would most benefit from the service (their target focus) would not travel to the Community college youth club and no doubt will not travel out to the Cromwell Centre. I know and appreciate that many already engaged with the youth service will, however it is my personal opinion (and that of previous youth workers) that the town centre youths will not and are being abandoned by the service. I understand that such a target grouping is challenging, but in my naivety I thought that was the core purpose of a youth service?

Moving to the bigger picture beyond the youth service, organisations provide activities in the town for young people and the council support many of them through grants. Over the last 10 years almost £10,000 has been awarded to clubs and associations providing activities. Volunteers from the football, cricket, rugby, artistic skaters, judo, 15 minute club scouts and guides all provide opportunities for young people often overlooked but very much part of the bigger picture.

Perhaps Council's biggest failure has been the inability to find a suitable site for a skate park. Having spent hours negotiating access and planning for a site behind Willes Close it was frustrating to fail. However we continued to support a park, paying over £2,000 for a 2 day mobile skate park in Gloucester Street car park and a professional appraisal of possible sites in 2002. Last year we paid £640 for a 3 day mobile skate park arranged by SK8. Our submission on 106 agreements for the new housing includes a skate park. In the last 10 years we have also spent over £24,000 on play equipment for younger children in our parks. Supported the Oxfordshire Playbus £1,750. Provided grants of over £10,500 towards the Pre School New Hut Appeal.

Finally there have been a number of grants made to both youth workers and community groups in support of projects specifically aimed at teenagers:

98/99. Faringdon youth centre £1000 towards the publication costs of a newsletter produced by teenagers.

99/2000. SPIF youth fund £1000.

2001/2002. Vale Churches Mobile Drop In and Outreach Project. £1000

02/03 another £500 towards the youth bus.

05/06 Faringdon youth centre £1,455 towards a programme of summer activities.

In addition to the financial support councillors continue to volunteer many hours to projects such as the health check and planning reviews to ensure that young people in the town get a fairer deal. Sure we could achieve more with greater resources but before you criticise the town council too much ask what the district and county actually in the town do with all their millions.

In a letter to the Town Clerk dated 16th Sept the Youth Worker describes the council's "shameful history with regard to youth provision". Well actually Allan as someone who has argued your corner in the past I think we do ok. No complacency or comfort zone though, we can and will do more.

Faringdon town council has enjoyed a good working relationship with the youth service in the past and for the benefit of our young people it must continue. I wish the youth service every success with the Cromwell Centre, any new facility has to be a plus for the town and one fully funded by the county will enable us to channel our limited resources into other youth projects. As for the Clubroom we are exploring other possibilities to create a community room for all ages including the town centre youth.

Cllr. Steve Leniec

Development of Business Centre, Faringdon - 10/10/06

Seeda(South East England Development Agency) are planning to develop the unused land in Volunteer Way. If you want to see their plans, go to the exhibition on **25th October, 2pm - 8pm** at Brunel House(now the Faringdon Gateway), Volunteer Way

Quote from letter to nearby householders:

As you may be aware the land on the south side of Volunteer Way has been earmarked for employment development for many years. The type of development has been specified to be such that it would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of properties in Volunteer Way. Indeed, part of its purpose is to screen the housing from the existing employment area at Pioneer Way.

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) is the Government funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of the South East of England. SEEDA has acquired the land on the south side of Volunteer Way, with the aim of developing small starter/incubator units to help establish new small businesses to support the local economy. This is in partnership with Faringdon Enterprise Gateway.

If you are unable to come to the exhibition, please send in your comments either at the above address or marked for attention of Jeremy Herring, at Brunel House, Faringdon Business Centre, Volunteer Way

Community Bus - 9/10/06

Just to let everybody know the Faringdon Community Bus has got a permanent new telephone number 01367 244480

The phone will be manned Monday to Friday and will be able to discuss queries, take hire bookings and talk to anybody who wishes to volunteer and drive the bus or help in any other capacity.

Alison Moore

World Food Day - and the Porridge Club -9/10/06

I would like to invite everybody who reads talking points to Breakfast under the **Old Town Hall on Monday 16th October**.7.30 - 9.30

We will try to explain while you eat your Porridge (and hopefully make a donation) what World Food Day is about.

The Porridge Club has been set up in Faringdon as part of the the African Childrens Fund, it is about enabling children to take advantage of primary education in Africa and we are already after only being in existence for a few months running the 1st of our porridge clubs in Kenya giving porridge to up to 100 children a day.

The African Children's Fund shop on the Market Place would be be very grateful for any good quality donations and any offers of volunteer help.

Many thanks to all who help to Make Poverty History

Alison Moore

New Housing and Business Park- exhibition - 8/10/06

FOL LY PARK VI EW FA R I N G D O N PUBLIC EXHIBITION

THE PUMP HOUSE FARINGDON

From Tuesday 24th October to Saturday 28th October 2006 Daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The exhibition will illustrate preliminary proposals by Bloor Homes to create a new mixed use development of housing, business and recreational facilities in accordance with the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan.

If you would like more information on the proposed development please contact Hannah Philp or Claire McIntosh, Vincent and Gorbing, telephone / e-mail : 01438 316331 - hannah.philp@vincent-gorbing.co.uk or claire.mcintosh@vincent-gorbing.co.uk or visit the Bloor Homes website : www.bloorhomes.com.

Ed: I've heard that as well as info about the housing and the business park there will also be something about the Planning gain items - Skate Park, Folly Park extension etc

Fly Tipping - 6/10/06

4 months ago I reported a load of fly tipping that had been done up Sands Hill to the local police. Nothing was done. A month ago I re reported it, this time to VWHDC. Once again nothing has been done.

Today I walked up Sands Hill and it is clear that other idle individuals (I refrain from using the term scum at this time), have begun adding to the pile. We are told that we should report fly tipping and that councils regard it seriously as a problem.

Well, it seems that while we should, the council clearly do not! Clearly stuck as we are in the bottom corner of Oxfordshire VWHDC regards us little. Maybe we should consider moving back into Berkshire if we are too much trouble for the Abingdon bureaucrats, or maybe move into Wiltshire!

Name Supplied

Ed: I used www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/StreetScene/DetailPage-9151.asp 28/9, and got an automated email response - nothing else- yet??

Youth Centre - 6/10/06

I think the Cromwell Centre is a fantastic location for a Youth Facility - it is not too close to houses; it is not in the town centre where youths will congregate and make noise (God forbid anyone who makes noise in the town centre as past experience shows!); there are footpaths all the way along to it and it can be up and running very soon without huge refurbishment costs.

Playing Devils Advocate ever so slightly I am sure there are lots of positive ways that the old bar behind the Pump House could be used - there can be none however that attract quite as many grants as Youth Projects. Could it be possible that there are some Town Councillors who feel that they have missed an opportunity to get a lot of money thrown at one of their Town Centre Facilities not to mention the brownie points they may have

earned (looks like they need some desperately!) by securing a venue for Youth in the town?

It really is about time we saw more cohesion in Faringdon - we all want the same things, who cares who takes the credit? Congratulations to Allan O'Connor for pushing ahead with his plans - and to all the Youth of Faringdon I hope you have a fantastic time at your new club when it opens!

Finally could it be time for a new Talking Points competition, 'Best use for the Pump Room bar' I'm sure we could come up with something very innovative for Faringdon!
Name supplied

FARINGDON ARTS FESTIVAL - 5/10/06

Thanks to everyone who came to the meeting on 4 October and volunteered to be involved in the organisation of the 2007 event
Sheila Donovan

Youth Centre - 4/10/06

I think that the cromwell centre is a very good idea and i hope that itll be a great oppourtunity for the youth of faringdon.

if the youth centre goes underway me and my friends will all use it reguarly.

Thanks: Jackie and Allan for working hard to get this oppourtunity for all of us young people, but i feel its a shame about the town council not supporting us .
Ella Williams

Youth Club!! - 4/10/06

Having a youth centre in the cromwell centre is a great idea!!

I want 2 thank jackie and allan for all the hard work.

Its a bit of shame the town councill are not willing to support us in this oppourtunity as there is currently no space for us (young people)

Hope this all goes underway because we need a youth centre!!
Grace Bouwers

New Youth Centre - 4/10/2006

I think it is fantastic that there is to be somewhere in Faringdon for young people to meet and call their own space.

I am very much aware that Allan O'Connor has put a lot of time and energy into making this happen and he deserves a medal for what he has achieved.
Well done !!!!

I'm surprised that the Town Council are not a little more supportive, but I guess it means that the space promised to the youth in the Pump Rooms will remain disused and in a poor state of repair until another idea comes forward.

Maybe that is what is meant by "dismay" and "disappointment".

I'm sure the Town Council aren't short of ideas or would they like some help...?

Fantastic news Allan on the Cromwell Centre - can't wait to see it open !!
Name Supplied

Youth Centre - 2/10/06

Well said Allan!

Is there room for a skate park at the Cromwell Centre too?!

Name supplied

Grove Lodge - 1/10/2006

I do admire the site, but I must point out a couple of wrongly named properties.

I am the owner of "GROVE LODGE". The Panoramic View Site called it GROVE COTTAGE . GROVE LODGE is the name used by all old maps that I have seen, fitting in well with GROVE WOOD, GROVE COTTAGE (as was) and THE GROVE. I have officially reverted the name back from STORMY CASTLE COTTAGE to it's original name.
As it should be!

I was quite tickled to here it also called WORLD'S END and another name something to do with being haunted!

This a very old site dating back maybe thousands of years, judging by the way the slopes from the adjoining fields surround the original garden plot. The present building as can be seen from the existing fabric was a one down one up with a simple pyramid roof, the same as was Grove Cottage (Church Path Farm), both dating from about C1850.

Being very strategically placed, in a direct straight line between the bridge at RADCOT and FOLLY HILL and the footpath going to LITTLEWORTH, (Still known by some locals as "coffin walk", before they had a church) Then finding out that a settlement with a prefix of LITTLE, was a good chance it was on a driveway!

And so the plot thickens. If you know anyone who can advise on it's history I would be very interested to know.

CHURCH PATH FARM, used to be called GROVE COTTAGE on the older maps but is wrongly called CHURCH FARM from the crane view.

Thanking you in anticipation, Ian Smith.

Speeding on the Highworth Road -30/11/06

Please lets not get all nannying about speed on this site apart from eveything else thats being controlled at present. Controlling speed is something thats very serious and needs to be completely understood.

A couple of local examples for you;

the speed humps that have appeared on the Lechlade road leading out of town adjacent to the schools. Any thoughts to the increased carbon implications when drivers have to brake and slow to pass over these and then accelerate again in between. The actual enriched mixture coming out of the exhaust by this process times each vehicle is adding to global warming, all in the name of safety.

It also needs to be considered that these humps appeared without much warning and if you are a motorcyclist and you hit one (they are difficult to spot when on a bike) they are a possible means of actually losing control and what then mounting the curb possibly, maiming children, who would be in favour then?

So, please before we have speed humps, or those dreadful narrow chicains in and out of Bamford think very hard, is it going to slow traffic, increase the risk of an accident or worse still add to the earths global carbon problems....

Name supplied

A bit of noise is worth it - 29/11/06

My Wife told me about this site today and without her diligence we would not have been invited to this discussion.

I am a resident of Gloucester Street and live in one of the closest houses to the Corn Exchange. Most of the time the level of the music is perfectly acceptable, and on only one or two occasions has it been too loud. On these occasions it was a private function playing drum and bass stupidly loud. There has to be a balance, and I for one enjoy hearing the bustle of a town in the background.

As a youth I was always playing in bands and I would have been devastated if there was nowhere to play. If we take this away from the youngsters in this town then what else will they have? I think that this is a very important part of the youth culture and needs to be encouraged. I would rather a bit of noise and know that the youngsters are enjoying themselves in a safe environment rather than getting bored and going down other avenues to have fun.

If you want to live in a town centre you should expect a bit of noise, remember that this isn't some sleepy village.

I have not been canvassed and I wonder if the council have taken a decision by only listening to the opinion of the people that have complained?

The council need to reverse this nonsense and return the local live music to its rightful place before this wonderful building becomes the reserve of Christmas bazaars and coffee mornings..

Name supplied

15 minute club must continue - 29/11/06

As a Gloucester Street family we are never disturbed by the music and think it would be a loss to the whole community if the 15 minute club was forced to close.

We all complain about young people wandering the streets with nothing to do; here is something constructive that they can get involved in together with the rest of us.

It must continue
Name Supplied

Speeding Cars - Highworth Road - 29/11/06

We are very concerned about the speeding traffic through Highworth Road in Faringdon.

We often see cars exceeding the speed limit and making it dangerous for other road users.

I think it'll be only a matter of time before a serious accident is repeated, last time this happened a pedestrian was killed.

Does anyone have any views on this?
Name Supplied

ED: There is a group called Traffic Advisory (Councils, Police) - maybe worth contacting them - the Town Council will know who the chair is

Gloucester St residents- no problems with music?-get in touch -

29/11/06

For my part I know that it is not all the residents of Gloucester Street complaining.
In fact my understanding is that it is limited to a handful at the very most.

I am, of course, concerned for the comfort of those who are adversely affected but, for balance, I'm also very interested to hear from anyone in the vicinity who does not have a problem with the current noise levels at the Corn Exchange.

Please feel free to call me on 0771 421 8825.
David Reynolds

Surprised Gloucester St resident - 29/11/06

I am a resident in Gloucester Street I logged onto the website for a read over lunch.

Very surprised about all the articles about live music at The Corn Exchange.

Why have no letters been sent to local residents has it been assumed that all Gloucester Street residents have the same view on live music at the Corn Exchange?

Name supplied

EMBERS

Last Chance to buy Embers stock

Huge savings on Fantastic items

At The Market Place Restaurant, Faringdon
Sat 2nd December, from 10am

Up to 75% off

Only some Gloucester St residents - 28/11/06

Hang on a minute - there's far too much talk at the moment about the residents of Gloucester Street, as if they were a coven, hell bent on putting an end to fun!!!

I'm not sure who among us has complained about the noise levels at the Corn Exchange but it is unfair that we should collectively have the finger pointed at us.

I am very rarely disturbed by the activities at the Corn Exchange except for the post disco drunks who stagger back up Gloucester Street!!!!!!
Name supplied

Junior School as a Venue -27/11/06

I have spoken to the Chair of the Goveners, Joanna Cave and the school will consider this issue at their meeting in the new year.

From my inital conversation there is an interest in the oppportunity but at the same time they will have to balance the needs and concerns of any possible impact on their neighbours.

Sean Hodgson
www.britpopuk.com

Website visits last week 1460

THE HEART OF FARINGDON -27/11/06

The regeneration of Faringdon's soul has occurred because the square has once again become its heartbeat.

While it would be admirable to have a variety of arts venues distributed around the town and beyond, it is vital that we keep attracting people into the town centre.

This is why the short-term focus should be on reinstating the CORN EXCHANGE by coming up with a compromise that is closest to the needs of all Faringdonians.
Mark Harrison

Good NHS news - 27/11/06

David (Williamson) has just won the Hospital Doctor 'Surgery Team of the Year' Award as leader of the Orthopaedic Department at the GWH, Swindon.

This is a prestigious national award, and the local team won ahead of 50 or so nominated entries from all branches of surgery throughout the country

David is being quite modest about it all, but I am happy to blow the trumpet for good quality local services.
Lynn Williamson

RE: Corn Exchange -26/11/06

I agree with Matt Barber that all parties need to get together on this matter urgently.

This venue is just too important to the soul of Faringdon.

I lived opposite the Corn Exchange for many years, and have played there with my band, so I can see both sides of the argument. I do feel however that if you live in the town centre you need to accept some noise (it goes with the territory I'm afraid).

The VoWH decision to ban all live music is surreal.

A leaf fell on the bonnet of my car the other day, so could the Vale please organise to cut down all the trees in Faringdon to stop this happening again.
Name supplied

Fernham on TV- FFFF Calendar - 26/11/06

Filming took place in the Woodman Inn, St John's church and at the home of Mr October!

We've been assured of a place in local TV history - with a 2 minute slot on Monday night - BBC Oxford at 6.30 - set the videos!!

Calendars are available at 6.50 or signed copies for a tenner - please let me know and we'll post or even deliver!

All for a good cause - for more info - check out www.fernham.info and click on Project Inspire.....
Bill

CORN EXCHANGE DEMISE -26/11/06

Whatever is happening at the Corn Exchange.??

I cannot believe that the performing of live music is being threatened by a handful of residents living nearby. (Did they not consider this when they moved to Gloucester Street ??).

In 1964 my wife and I lived in Marlborough Street, overlooking the Hall. There were dances at regular intervals, all finishing at respectable hours, and the noise never bothered us. In fact, we started a family there, and the eldest son now plays with the Lucky Generals, (or should that now be UNLUCKY Generals) who perform at the venue.

I understand that cancellations of dances etc. are under way.

We cannot let this happen, so come on, you committees, let common sense prevail before Faringdon sinks slowly into oblivion.

Geoff Edgington, born and bred here, will never leave, but saddened by recent events.

Ed Vaizey said this in an email... - 25/11/06

Thanks very much for getting in touch about the shenanigans at the Corn Exchange. Sorry about the delay in replying.

I am a big fan of the faringdon arts scene, and completely agree it is thriving. I would hate anything to jeopardise it.

I raised the issue on Friday with the Vale, and this is my understanding of the position. I am putting it as objectively as possible, as that makes it easier to work out a solution.

1. There have been complaints from neighbours, apparently about ten in all
2. The Vale own the building, but the Town Council are responsible for running it
3. The entertainment licence is granted to the Town Council and there are no formal restrictions on it
4. However, the Vale can intervene and serve a noise abatement order. This they have threatened to do.
5. They have encouraged the Town Council to use a limiter.
6. The Vale has encouraged the Town Council to get an expert to set the limiter. The Vale have said they could make one of their officials available to set it properly.
7. The Vale is open to the idea of discussions with neighbours where, on particular occasions, the limiter could be switched off.

I also understand that Matthew Barber is convening a meeting of all interested parties - neighbours, bookers, town council and Vale - to look for a solution. I will do all I can to help.
Name supplied

Community College for a music venue? - 25/11/06

Have you thought of using the faringdon community college as a venue

They hold a battle of bands there. and I heard from a couple of friends that it's quite noisy. but none of the neighbours complain.

Name supplied

Town Crier - too loud!! - 24/11/06

The Town Crier set the Corn Exchange limiter off at the Pre school Xmas Fair.

Good eh?

Name supplied

SILENT NIGHT(REPRISE).- 24/11/06

Yep, I'm up for mass carol singing in Gloucester Street, I will bring my drums

Perhaps all the money raised could go towards the £190 needed for the school licence, see, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and there was me thinking it was another train coming

Tis' the season of goodwill after all, god bless Mr Scrooge and every single one of us, buy the biggest turkey in the shop boy.....oh dear to much Chateaux neuf de pape, and watching " It's a wonderful life" back to being a miserable ol' git tomorrow.

Jim Horton

Meeting to attempt to resolve Corn Exchange situation- 24/11/06

The concerns over the problems of the Corn Exchange have been rumbling on for months now, but over the last few days things have become even more intense.

The future of the Corn Exchange as a music venue is extremely important to the town, but so is the responsibility to the neighbours who are effected by the noise.

A solution to this problem will not be easy to find, but I hope that a meeting of interested parties will help to clear some of the emotion, deal with the facts, and hopefully find a way out of this problem.

I am proposing to convene a meeting between those directly involved with the Corn Exchange: the neighbours, representatives of the hirers, Town Council, District Councillors and Vale officers. I will try to confirm details and circulate invitations over the weekend. I have spoken to the Chairman of the Town Council's Venue's committee and we are agreed that this is the most productive way forward.

I do not believe that anyone is to blame for the situation in which we find ourselves, it is a matter of circumstances, but working together we may be able to find a solution.

Matt Barber

VWHDC and FTC Councillor

Trying to provide an accurate picture. -24/11/06

This may sound boring but a lot of missinformation seems to be going around I hope this begins to clarify the picture.

Today I have had a conversation with Roy Paddock who is the environmental health officer from the Vale who has been looking into the complaints. His departments role is to asses the impact of volume on the ability of complainants to still enjoy the use of their home without reasonable interference from noise. This is NOT a technical issue relating to decibels i.e it is not linked to the sound limiter.

Mr Paddocks guidelines are that if within the home of a complainent he could hear the words to the songs then this would be regarded as a statutory nuisance and an abatement notice would be issued to the licensee i.e. the town council.

As of yet following the recent complaints no one from his dept. has managed to get to an event in time to make such an assessment hence they have not had the opportunity to make such an assessment. Having said that he did feel that possibly the Halloween night may have been too loud and could possibly have resulted in such a notice - but he didn't get there in time to fully assess.

The issue of the sound limiter although linked is seperate this is a condition of the licence - why this is required and why it is required at such a low level is unclear - I will speak to the licensing department on Monday. But to get this changed will require the licence holder (the town council) to apply for an amendment to the licence at a licensing committe hearing - part of the Vale District Council). Obvioulsy this would be an open hearing and

interested parties would also make representations i.e. current complainants. But at this stage anyone using the hall without the using the sound limiter puts the licence holder, the Town council, in jeopardy of breaching a condition of the licence hence their insistence that it will be used.

The suggestion made by Mr Paddock was to have a band play (not as gig but as a test) then his staff could plot themselves around the vicinity to make an assessment of the sound levels. It is the opinion of the Environmental Health officer not any breach of the sound limiter levels that counts - in his capacity the sound limiter is NOT part of the assessment.

I assume, following Wednesday meeting, these are the issues the venues committee are considering.

If the Council could post their current position on this site that would be useful.

Sean Hodgson
www.britpopuk.com

PS The cost of the Junior school applying for a licence is £190 (not extortionate).

ITS NOT ALL OVER YET

Sealed Knot noise - 24/11/06

Jim Horton's comments about Sealed Knot gun noise in Faringdon are a little over the top.

The limit for sudden noise such as gunfire is 120dB. Anything over this tends to make the ears ring, indicating hearing damage.

The Sealed Knot, being Europe's largest re-enactment group, monitor and control the noise levels inflicted on the Public with great care.

John Gillman

Silent night - 24/11/06

As we near Christmas - how about a few of us (say a hundred or so !) get together for carol singing.....maybe along Gloucester Street !.
Starting with 'Silent Night'.

Well, it is the season to be jolly' !
Name supplied

Junior school possibility as a venue -24/11/06

I will approach the Junior School to ask if they will consider applying to become a licensed premises. Perhaps the town council budget that was going towards double glazing (about £5-6k), which is now not needed, could be invested into the Junior school hall as part of the towns contribution.

There are financial implications for the school, the cost of becoming licensed (based on rateable value), the cost of paying for the Designated Premises Supervisor DPS (Licencee) to become licensed (One licence for the premise one for the licensee) unless someone we know would take the role, training for the DPS, possibly establishment of a proper bar area.

This could be a win win to all concerned.

Sean Hodgson

Ed: I've always thought that a town the size of Faringdon has difficulty sustaining one of everything - so it makes sense to join together and make the most of what we already have.

I am pretty certain that there is/will be planning gain money for sound proofing and refurbishment of the Corn Exchange (ask the Town Council- it was their suggestion) I vote we try and get this money in developing the junior school - hopefully the head and the County would be willing!!

The school would gain, and Faringdon would have a town centre venue with parking nearby - what could be better!!

I think we should return the Corn Exchange to VWHDC, and the Town Council move to the Pump House- something that is already being considered by them I believe

Dedicated Performance space -24/11/06

It is very sad to hear about the Corn Exchange and the problems with sound.

FAP have for the last 12 months been trying to get a dedicated performance space in Faringdon. Lets get together to get this project moving as soon as we can.

Please contact Julie Farmer at julie.farmer@fap.org.uk or anna.marlow@fap.org.uk

Julie Farmer

Performance Space - 24/11/06

It seems to me that we need a short and long term solution if the music scene can grow to become even more successful for the town.

Our very successful Faringdon Dramatic group really need a more appropriate venue, Faringdon artistic skaters (winning national level competitions) need somewhere to practise and I expect there are more(I'd love it if there was a community choir)

In the long term the Corn Exchange is not suitable for many events, and needs much money spent on it - sound proofing, the loos, maybe the bar area, and it belongs to VWHDC, so will always be a battle to get things done in there. For the future it probably isn't big enough either

So my suggestion is that we focus on the Junior school(with their permission) in the short term and for the longterm work towards a purpose built performance venue- flexible space for different uses, and parking

There is 106 money from the planned housing development for a contribution towards Community Art (in the hands of VWHDC)- maybe this could be used to investigate the option, understand the potential uses. I understand there is land owned by Faringdon (charitable, with covenants) along Park Road(on the right, just before the road to the quarry)

WE's need a great deal of meiney, but Faringdon Area Project has practical expertise in applying for grants - the Big Lottery fund could be tried

So given there is a suitable shorterm solution at the Junior School (or elsewhere) I suggest we focus real effort in getting a proper performance venue that will take us into the future

Gene Webb

Corn Exchange- a lobby group? - 2311/06

Excellent idea Steve - we need a coordinated approach or we'll lose the initiative. Name supplied

Corn Exchange- a lobby group? -23/11/06

Following all of the positive posts and ideas put forward it would be terrible to lose the venue without exploring all options.

I would be prepared to organise a public meeting to consider possible options and where perhaps a group could be formed to lobby and organise?

Anyone interested in a public meeting contact me.

steve@leniec.fsnet.co.uk

CORN EXCHANGE -23/11/06

. I too have just sent a email to the VWHDC, if we all do it then maybe some common sense, and common ground can be made.

On a lighter note, our beloved Mayor is a member of the Sealed Knot,(it's mentioned on the profile page of the town councils web site,)

Well I would like to complain that every time they fire their b****y guns in the market square its always far to loud, next time could we have a sound monitor just to make sure my hearing is not being damaged!!!!!!
Jim Horton

LIMITERS FOR ALL -23/11/06

Okay (it's not okay), the VWHDC has unilaterally enforced the noise limiter at a reduced level in the Corn Exchange, effectively killing any form of entertainment(and indeed any form of life) there.

Are they enforcing this throughout the district?

On ALL pubs, clubs and town halls? Does this also mean we will have to have a limiter at private parties in our homes?

Where do they draw the line? Who decides? We have to appeal.

We can't let them do this to Faringdon.
Shelley-Ann Harrison

Contact the Vale - 23/11/06

I've just complained - and asked that representatives of VWHDC come along to a meeting to discuss our grievances and listen to our constructive suggestions for an amicable resolution.

I suggest we also go directly to our local VWH councillors

Name supplied

Corn Exchange - 23/11/06

I wonder if we should be seeking help from our District Councillors rather than Town Councillors?

Also I do think it would be helpful if the Town Council could post on this site a clear explanation of the position and say what went wrong at their recent meeting with Environmental Health Officers. For example were Dave Reynolds or Dave Porter invited?

Was any notice taken of the large amount of very authoritative technical information and practical suggestions which have been advanced here and at the meeting on Tuesday?

Name supplied

Ed: Yes I agree. Faringdon Town Councillors have little say in VWHDC matters, and I'm sure they'll be fighting it on some front. So here are email addresses for our VWHDC councillors

Matt Barber mail@matthewbarber.co.uk

Roger Cox roger.cox@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Alison Thompson alison.thomson@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Judith Heathcoat - County Councillor (County Education owns school premises) judy.heathcoat@virgin.net

Contact our MP? - 23/11/06

I know this is a long shot, but has anyone tried our local MP? Maybe he could intervene with the council? I'm all for writing to the Council. Perhaps the Webmaster of this excellent site could knock up an online petition that everyone could sign as well.

Ray

Ed: Happy to have something on here - but we don't have the technology for a proper online poll/survey. I can't help thinking signatures are needed. But maybe someone out there can help/will tell me different

Our MP is Ed Vaizey vaizeye@parliament.uk

"This town's coming like a ghost town". -23/11/06

The Specials 1981. Ring any bells!

Having been to last Saturday's Tyla gig, and seen the noise monitor tripped off by applause and to Tuesday's Venues Committee, where strong feelings were aired by supporters of music and the complaining neighbours,

(never mind the Mayor's embarrassing contribution) I am very saddened and angry by the fact that Faringdon is losing its main social venue just at the time when there is a strong musical and community spirit emerging.

I also think the Corn Exchange just isn't up to it in terms of containing loud music and the new lower level recommended by the noise police, unless there was major investment in the building.
Where's the Vale in all this? They appear to have withdrawn from the town and they own the building.
We could either go back to sleep for 100 years or push forward to create an alternative venue...some chance of that with the determination of some people to kill everything off that makes a noise....long live live music!
Frank Lee Phuming

re music is dead. - 23/11/06

The Vale is still our elected council.
Who do we write to/phone about this?
Faringdon shouldn't just roll over on this one.
Name supplied

Contact the Vale - 23/11/06

Flood the Vale site with complaints re the Corn Exchange issue ...
http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/corporate_complaints/
Name supplied

Other potential music venues.-23/11/06

The Crown physically is a possibility but at present does not have the right licence to allow live music (hence the reason for having the Boogie band at the Corn Exchange originally planned for The Crown). If my understanding is correct it again is sound related the Environmental Health Department (VWHDC) would put in an objection to the Licensing Committee (Local Authority VWHDC - NOT Faringdon town council) unless the owners installed significant sound proofing. This is not likely in the short term.

The Junior school is a great venue but is not licensed. The school are allowed to hold 12 'Temporary Events' without a licence - these opportunities are snapped up and the demand will now increase. If the school want more then the school has to be licenced - a possibility they may wish to consider (an income generator perhaps) but it brings with it significant legal implications and responsibilities - but not insurmountable if they want to consider it. It also has to be borne in mind that the school do charge nearly twice as much for the use of the hall - this has implications of viability for organisers of events.

The idea of a new venue on the edge of town sounds wonderful but this would be longterm and would bring with it the flaw that unfortunately people won't bother to walk down to it. This would be similar to the possibility of using the community college which, my understanding is, people regard it as too far out of town - after all most people go to such events as they are located near the pubs where people go to first. Also the cost to hire the college hall is similar to the junior school and therefore impacts on the viability of using it.

The only longterm possibility is the community centre unless the Junior school seize the opportunity and become licensed.

Sean Hodgson
www.britpopuk.com

Ed: The school buildings are public buildings and therefore 'belong' to us. the taxpayers- perhaps the fees can be reduced

NO MORE FTFC DANCES -23/11/06

We too have just had to cancel our annual Christmas Charity Dance. The live bands booked expressed concerns about the safety of their equipment when using the limiter.

Faringdon Football Club have been using the Corn Exchange for over 50 years, various events have been held, many involving live music. These will now have to stop as no other venue in Faringdon is suitable, this means local charities, which have already benefited by over £20000 over the years, will no longer receive much needed extra funding.

Come on Faringdon, there must be a compromise, otherwise all the past & future hard work by FTFC will just grind to a halt!
Name supplied

Xmas party cancelled - 23/11/06

I heard this morning that the Football Club Christmas party on Dec 9th has been cancelled as a direct result of the noise problems at the Corn Exchange.

This is an important event in the town's social calendar and 200 people are going to be deprived of an excellent evening, celebrating Christmas and dancing to the music of premier local band 'Kiff'.

Where are the priorities of the local council? - restoring live music to the Corn Exchange should now be their number one priority. They should demand a meeting with the Vale Council to hammer out a plan that allows events we have enjoyed for years to continue in OUR Corn Exchange.

And if you don't want to live in the centre of a vibrant community, I'm sure the local estate agents will be only too pleased to find somewhere quieter out in the country.
Name supplied

A Tragedy - 23/11/06

This indeed a tragedy.

I suspect the requirement by the VWDC to reduce the level even further is because they are under the impression that all the events that have been causing the recent problems - including the 15MC - have been using the noise limiter.

Was there no discussion about soundproofing at the meeting?

Name supplied

Corn Exchange for live music- it is dead....finished! 23/11/06

At a meeting between the the Vale of White Horse and the Town Council yesterday the former demanded that the noise limiter be reduced EVEN FURTHER than the ludicrously low level at which is currently set.

This effectively means that no live music (and possibly even discos) will be able to perform at the Corn Exchange anymore.

No discussion with the people of the town, no compromise.....it is dead....finished!

A big thank you to those who have worked tirelessly to reach this sad conclusion.

I hope you (the complainants) are pleased with yourselves and look forward to hearing your own plans for improving the economic and social development of Faringdon!

David Reynolds

Move over Cropredy - 23/11/06

The pleasure that has been given to the people of Faringdon from music events held in the Corn Exchange has been immeasurable. I count the Tsunami fund raising gig as a highlight of my social life in recent years. However, these cannot feature in balance sheets.

Surely it would be an easier proposition to measure the monetary value of such events? Direct and measurable benefits include: FTC in hire fees; the organisers of the bar; charities receiving funds raised as a result of events held; impresarios willing to organise local and visiting artists; PA and lighting hire companies, etc. There are as well the indirect benefits - increased energy and enthusiasm in local businesses, residents and among visitors - all likely to increase the money generated and spent in the town.

Perhaps bearing this in mind would encourage local officials to find an effective solution likely to satisfy all interested parties? There are any number of contributors to this forum who have expressed willingness to work together to resolve the issues. We can then all continue to build our town's profile as a centre of excellence in

live music.

Move over Cropredy - Faringdon is the place to come to for year-round musical entertainment.
Name Supplied

Ed: Hear hear! The music events are gradually putting Faringdon on the map - the New Orleans/Sidmouth, Edinburgh of Oxfordshire!! Shops, pubs, restaurants, B&Bs - all would benefit, and subsequently the vitality of the town would improve for everyone

Music Action - 23/11/06

In all of this the only real practical suggestion is the one coming from David Reynolds.
So what do we have to do to make it happen?

And if it doesn't happen or doesn't achieve a reasonable compromise, can we go to mediation, please - it is the practical way to resolve disputes where the parties cannot otherwise agree ...
Mark Harrison

Noise Limiter - FACTS - 22/11/06

Why does the noise limiter trip for live music at a very low level but seems loud for discos/recorded music (i.e. when it was calibrated)? The answer is, the noise limiter is set to trip at "peak" volume (dB).
At the risk of losing the readers' interest, I will try and explain without the help of diagrams.

Recorded music has already been processed and compressed and cannot exceed the maximum (peak) level permitted for a CD/vinyl record. This processing results in the perceived volume (RMS level) of the music being raised to become closer to the peak level. The RMS level is a special kind of mathematical average value which is directly related to the energy contents of the sound - i.e. how loud it sounds or i.e. how much it will bother residents.

Live music, by its nature, is dynamic. Peak levels are uncontrolled and cannot be controlled without recording and processing. Its RMS level (perceived volume) is much lower than its peak volume. Hence bands trip the noise limiter at a much lower perceived volume.

The solution: Switch the noise limiter to measure RMS levels so discos in the Corn Exchange trip at the same level as bands and set it up as suggested by Dave Reynolds, Brian Critchley and myself.

Dave Porter
BSc Electronic Engineering, Recording Engineer for BBC/EMI 1985-1997

CORN EXCHANGE - LIVE MUSIC - 22/11/06

I was in attendance both on Saturday 18th and Venues Committee on Tuesday 21st.

I completely agree with trying to reach a solution by involving complainants, musicians, council and environmental health at an event specifically aimed at setting an acceptable level of noise. It has been proven at a recent event that by setting the sound level with aid of a hand held noise meter it is possible for amplified music to be played at a realistic level without complaint.

The ill informed setting of the limiter at present means that it has been bypassed, resulting in music being played at uncontrolled levels therefore causing complaint. Most people I have spoken to support the use of a limiter but it needs setting by someone who understands how they work.

This first action should take place before anything else. If unsuccessful then experts in noise control need to be brought in so that that the problem and its resolution are clearly understood before a penny is spent.

Referring to previous points - Of course there are other venues in the town which can hold live music but the Corn Exchange is important. It's at the heart of the town and on a good night can be the heartbeat of the town, bringing all ages and talent together making our community stronger. It would be a travesty to sit back and be satisfied with linen, markets and jumble at this key venue.

The venues committee was an eye opener. The musicians, promoters and complainant made their views felt in complete order. In stark contrast was the Mayors embarrassing, heavily one sided, inaccurate rant which did not offer any constructive comment to aid proceedings.

I was pleased when I arrived and saw him sat there but after his tirade it did make me wonder how other important issues for the town are influenced.

Chris Edgington - The Lucky Generals and Gloucester St Resident.

Disappointed - 22/11/06

I would just like to ask if what i heard is true about the 15 minute club.

I think it is stupid if the same people that complained earlier on this year still have another chance of destroying a fantastic event. I understand that loud music being played on a sunday night isnt the most of attractive idea to residents living by, but the 15 minute club should still stand.

To be honest i think its a disgrace that in a town of democracy just two residents can make such a huge difference. everyone that i know really enjoys the event so it would a real shame to lose it.

My band and i were very excited about playing this month in the 15 minute club but now our hopes have failed and we are strongly dissapointed.

I hope you understand my view.

Mark Langlay Smith

Fatal accident is waiting to happen on B4019 - 22/11/06

In my view speed claiming measures is desperately needed to slow down the traffic entering Faringdon on B4019 Highworth road.

Oxfordshire highway department and the local council position on this issue is that no consideration will be given to this until there is been enough serious accidents.

I feel this is a totally wrong approach to wait for a disaster to happen before any action is taken.

Ron ONeal

The Corn Exchange - a suggestion -22/11/06

David Reynold's suggestion is a constructive contribution, but I fear that it is the 15 Minute Club itself that started the complaints.

For many years live music was played at the Corn Exchange without any adverse comment from local residents.

At the meeting of the Venues Committee last night I understand that the main complainant stated that he had lived in Gloucester Street for five years but that it was only within the last 18 months that the noise problems had got worse - around the time the 15 minute club moved to the Corn Exchange from the Portwell bar. The short-lived closure of the 15 minute club in the summer was a direct result of complaints about the noise it was creating.

Surely any resolution of this affair requires movement on both sides and a reasonable gesture on behalf of the musicians of Faringdon would be to agree to restrict all live music to a Friday or Saturday night.

By all means let's try to see if we can agree a sound level that's acceptable to both sides within the current set up - gigs have been played recently without the sound limiter and without complaint - but let's also agree that tolerating loud music on a Sunday evening is asking a lot from anyone.

If the Pump Rooms development is going ahead as currently planned, the 15 Minute Club can reasonably be expected to transfer its activities there within six months or so.

So let's offer this olive branch to the residents of Gloucester Street and ask in return that they work with us to restore life to the Corn Exchange.

Name Supplied

Ed: Re Pump Rooms. There are many residents close to the Pump Rooms rear. I can't help thinking it is a good thing that the Youth Club is going elsewhere(hopefully)

Overwhelming support- 22/11/06

The depth of feeling displayed through comments on this website is truly overwhelming and it is super to see that so many people are as passionate as I am to make Faringdon a centre of musical and social vibrance. Some interesting ideas have been raised. I am keen to pursue the idea for all parties getting together for the very reason that it will underline EVERYBODY'S commitment to find an agreeable resolution. If it doesn't work out we will understand each other's position and at that point a decision can be made on how to move forward.

Ironic to see that Slade played at the Corn Exchange in the 70s a band once listed as the one of the loudest in the world....and no complaints!

I do wonder who made the statement, as expressed at last night's meeting, that the Corn Exchange has only just recently started being used for events that are slightly louder than the average bed-linen sale!
David Reynolds

SOME GOOD NEWS!!!! - 22/11/06

'Jon Lane & Boogie Me', 16th December and 'Roxy Magic', 23rd December.

These two gigs are still going ahead and have been transferred to the Junior School.

A splendid time is still guaranteed for all.
Sean Hodgeson
www.britpopuk.com

CORN EXCHANGE. - 22/11/06

It is very sad to hear, and read all that has been happening in this lovely old hall, the accoustics have never been brilliant for live music, but local bands have loved playing there.

It may surprise some of you that Slade, the seventies band once played there,that was when the hall had a proper stage, and by god they were loud, but it all ended at midnight, and no one complaned.

I am a Faringdonian, born and raised here,(not someone who has just moved here because its quaint, and the first thing they do is try to change it), and I can tell you that it has always been twinned with Brigadoon, it comes to life every hundred years or so, woken from it's sleep by a few hard working people wishing to push the town into a more modern age, people that try to encompass all residents, young and old alike.

Sadly in my experience, they have always been put back firmly in their place, because in the past there have never been enough like minded people to make a difference, to defeat the pompous, bombastic attitude's of the so called people that know better, well there are now,

Over the last couple of years we have been overwhelmed with music events, the organisers that have put them on have even lost their own money on some shows, and still carry on putting on more,(how's that for dedication, some councillors could learn from that!)

I don't want to go back to how it was, and neither do the majority of the town. The Corn exchange will now start losing money, as nothing, apart from the W.I. (at reduced rates)oh, and a massive bedding sale. will ever hire it again. Now how sad is that?

To my knowledge not one of our councillors have ever been voted in by the townsfolk,(sorry if I am wrong, but co-opted has a familiar ring about it) as in the past the attitude of "can't be bovered" by us all has prevailed. Well they need to know that this time around we CAN be bothered.
If the Corn exchange is bullied into submission, do we care, well yes actually I do.
Jim Horton

Music events - the fund raising contribution - 22/11/06

There is an important aspect of the debate about the use of the Corn Exchange that hasn't featured greatly in discussion so far, namely the contribution that events held there make to the local community.

Saturday evening's debacle had the admirable aim of bringing together both teenagers and their parents' generation in a shared enjoyment of live music. Recently "Kiff" and "The Beamers" raised over £500 for the Pre-school at an event that was supported by a cross-section of people from the town.

This is an annual fund raising event on which the Pre-school depends. The wonderful fundraising event for the Tsunami appeal is another case in point.

There is more than music at stake here - important though that is.

Name supplied

Corn Exchange - another twist - 22/11/06

Corn Exchange... Just another twist to consider; in the future Faringdon expect's to convert the land between the A420 and the petrol station over to commercial use.

Why not enter into discussion NOW with the developers to build a new venues building there that could be leased back to Faringdon for the same amount as we pay the Vale. That way it could be utilised for the benefit of the community and possibly make the residents of Faringdon a commercial return by hiring out said building. As long as no one has a bright idea to build homes too close all should be happy?

Re the corn exchange, there's always the worry that someone or something will upset the neighbours again, parking, dog fouling, teenagers, wind in the wrong direction etc as well as noise.

This way the corn exchange could be converted into flats for immigrant labour, recovering drug addicts, or enhancing the local pain in the butt brigade.

Its not dissimilar to people moving into houses near a farm and complaining about the smell!!

Andy Patyra

Corn Exchange - ideas - 22/11/06

Although I think David and Brian's idea of setting the sound levels in conjunction with the complainants is reasonable, it does rather rely on the central premise that the complainants accept the idea that the Corn Exchange should be used for live music - which considering everything that's gone on seems fairly unlikely.

It seems to me that whatever the live music community do there is an innate rejection to the very idea of the Corn Exchange being used this way. I can't even see that it can be soundproofed considering its construction, and that's even without taking into account the fact that the Council would no doubt face a challenge from someone - or six - who would probably take umbrage that their Council Tax is being used this way.

Dave - is there no way you could move The 15 minute Club to: The Crown - largish back room and which I'm sure could fit the 100 or so regulars; I'm sure you could arrange a split in the bar takings that was advantageous to both of you.

The Junior School - admittedly I've never attended a gig here so have no idea if you can open a bar.

Let's face it, there's a small but dedicated minority in this town that are determined to close The Corn Exchange whatever is done.

Ray

Sound test the Corn Exchange - 22/11/06

How about we get a band into the Corn Exchange. Crank up the volume. Play around with the sound to determine an acceptable noise level within the houses of concerned nearby residents. Then ask Dave Porter if he wouldn't mind resetting the sound limiter accordingly.

We will then know whether amplified music in the Corn Exchange is viable without sound proofing.

Also it will help assess whether sound proofing would have the desired effect.

A compromise, if not already in place, could involve certain day/ time limits on amplified music and a limit to the

number of amplified bands per month.

I think that the mayor let himself down at last night's meeting. He gave a good lesson in 'How the mayor shouldn't act at a meeting.'
Brian Critchley

Moondust - in the library - 22/11/06

My new book can be read in Faringdon Library.
Cleve Gibson

The Corn Exchange - a suggestion - 22/11/06

For those not in attendance at the Venues Committee meeting here is my suggestion.

The noise limiter is currently set at an impossibly low level that simply precludes any meaningful live music performance and presents some health and safety issues if lighting is also routed through the trip system. I believe the limiter can be raised to a level that is acceptable to both nearby residents and performers.

I propose we run a 15 Minute Club at the Corn Exchange with the complainants (I understand there are 6), an officer from Environmental Health, the caretaker and member/s of the Town Council in attendance. We will by-pass the limiter and reach a level of sound that is acceptable to ALL parties. Once that level has been agreed the limiter will be set at that point and everyone is happy.

This also negates the need for the Town Council to spend the town's money on soundproofing a venue that isn't even owned by them. (It is owned by the Vale of White Horse).
If there is a genuine willingness from all parties to resolve this issue I believe this way forward will work.

David Reynolds
15 Minute Club

Council Venues Committee meeting - a summary - 22/11/06

I would guess around 20 members of the public attended the meeting, which 2 (I think) councillors and the chairman attended.

The meeting was chaired by Siobhan Vinall and in my view she did an excellent job.

It seems that the number of complainants has increased by 200% - **there are now 6!!**. But importantly it is not all the events at the Corn Exchange that are complained about.

VWHDC Environmental Health have threatened to revoke the licence for the venue, if the noise nuisance continues. It seems that any noise that can be heard outside the building may be deemed a nuisance. The Statutory Nuisance Act does not specify acceptable levels, so even if the noise is lower than the traffic and people noise in the street, it may be deemed a nuisance.

David Reynolds said that given the sound limiter settings remain at the current level, then the Corn Exchange is not a suitable venue from the organisers and musicians point of view. This is because when the limiter cuts the power the lights go out too, so there is a Health and Safety hazard for all those in the building. Also the cut out and cut in of the power could damage sound equipment and instruments.

Faringdon Town Council (FTC) have a quote of about £5k for double glazing for part of the hall. There are concerns that this still may not resolve the noise issue. It was suggested that specialist sound proofing advice is needed.

FTC are meeting with VWHDC Environmental Health today, 22/11/06, to try and resolve the issues. These appear to be the ability to put double glazing into a listed building, and whether VWHDC will contribute. Siobhan Vinall said maybe she would post to this site after the meeting.

The building is owned by VWHDC, with FTC leasing it from them, though it was mentioned that a lease has not

been signed.

New residents may be interested to know that the Corn Exchange once belonged to Faringdon. A previous Town Council gave it to the Vale, and retained the use of it on a peppercorn rent until 3/4 years ago. At that time the Vale indicated that they were going to charge Faringdon a high rent. It was mentioned that the Corn Exchange costs £18k pa to run, excluding a share of the Caretaker employed by FTC. I suspect this does not take account of the income from events

FTC say they are seeking to resolve this as a matter of urgency, though it didn't appear to me that there is a real plan, apart from the meeting with the Vale.

I do try and remember that all town councillors are volunteers

Gene Webb

We should talk - 22/11/06

Has anyone attempted to speak to the two people who appear to be at the root of the complaints?
Name supplied

Sorry June ! - 22/11/06

The postings on this website give a very clear indication of our feelings about matters which concern us but the Powers That Be, if they read them at all, may dismiss them as 21st century Graffiti.

THEY may claim that THEY have received very few valid complaints.

In the past, when I have sent letters of protest I have always received an acknowledgement and I presume my comments have been filed, though not necessarily acted upon.

Unfortunately it is not always obvious who should receive the complaint so one answer might be to copy future postings to someone who is bound to know where to send them with a polite request that they be forwarded to the appropriate committee.

I'm afraid the obvious choice is our overworked Town Clerk who I am sure will not thank me for this suggestion so I am not even mentioning that her email address is june@faringdowntowncouncil.org.uk
HGM

Council need to take urgent action - 22/11/06

The council have been sleep walking into the issue of noise from the Corn Exchange and allowed local town folk to go into battle.

The council needs to set clear objectives regarding the allowed usage of Corn Exchange venue and set out an urgent action plan to resolve the dispute.

It needs to believe in it's number one objective as per the Faringdon web site: "To enable residents and visitors to enjoy high-quality social, recreational, environmental, educational, economic and cultural facilities within the town, and to seek the continuing improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by the residents."

Interesting the Directgov web site says this re noise nuisance: "In some cases, the council may not need to prove a statutory nuisance where the premises hold a public entertainment licence."

Tim Cave

Some good news for a change -22/11/06

I've had some emails and so has Tyla all from people who travelled to Faringdon for the show.

They were sad for the mess that the Council found itself in but were grateful for Tyla's extended set to ensure

that the show went on.

A number of them stayed in Faringdon and commented on how friendly and welcoming they found everyone that they came across.

Also they asked Tyla when he was coming back!!!!
Hamish Millar

Play on ... - 22/11/06

It is clear that Faringdon's lack of music venue needs to be resolved PROMPTLY if our town's culture and youth are not going to suffer.

At first, it would seem that soundproofing the Corn Exchange offers the best solution but the uncertainties of cost, authorisation and timescale make this a high risk approach.

I would like to suggest a 3-tier approach that could work:

1. We follow David Reynolds and others' excellent suggestion that we work with the complainants to find an acceptable compromise sound level that is consistent with the ambient noise in Gloucester Street (Traffic etc.)
2. If this does not achieve a speedy solution, we employ the services of a professional mediator
3. If mediation is not acceptable to all parties, we resolve the issue democratically through some sort of device such as a local referendum

... This needs to be resolved in weeks rather than months or worse.
Mark Harrison

Corn Exchange situation- FACT - 22/11/06

I have just been to a well run venue committee meeting - FACT

Everyone was entitled to their say - FACT

The main complainant hid behind his children and the fact that someone, not remembered who, told him that noise not an issue from the Corn Exchange when they chose to purchase their house on one of the busy streets in the middle of town- FACT

Faringdon has actually developed a vibrancy in the last few years which has no doubt pushed up house prices - FACT Sadly a lot of facts about Saturday were distorted - FACT

The town council final warning was not actually as draconian as put to me on Saturday when the letter read out - FACT

Live music however is dead at the Corn Exchange unless an agreement about reasonable noise is agreed by all parties and adhered to - FACT

The Mayor appears to wish he had a gatlin (hope spelt correctly) gun to shoot the kids outside his house - FACT

The Mayor continued to spout a lot of false facts about Saturday despite being advised he was incorrect and shouting - FACT
(at a level which would have set off the limiter if he had been miked up) after each point - FACT

Sadly his unreasonable behaviour forced me from the meeting as at that point even though I am a local Council Tax payer due process meant I was unable to respond.

The Mayor sadly made himself a figure of fun at the meeting - FACT Is this the best that this town can do for a Mayor - SURELY NOT A FACT An enjoyable post meeting was held in the Bell - FACT

Based upon the Mayors performance tonight the local paper should be renamed the Faringdon FACT

Hamish Millar

Digital TV signals - 22/11/06

Has anyone else had problems with the ITV digital (freeview) signal.

My elderly mother (a resident of Oakwood House) cannot watch ITV through freeview from about 4pm onwards.

I have written to ITV and they tell me that the ITV signal is the weakest and that the government say they cannot strengthen it until the analogue signal is phased out.

Is this a ploy to allow them to phase out analogue earlier as we all get fed up with these poor digital signals?

Name supplied

RIP - 21/11/06

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come. ...
to the Corn Exchange.

Name supplied

Narrow Minded, miserable, killjoys! -21/11/06

Why why why do the powers that be in this town have to pander to the smallest minority, no matter how pathetic they are?

Faringdon is finally in with a chance of becoming a thriving, buzzing town and what happens?.....You get two people choosing to move into the centre of town next to a public venue knowing full well what that might involve and yet they have the cheek to complain and attempt to spoil everything for the WHOLE town!!!

I have only one thing to say to these dinosaurs.....Do everyone a favour and move to the middle of nowhere!

Although i'm sure they'll put in a complaint about the dawn chorus sooner or later!

Trish Reynolds

Pro music candidates - 21/11/06

The Anti-Music brigade really do appear to have it for any use of the Corn Exchange that does not revolve around tea cakes and craft fairs don't they?

Personally i think the best thing we can do is put up a raft of Pro-Music candidates at the next local elections, as this latest decision stinks of a stitch-up.

I was at the last emergency meeting when the 15 Minute Club won its reprieve and it was fairly obvious that those who were against the idea (though small in number) where not going to give in.

If that fails then perhaps we can find a venue that is council free - which would at least deprive them of a fee Ray

Boogie Me Boogie Relocated to Junior School -21/11/06

For those of you unaware, Boogie Me are a Faringdon based rhythm and blues orchestra totalling some 12 permanent musicians and an additional 6 musicians for performances.

As you can imagine, its very hard finding somewhere to practice with a band this size and so we recently hired the Corn Exchange for our usual band practice. The attendees included: one trumpet (unamplified) , three vocals, a bass guitar, a rhythm guitar, drums, piano and one sax (unamplified).

We obediently plugged into the limiter and managed to get a whole 10 bars into the first track before the vocals made the limiter cut in. Reducing all amplification to the lowest level we could possibly hear resulted in the unamplified trumpet setting off the limiter again.

We all agreed that the Corn Exchange is untenable as a venue for live music.

We are not a punk band - we play soul, blues and jazz - none of which is especially well known for being thrash type music and not usually known to provoke any kind of negative response from passive listeners.

We've now moved our rehearsals back to the Crown at the invitation of Lanlord Keith who is happy to support local music in Faringdon. Luckily, BritPOP UK has managed to move our gig to the Junior School on 16th December but what a shame that the core focus of our little market town is clearly destined to be a venue for beetle drives, poetry readings (unamplified obviously) and silent protests.

Also, how pointless was it that we all trooped off down there to attend the council meeting where we managed to get the 15 minute club ban overturned when Environmental health can just shut it down regardless.

I implore the couple who will not accept that living in a town centre next to a public hall may just mean live music to

JUST MOVE!!!

Mel Taylor

Faringdon RIP - 20/11/06

I am the drummer with the Lucky Generals, one of the bands who didn't play Saturday night.

It would appear that the council have received a final warning letter from environmental health stating if they receive one more noise complaint they will lose their licence so their actions on Saturday are understandable.

I have played at the Corn Exchange numerous times for the last 10 years. The noise limiter has always been there and at various times we have been asked to play through it. We have tried to, but it has not been possible as it is set at a ridiculously low level. Tyla, the main act on Saturday night, tripped it 3 times with quite acoustic guitar and vocals! The audience clapping tripped it twice!!!

I have 2 points to make:

- 1) Why are noise complaints accepted by Environmental Health without any objective measuring taking place. Sure, it's possible to hear a band playing if you step outside your front door in Gloucester street in the same way as you can hear a bus going past. Living in a town centre you would expect this level of noise pollution, wouldn't you?
- 2) Why is the limiter set at a level which kills live music? The caretaker said that country and western bands play through it. I don't believe any band has played through it. They may say they are and run off a socket not fed from the limiter.

Surely the solution is to set the noise limiter up based on an acceptable limit as measured outside the Corn Exchange at the nearest residence in Gloucester Street?

Please Enviromental Health / Faringdon Council / White Horse Council let sense prevail before Faringdon loses it's music scene.

Dave Porter - Kiff and The Lucky Generals

Loud clapping at the Corn Exchange - 20/11/06

It was my event on Saturday and was the first under the supposed final warning from the Vale.

On Saturday night having had this bombshell thrown at me I tried to work with the Vale to get an acceptable time to cut off amplified music so that Surface Noise, the teenagers from The Community College could play.

According to the professional sound engineers the band would reach a sound of 103db, the limiter cuts in at 98db however this sound is measured inside the hall and is not the sound outside which would be approx 30-40db on the other side of the road.

Unfortunately for all concerned the edict was use the limiter or no event even though the promise had been

made to have amplified music finished by 8.30, the other support act, The Lucky Generals, kindly agreeing to forgo their slot so that the teenagers could play.

Fortunately the main act was planned as an acoustic act, demonstrating that I was sensitive to the needs of those affluent residents who have chosen to live in the ghetto of inner city Faringdon, and therefore we were able at least to have some music.

I am grateful to everyone who has supported me in this and stayed on Saturday to watch what was one of the most inspirational and moving performances that I have ever seen,
- the irony of the whole situation being crystallised when the audience showing their appreciation set off the limiter and cut the power.
Hamish Millar

Saturday at the Corn Exchange - 20/11/06

I too witnessed the farcical events of Saturday night in the Corn Exchange.

The curtain closing on music in a dedicated venue in the centre of Faringdon.
How about a big push for some double glazing (and a ceremonial removal of the sound limiter).
Brian Critchley

15 Minute Club.-20/11/06

I was surprised and dismayed to learn that once again we face the possible loss of the Corn Exchange as a performance venue in the town.

My understanding of the situation on Saturday was that groups were asked to comply with the conditions of hire and use the sound limiter.

It would appear that this causes problems, even though it has operated successfully in the past and I am not sure if this is due to faulty equipment/settings or a desire by some artists to be totally unrestricted?

Readings taken at the 15 minute club in November did not indicate any problems and in Gloucester Street were not as loud as passing traffic.

As the operator the council hold a licence granted by the Vale district council who through their Environmental Health officers have now suggested that any noise audible from the venue at a complainants property could be unacceptable.

Clearly if this is correct we face an impossible situation and the building as a venue will become untenable. I for one would not support the Town Council continuing to operate the Corn Exchange as a hall for Markets and jumble sales, we were there in the past when Faringdon was a Ghost Town and the tumble weed blew through the town centre!

Anyone who attended the special meeting of Council in the Corn Exchange, when this was last considered, will realise that the majority of councillors want music to continue. I hope we can find a solution before we loose the vibrant music scene that so many have worked hard to develop.

If living within earshot of a music venue is grounds for closing it down we are destined to become a pretty soulless town again and will the last one out turn off the lights - quietly.
Steve Leniec

Music and the Corn Exchange - 20/11/06

Although I wasn't there on Saturday night, what I have heard and read about a minority taking actions to ruin an evening of music for the majority angers me.

At the meeting to discuss the future of the "Fifteen minute club" a few months ago, there was a lot of talk about the fact that it this "open mike night" was held on a Sunday night and that nearby residents would be trying to

sleep earlier for work the next day.

But this was 8pm on a Saturday night, surely the one night when events like Live music should be able to be staged without comeback from anybody, residents or not.

As a musician and performer, I sympathise greatly with the 2 local bands that were cancelled because of the farce that took place on Saturday night. I know that these bands will have worked hard and rehearsed like crazy for such an event, only to have had their excitement at playing totally deflated.

I used to live in a flat above a hairdressers in a town in Kent which was a few doors away from a very noisy pub that every weekend had live music on a Saturday and Sunday night. I never once thought about complaining about the noise levels though because it was my choice to live there, and I had to accept that I was living in a town centre and that town centres can (especially at the weekends) be noisy.

I also have lived for many years in a small village which had a village hall, which was used for events, live music, dances, discos, wedding receptions etc. It was surrounded by local residents, wasn't soundproofed and yet there was very rarely any complaints about noise unless the music went on past 1am.

So what's really going on here with the Corn Exchange? Is there a hidden agenda here that we are not aware of?

My Grandfather risked his life fighting in World War 2 fighting for freedom against Nazi Germany. If Live music can't be staged in a communal hall in a thriving town in the middle of England's green and pleasant land on a Saturday night at 8pm, maybe he shouldn't have bothered

Neil Dwerryhouse

Fifteen minute mime club - 20/11/06

Perhaps we should set up the Fifteen Minute Mime Club?!

I reckon there'd be a few interesting mimes aimed at the people responsible for the complaints about noise.....

Name supplied

Tutors wanted - 20/11/06

We are looking for Tutors for adult courses.

Languages, Digital Photography, Scrap-Booking, are just some suggestions. Other course suggestions welcome.

Taster or 5-week courses initially, to begin January 2007. New Year, New Start!

Please contact Janet Deane to give brief details about what you could offer jd0051@faringdon-cc.oxon.sch.uk

Faringdon Community College

Faringdon R.I.P -20/11/06

For those interested in trying to keep the Corn Exchange alive as a key music venue in Faringdon, the Town Council's Venues Committee is meeting at 7:15 on Tuesday 21st November at the Corn Exchange.

Needless to say, noise complaints about the Corn Exchange are on the agenda.

Those who either play or enjoy listening to live music in Faringdon should come along and let the council know how we feel about this unacceptable situation.

There has to be a solution.

Martin Waymark

15 minute club - 20/11/06

The 15 Minute Club will not be held at the Corn Exchange until further notice.

The Management of the club has taken this decision following the unfortunate events at the venue on Saturday which lead them to believe the venue is no longer viable under current conditions.

We sincerely hope this can be rectified and that the hundreds of people and artists who enjoy the event can look forward to a return at a time when no inconvenience is caused to nearby residents.

In the meantime the 15 Minute Club will revert back to the Portwell Bar from the first Sunday in December (3rd).

Any enquiries please call 0771 421 8825.
David Reynolds 15 Minute Promotions

Frustration!! - 20/11/06

Monday morning and the frustration is building up!

More new homes near the centre of Faringdon with parking space, but is it enough? Do we remember the great debate about parking spaces for development in Swan Lane and have you tried to drive there lately or even walk on the pavement?

Has anyone worked out the sense of getting parking fines for being in a car park, albeit slightly over our time limit, but no fines if we park on double yellow lines?

And now we have a performance venue (The Corn Exchange) where there will probably be no performances.

And I just can't bring myself to talk about dogs still fouling our footpaths.
Steve Wright

Faringdon R.I.P. -20/11/06

I was there on Saturday night and there is no doubt about it.

The Town Clerk and Hall Manager were there and they ruled that any amplified music must go through a sound-limiting device which basically cuts off the power every time the singer of an amplified band starts to sing.

The two (amplified) bands due to play that night were cancelled. One of the bands was a group of local teenagers who had worked incredibly hard to get that opportunity.

I thought we had resolved this issue but clearly not.

I cannot see how the 15 Minute Club can continue under these rules or indeed the countless dances and fund-raising events we have enjoyed over the years.

It is a tragic and ludicrous situation.

Name supplied

Ed: I despair!!

Faringdon R.I.P. -19/11/06

Twenty years ago when I told people I lived in Faringdon the news was met with an ill-disguised sneer. That has changed recently and our town was becoming an enviable place to visit and live. Much of this was down to the active cultural scene that attracted people, young and old from the surrounding areas, even Oxford with all its history and facilities for culture.

All this is now being threatened by the narrow-mindedness of a few residents and the cowardliness of the Vale Council.

From 18 November 2006 on, it became impossible to play amplified music in the Corn Exchange, even at 8PM on a Saturday night!

It is so unreasonable that it beggars belief - young people's bands unable to play in OUR town hall early on a Saturday evening ... perhaps the detractors would rather these industrious young people and their admirers were on the street with nowhere to go and nothing to do ...

Come on fellow Faringdonians - the only way good sense will prevail will be if we all stand together against the few bullies that are trying to kill the spirit of our town!
Name supplied

*Ed: Anyone know anymore? Would one of our Town Councillors like to comment? Does it mean that the 15 minute club has been told it can't use the Corn Exchange?
I thought VWHDC had measured the sound levels and found them within the limits??*

Parking - 19/11/06

Interesting point re the parking we now have to endure.

The new machines, the strict adherence to the times and visibility of tickets etc etc. I do wonder if the car park in the council's eyes is a money maker, an inconvenience that has to have a warden patrolling it, or do they see it as a means of helping our community or even encouraging visitors to return, don't think it's the latter do you?

We have all seen the about turn in Oxford from a car unfriendly city to a more liberal one after rush hour to encourage business. Maybe people were going elsewhere because of it and revenue's were falling?

But hey, what about Faringdon, what rush hour, what problem parking that needs strict adherence to a few spaces we've been given to use? In all the years that I've lived here when ever I've driven into our car parks there's always been space, or am I missing the point.

Does our council want us to walk more with our shopping, I would love to know the real answer to this.

Now I'm not blaming the recipient but its barking mad when an MP has to get pulled in to a dispute over car parking spaces isn't it? I think this will drag on and on and we'll never get to the bottom of it or get any sense from senseless liberal councillors' either.

Think the point about parking on the double yellow lines looks like a cheaper bet to me?
Andy Patyra

Parking - 19/11/06

The VWHDC really do take the biscuit don't they?

I wonder what response I'd get if I invoiced them for every occasion I OVERPAID for parking because their machines are "unable" to give change.

The previous correspondent makes a very valid point about London Street parking which I know for a fact impacts hugely on many of the shopkeepers in the area and is a dangerous obstruction to other road users.

I have a proposal. Budgens Car Park:

First half hour free of charge, machines that give change and a tiered penalty system that is proportionate to the length of overstay.

London Street; train and empower a team of local residents to become surrogate traffic wardens with the authority to issue tickets.

All this could help the local economy and make everyone safer.

Is this something The Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Joint Economic Forum might like to get involved with?

David Reynolds

Ed: Currently the police are responsible for on street parking here, and VWHDC the car parks. In some areas, on street parking enforcement has been handed over to the County, who I think usually passes it on to the District council. Don't know if and when that will happen here.

re Parking Fines..... 18/11/06

November 2005

my elderly Dad was parked in a disabled space in Budgens car park during the time he was standing in the market place with his RBL Poppy Appeal collection tin.

He does have a valid disabled permit which he keeps attached to the sun visor, however on this occasion it hadn't been pulled down fully and the parking attendant couldn't see it.

I tried, and so did Mr Ed Vaizey MP, to appeal to the VWHDC's charitable side.....it doesn't have one !. No leeway at all.

Fair enough, the badge should have been more visible but the fact that disabled drivers don't pay to park there anyway, and it was easy enough to prove that he has that entitlement - all a bit mean I think.

Due to our own stupidity, in the last few months my husband and I have received two parking tickets for
1) ticket wrong way up so details not visible and
2) no ticket.

Thank you to the Kennet DC for understanding that the ticket was valid, just upside down and Thank you to North Cornwall DC for accepting that our ticket was valid - just on the floor !.

So you see, not all councils are so grasping. In future - park on the double yellow lines along London St and Stanford Rd, you'll be fine there (no pun intended !).
Name supplied

Parking fines - an increase - 18/11/06

This week I had the misfortune of overrunning my allotted parking time in Budgens Car Park by 23 minutes having been caught up in an extended business meeting.

Why misfortune? Well I had received the inevitable excess ticket but to my astonishment the fine is a staggering £50 rising to....wait for it....£80 if not paid within ten days!

I have contacted Vale of White Horse District Council to see if there's any latitude and they basically said "On yer bike!" (which is what I might do next time!).

A penalty of this magnitude isn't particularly helpful at a time when we need to encourage people into Faringdon to use the shops and other facilities.

David Reynolds

Name supplied 16/11/06 unmasked -18/11/06

I acquired world wide recognition when I revealed that Eliza Doolittle was a Hungarianof Royal Blood.

I can now reveal that the shy Name Supplied who commented on THEY is definitely and without any doubt either:

- 1.A councillor.
- 2.The owner of a large back garden ripe for development,
- 3.John Prescott .
- 4.None of the above.

I am never wrong in these matters !
Zoltan Karpathy

Bus services -18/11/06

It is true that as a result of talks about the new development, there is a suggestion that the bus service will benefit.

The County Council representatives at a meeting that I attended suggested that the route between Swindon and Oxford would be designated as a "premium" route. This would be paid for from a contribution by the developers of the new site. If this happens (and the County usually get their way in these matters) then yes the service will improve dramatically and it will continue much later (whether until 2.00am I'm not sure).

The full details of all the infrastructure improvements resulting from the development should be available very soon.

I will post a note on this site when they are, so that everybody can know what's going to benefit.

Alan Hickmore

Re Stagecoach Punctuality -17/11/06

It's not always lateness which is the problem though.

The buses often arrive at the peripheral stops earlier than expected, which is worse than being late because if you miss a bus which is early, it actually makes the service worse than 'no service'.

Name supplied

Stagecoach Punctuality - 17/11/06

I appreciate that an unpunctual bus service is annoying but it is better than no bus service. King Louis XVIII of France is supposed to have said "Punctuality is the Politeness of Kings"

I can't be certain of this as I wasn't there.

But what I can be certain of is that he didn't attempt to drive a long fat bus in a rural environment.

The bus drivers could guarantee to be never late by observing a few simple precautions one of which would be never drive down narrow roads used by tractor drivers or horses and never try to negotiate the centre of Faringdon.

Name supplied

Unreliable Buses - 16/11/06

Twice in the last 2 weeks I have attempted to go to Oxford.

The first time the bus was early and I missed it, the second time the bus did not arrive at all !

When you do manage to catch one they are very noisy and unpleasant to travel in.

I have emailed stage coach but so far no reply.

Kay Fox

They!! - 16/11/06

"They" could be "you" if you were brave enough to stand for election to one of the councils.

What's holding you back?

Perhaps you just like to whinge?

Name supplied

About Budgens- from the horses mouth - 16/11/06

As the manager of Budgens i have not asked members of my staff to answer on my behalf regarding the so called takeover.

All Budgens store will be franchised in the near future following a roll-out plan. This was published in all the national press when Musgrave bought Budgens over 3 yrs ago so this is not a big secret.

When faringdon does become franchised we will as indicated try to source more local products to meet more of

our customers needs

I hope now this has come from the horses mouth it answer most of your concerns.

David Woodruff

Buses - 16/11/06

I agree with Ray that if the bus rumour were true, it would indeed be fantastic (on paper).
The only problem is that buses are only useful if A. they turn up and B. they are on time .

The current bus service from Farington to Oxford or Swindon is atrocious.
I have written two letters to Stagecoach recently and have felt the replies have been written with an 'am I bovvered' kind of attitude.

Has anyone else had problems?
Name supplied

Another rumour - 16/11/06

On Friday I heard another rumour.

A councillor's son told me that as a result of the new homes that are due to be built, the bus from Farington to Oxford would be running every 15 minutes, with the last bus back from Oxford due to leave at 2am.

Can anyone confirm this as it would be excellent news if true.
Ray

THEY - 16/11/06

The OCC, VWHDC and FTC are dedicated to spending our Council Taxes etc to make the lives of the people in Farington better. But within this benevolent body there hides a secret group who do not have the same aims. This group is known as THEY.

THEY reorganised our town centre...enough said !
THEY decided to restrict the road in front of the Crown to buses and taxis..but to turn a blind eye to dangerous drivers who use it as a shortcut
THEY increased our car park charges and prevented us sharing the spaces we had paid to use
THEY said town centre parking was restricted to 30 minutes apart from anyone who wanted to stay longer.
THEY decided that our facilities in Farington could justify building hundreds of new homes particularly for key workers such as Prison Warders and Council Officials THEY considered traffic calming measures in London Street and Coxwell Road were not necessary

But THEY may be getting worried
THEY may have been behind the move to close the 15 Minute Club and for probably the first time
THEY did not get their wicked way. And now we have a champion to fight for us, one councillor is not afraid to tell it as it is from his point of view.

So please Mr L keep your Knight in Shining Armour suit polished and keep a special eye on the future mini estates being encouraged in people's back gardens.
I know our Deputy Prime Minister is in favour but he may not realise that there will be little room for croquet lawns.
HGM

The Future of Budgens - 16/11/06

I too had heard the rumours so I hatched a sneaky plan to find out the truth. I asked a staff member if there was a change in store (get it ?) for Budgens and was it a secret. I was told it wasn't a secret but I must talk to the manager. Which I did.

It seems that it is intended to change some Budgens outlets into franchises. This will allow the new 'bosses' to cater more for local needs but the products will still be to the same standard we have always had from our local supermarket.

The manager made it clear that any talk of secrecy was nonsense. So it is to be hoped that staff members who are Websiters will now be able to answer any questions from customers without disturbing the manager.
HGM

More Inconsiderate Parking - 15/11/06

Not only Coxwell Street, but London Street has become a one way thoroughfare for most of every day. Cars are parked in the shopping areas, also further up the road; on the double yellow lines; in the restricted time zones, and often dangerously close to junctions, restricting the view of oncoming traffic.

It is all very well the public being encouraged to report such things, but we pay community support officers and police officers to deal with these infringements.

This apparently to no avail.

If those who are paid to uphold the law have no respect for it, then what chance anyone else?

Name Supplied

and another demolition to make room for houses - 15/11/06

Planning application GFA/10178/1 is to demolish existing 49a Bromsgrove (and swimming pool) and build nine 2 and 3 bed dwellings with associated car parking.

It looks as if access is to remain where it is - through Walnut Court- I hope they've been consulted.

The site is adjacent to school lane.

You can see the detail on [VWHDC planning system](#)

Gene Webb

A rumour!!!! - 15/11/06

That Budgens is being sold, but remaining a supermarket

Anyone know anything??

Gene Webb

Thoughtless Parking - 15/11/06

I suspect the poster means Coxwell Street NOT Coxwell Road.

And I agree, especially as one of the accidents wrote off my son's car and he was parked legally

Jane Boulton

Thoughtless parking, Coxwell Road - 13/11/06

I have the misfortune to need to drive along Coxwell Road each morning at about 7.45.

It has always been a little difficult due to the parked cars, but in recent months the double parking has escalated.

Last week I saw the end results of 2 collisions due to this.

But this morning took the biscuit! A red BMW was parked half on the road, half on the pavement, facing the wrong way, right on the junction with Coxwell Gardens!!!!!!

This sort of thoughtless behaviour is an accident waiting to happen.

Name supplied

Noises off -superb- 12/11/06

On Saturday we went to see The Faringdon Dramatic Society perform Noises Off! The cast were absolutely

brilliant.

They performed a superbly funny and extremely clever play to a standard you might only expect at some top venues.

Once again it goes to show how unique Faringdon is for artistic talent.

If you haven't seen these folks perform before please do go along next time. You are in for a truly major treat!
David and Trish Reynolds

Noises Off - 12/11/06

What a huge amount of talent there is in Faringdon!

Absolutely brilliant performances this evening to a packed house - fantastic set, marvelous direction, lighting, costume, sound etc etc.

Well done everyone, you should be very pleased with yourselves.

I loved it.

Name supplied

Super sausages - 10/11/06

Congratulations go to Peter, Tara and their team at Pat Thomas- Butchers, Market Place, Faringdon.

With over Eighty entries from all over Oxfordshire and Berkshire, our Faringdon Butchers came home with Bronze Medals in both of the two classes they entered. In his first ever competition, Peter took his prize winning sausages straight from his shop window to place before the Judges. 'We'll return next year with Gold Medals' he says confidently.

Buckland School children are already enjoying these sausages. The Faringdon Local Food Group would encourage parents to write to their children's schools to ask if more schools would consider having them. The prize winning plain pork sausages, and the pork and beef with herbs sausages, both have no additives and no preservatives.

Baked in an oven proof dish with a dash of soy sauce and a drizzle of local Faringdon honey - they are fantastic

Daphne Saunders

ROTARY CHRISTMAS COLLECTION with THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FATHER CHRISTMAS

MONDAY 4 DECEMBER - Watchfield

TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER - Watchfield

WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER - FARINGDON Highworth Road area, Westland Road, Orchard Hill, The Pines etc.

THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER - Lechlade

FRIDAY 8 DECEMBER - FARINGDON Park Road area, Marines Drive, Town End Road, Marlborough Gardens, Volunteer Way

SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER - Lechlade

MONDAY 11 DECEMBER - Shrivenham

TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER - Shrivenham

THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER - FARINGDON & GREAT COXWELL Coleshill Drive etc., Leamington Drive, Fernham Road, Folly View Road, Great Coxwell

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER - Clanfield

SATURDAY 16 DECEMBER - FARINGDON Stanford Road area, Berners Way, Tuckers Road, Nursery View, Pye Street, Goodlake Avenue, Southampton Street etc

MONDAY 18 DECEMBER - Stanford in the Vale

TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER - Southmoor

WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER - Uffington, Fernham, Little Coxwell

Re: Anonymous posters - 8/11/06

I usually supply my name when I post, but there have been a couple of occasions when I have posted and revealing my name would have identified someone else who might not have wanted their details known. It has always been in the interest of the town but I would not like to embarrass another
Name Supplied

Our own trumpet!! - 8/11/06

This website regularly gets 800-900 visitors each week.

Last week it was more than 1000

How good is that!

and I was chatting with a couple of people at Bloors exhibition - they had come from Surrey - and only knew of the exhibition through this website!!

Hil and Gen

Name supplied!! - 7/11/06

Like Devil's Advocate I think we should respect people's right to anonymity. I often post to this site anonymously as I do not want my personal opinions confused with my business opinions. Many people wear several hats in this town and the different hats don't always share view points! This is not a matter of cowardice but more of professionalism.

Whilst I do not always agree with him, I do admire Cllr Leniec for having the guts to say as he feels on this site - I think it is quite refreshing to have a town councillor who is prepared to stand up to public opinion to air his own personal and/or professional opinions and I wish more would do the same. The fact that he wishes to publish his name however does not make him more brave or more correct than those who wish to remain nameless.

The poster who branded the Town Council as m****s was a little out of order on that particular point but let's applaud the fact that he/she visited this site and bothered to express an opinion in the first place. We are lucky to live in a country where we can express our views freely - let's not undervalue that!
Name supplied

Christmas Lights - 7/11/06

I agree with Cllr Leniec in that personal insults should have no place on this site. I have had many disagreements with what people have said in the past, and made comments about views put forward, but I hope that I have never personally insulted anyone. On the other hand I have borne the brunt of some contributors who have taken exception to their views being questioned or an alternative view being put forward. However, I'm grown up I can live with it.

I do however disagree with Cllr Leniec's comments about posting and views being devalued by anonymous ones. It is also a little insulting to infer that those who wish to remain anonymous are cowardly (i.e. the opposite of being brave). In my case I have a view on many issues, I sometime just post to try and even up a debate to give a different and perhaps more balanced perspective. There are always two sides to a story or argument and in my experience the view of the masses usually takes precedent, a lot of the time at the expense of the little person. I try to be an advocate for the little person on many issues.

Unlike some Cllrs, I take no pleasure from being in the public eye. I have my reasons, just as Cllrs have their reasons for doing what they do. I simply wish to remain anonymous but enter into debates that I feel I can make a contribution.

While it is totally wrong to insult anyone on this site, I see nothing wrong with attacking a viewpoint. It is also wrong to devalue a view just because it is anonymous, sometimes we are right.

Devils advocate.

PS I always post as Devils advocate so it was not I who used the "m" word

*Ed: I meant to ***** the offensive word - I wish I had - have done it now*

Re: Firestation - 7/11/06

I happened to be having my usual Saturday glass of wine and do the crossword in the Bell on Saturday, when I overheard "Town Council" mentioned by a group of young ladies at the next table. I hadn't been eavesdropping and the music had been turned up so I couldn't hear the topic of their conversation, so I asked.

It appears that they wondered why the Town Council wasn't supporting the retention of the fire service in Faringdon.

As a Town Councillor (albeit a recent one) I knew nothing of this personally, I can't speak for the other members of the council.

I would be delighted to support Faringdon Firestation and would have attended the open evening if it hadn't coincided with our next council meeting.

Haven taken advice on this, my suggestion is that someone from the fireservice contacts the council and requests help from them.

I will reiterate that I am speaking personally and not for the whole council.

Jane Boulton

International RollerSkating Cup of Europe, Paris, 1st - 5th November 2006 - 7/11/06

Nathaniel Williams gained 2nd place in the above Championships
CONGRATULATIONS
Dee England

Christmas Lights - 5/11/06

Oh the joys of internet debate, make assertions that you can't back up, insult anyone you disagree with and all with anonymity.
HOW BRAVE IS THAT?

I refer of course to the post after mine 5/11/06 which describes people that the poster in all probability has never met as "morons". He/She then suggests that the lights should not be up until after Remembrance Sunday, not realistic and remember that they will not be switched on until December.

Well "name supplied" how disrespectful is your post!!!

What about being really brave and putting your name to your views? Anything less devalues comment and this site.
Steve Leniec

christmas lights -5/11/06

i would agree that mr white should do the lights,and that the council should not waste are money like this.

maybe the local people should write to them with there views,maybe start a christmas lights group? with pete white at the helm, with out the ***** doing it now.

i also feel that they have been put up too early,maybe this will give them chance to get them to work, but they could of waited until after remembrance sunday out off respect
Name supplied

Christmas lights, a seasonal fairy tale - 4/11/06

Bah humbug, it's that awful town councillor again, dropping down your internet chimneys with a few facts on the Christmas lights debate.

Fact, the Town council were asked to take the lights over from the Christmas lights group in March 98 to provide continuity and to enable the dreaded VAT to be reclaimed. Council then found itself in dispute with Mr White over his failure to complete the wiring in London street for which he had already been paid.

Fact, last year's installation cost, £4,480 not £7,000 as claimed by Mr White. This figure included the testing and repair of anchors holding the strings and a survey of the wiring! Something which we are now obliged to do on an annual basis which wasn't done in the past.

I fully accept that last year's lights were a disappointment and that the contractor will have to up his game. You will note that the lights are already in place for this year. Last year's problem appeared to stem from the original wiring being unable to take the load as one circuit, it has now been split into two separate circuits and the timer has been placed in a secure location!

Fact, The cost of Mr White's work between 1999 and 2001 was £1,520 rising to £1,730 not £1,393 in 2001.

Fact, Mr White's assertion that the Rotary Club lights cost £1,772 is wrong. They actually cost £775, they are held in secure storage by the council and haven't "disappeared into thin air".

Now I may personally agree with "Name supplied" that the council should stop providing Christmas lights on the rates and hand the whole operation over to some altruistic benefactor, the Christmas fairy? Step forward anyone who doesn't see Christmas as a commercial opportunity.

The fact is that we have a contractor with a three year fixed contract to install the town centre lights and we will no doubt be judged on their performance, silence if they are a success but woe betide us if there is one bulb out this year.

In the spirit of Christmas I thank Mr White and the Folly Tower Trust for their annual display and look forward to this year's, together with the centre lights we should have a display Faringdon can be proud of.

That's if we can keep the Greenpeace activists out of Didcot power station....

Peace and goodwill

Steve Leniec

Bah humbug - 3/11/06

The 'bah humbug' comment wasn't directed at you posters believe me - I totally agree with all your comments so far! I

t was in eager anticipation of the christmas lights debate which is bound to follow (I remember the discussions from last year!)

Just wanted to clear that up as I wouldn't want to cause offence!!

Name supplied

Not bah humbug - 2/11/06

No - we're not getting "bah humbug" again.

There have been no comments that the lights shouldn't be there. Only that the money should be diverted to the most economical and best place possible.

Name supplied

Christmas lights - 2/11/06

I totally agree with the Christmas Lights posting.

How can the Town Council possibly spend "our" money so irresponsibly when a very good local man can do it far better and for less money?

What do we have to do to make them see sense?

Name supplied

Peter White for Christmas lights - 2/11/06

I agree that Peter White should be given control of Faringdon's Christmas lights but I don't think it's quite as simple as it sounds.

I suspect that the Town Council may be tied into a contract with the current providers for some period of time.

Let's just hope that this year's display does more justice to Faringdon than last year's pathetic effort!

I know there are some people out there (some Town Councillors included) who feel that any money spent on Christmas Lights is a waste of money.

I personally think that Christmas Lights are incredibly important to a town and am looking forward to seeing Faringdon looking festive once more (especially the Folly with whatever Peter has in store this year!)

Why do I have the feeling that Talking Points is about to get all 'bah humbug' again?!...

Name supplied

One fire engine to disappear - 1/11/06

I have just heard that Oxfordshire intends to take away one of our fire engines, that would be a great shame, especially as Shrivenham no longer has theirs.

If you would like to ask why, there is going to be an open evening on Wednesday November 8th from 7 till 9, at Faringdon Fire Station, where the Chief Fire Officer will be attending.

Name supplied

Christmas Lights - 1/11/06

I vote that the Town Council hands over control of the entire Christmas Lights for Faringdon to Peter White. Anyone care to second/third/fourth/fifth?

Now's the time to start gathering support for this rather than allow last year's debacle to be repeated.

Faringdon deserves better and Peter White is clearly the bloke for the job.

Name supplied

Doorstep Charity Collections - 1/11/06

My own charity African Children's Fund and The Porridge Club both of which are Faringdon based are currently doing doorstep collections in the Faringdon area. In order to do so we have a time limited licence (1 month) from the VWH district Council.

All our leaflets have our charity number on and if any body would like to confirm our details please don't hesitate to telephone me on 01367 244480.

Also if you are doubtful about a charities credentials the District Council will confirm details and also the Police.

In the meantime please if you have anything you wish to donate we would be very grateful and children do benefit.

To all who have already supported this collection the donations have been wonderful and beautiful quality.

Thankyou

Alison Moore

Faringdon Coffee Shop - Parking refund - 1/11/06

The Faringdon Coffee House offer coffee house customers a refund on their parking.

If you spend over £10 (excluding mobile phone top-ups) with us, we will refund a maximum of 60p for the Southampton Street, (Budgens) car park if you provide us with the ticket receipt.

We will also refund a maximum of 50p when you spend £10 or over (excluding mobile phone top-ups) for the Gloucester Street car park. However, for us to do this, you must obtain a Coffee House receipt and on your next visit to us produce both the car park ticket and the Coffee House receipt.

If you are a local business and you park in Gloucester Street car park all day and spend £20 or over, (excluding mobile phone top-ups) we will refund the £2.00 parking fee when you produce a Coffee House receipt and the parking ticket.

Faringdon Coffee House

Ed: This scheme was started by the Chamber of Commerce many years ago. Any business in Faringdon can offer car park refunds

Not an old wrinkly - 31/12/06

"On Christmas Day someone, maybe an old wrinkly who was probably disappointed at what Santa Claus brought him decided to have a go at you. "

Old wrinkly? hahahaha. I'm 18 actually, and I got super presents for Christmas.

There are plenty of nice kids in Faringdon, sure, but there's also far too many thugs who make the place very unpleasant.

I've been followed, namecalled in public, and attacked by teenagers I have nothing to do with and have never done wrong to.

Problems like this originate from authority, because though these teenagers are responsible for their own actions - at the end of the day, who teaches them and gives them the role model of how to behave?

Parents, and teachers.

Name Supplied

Ed: Hear hear

Dear Gen & Hil - 30/12/06

Hope you have a properous and happy New Year!

Thank you for providing this wonderful "organ".

Not many towns are privileged to have such a vibrant mechanism for airing their disparate views. And satire is not dead yet ...

Happy New Year, too, to all Faringdonians - keep the dialogue going in 2007.

I'm especially interested in what young people have to say about how we can make this town even better than it was in 2006 - the best year in the past 20!

Mark Harrison

Ed: Thanks Mark - we like doing it!

Carol Singers 2006 version... 30/12/06

Jane's apology to her Carol Singers reflects the true spirit of Christmas but, as is very probable, they are the same two that visited me she need not feel too guilty.

In answer to a ring on my doorbell I found two young boys, one was wearing a red bobble cap which indicated they weren't Jehovah's Witnesses. They sang "We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year". No mention of Bethlehem, Wise Men, Mangers or Stars (Not even Peter's) and certainly no mention of a Silent Night.

I asked them how much their good wishes would cost me and they said " A fiver each" I gave them a pound because I admired their businesslike approach and said I would have to owe them the other nine.

So Jane don't feel too guilty !

But I know where you live and I may be round to sing to you next Christmas Eve and will expect a friendly reception and a mince Pie.

Happy New Year Everybody

HGM

YOUNG ONES?, DARLING, WE WERE THE YOUNG ONES -29/12/06

One just really is amazed at all the posts on this little site concerning the younger people of our town and country. His Lordship and I employ quite a few, and they really are extremely nice, and quite clean.

On occasions, yes of course, they are giddy things, but one remembers being the same, one was a flapper don't you know, One got up to all sorts of scrummy japes, if anything one is more jealous than angry. Lets start the new year all being jolly good pals, if anything bad happens we still have Mr Raymond and his birch do we not?

Any way to more important matters, One is quite sure you are all intrigued as to what one received for Christmas. Well for his Lordship, I gave him some Viagra, I can see you looking shocked, sadly One no longer indulges in that sort of thing, no, it's just that I find it stops him rolling out of bed. For Ones self, One received a sheep dog brazier, its very good, it rounds them up and points them in the right direction.

Tristram, my son, got mighty sloshed on cooks egg nog, thought that he could drive the Bentley, showing off to his young lady, Lottie, then promptly crashed the automobile into one of our workers cottages. I really do despair, One has always thought that God gave man a penis and a brain, but only enough blood to run only one at a time.

TTFN bless you all. Lady Constance DeCoverlette. (Mrs)

A message for the Non-Yobs of Faringdon -28/12/06

Hi kids,

On Christmas Day someone, maybe an old wrinkly who was probably disappointed at what Santa Claus brought him decided to have a go at you.

He said that there was a Yob Culture in Faringdon and he meant that you kids were a waste of space. !!

Was he right or wrong ?

He blamed the schools, the parents and the police and there he was definitely wrong because if there is a yob culture here in Faringdon it's not their fault . it's yours !!!

So are you happy to be grouped together and slagged off as yobs ? Why put up with it ?

Are you being bullied at home, in the street or at school or do you know someone who is ?

Have you or anyone you know been offered drugs

Do you know where your underage mates can get cigarettes or alcohol ?

Have you a 'friend' who boasts about driving without insurance or over the drink limit ?

I pass you in the town and I know that one or two of you will obviously come to a sticky end..Police record, lung cancer, drug addict Who knows ?

But most of you only go along with the yobs because you don't think there's much you can do about it and you don't want to be a 'Grass'.

Well there is something you can do.

Go to the top right hand corner of your screen and click on Comments.

Tell us what you know then tick the box that says you want your name withheld, as I'm going to because I don't want a brick through my window.

SOMEONE WILL TAKE NOTICE !!!

Name supplied

Apology - 27/12/06

I have an apology to make.

Some young lads were carol singing outside my house in Coxwell St on Xmouse eve and I was outrageously rude to them.

It was absolutely unforgiveable. But nevertheless I ask them to forgive me. I was on the phone and had just had some bad news and they were knocking on the door. I could not deal with the situation.

If anyone knows who they are and they come back they will be received courteously this time (they don't need to sing).
Jane Boulton

Casino in 1960s - 27/12/06

Um. I remember going to a casino in Faringdon in the sixties - in the Crown.
So a casino would not be a "new idea".
I think I still have some chips from that time. Not much use now.
Jane Boulton

Job culture in Faringdon - 25/12/06

I don't know why people create so much fuss about a casino or whatnot in Faringdon. Places like these are not the problem, but the lack of control and the job culture.

I live just outside Faringdon and went to school there, and a more unpleasant institution I think it's hard to find, unless you go to the rough areas of Manchester or Birmingham.

The police do very little of any good, and children are brought up with no respect for each other or for authority. Bullying is rife in Faringdon, and the teachers are fully aware of it, but do absolutely nothing to stop it!

Not until the school improves, the authorities crack down and better systems are put in place to control the youth population, will the atmosphere in Faringdon improve
Name supplied

Set the record straight - 25/12/06

HGM - just to set the record straight, it is the imported traffic wardens who 'police' the parking situation in Faringdon, although you are right that it is a police matter.

Some folk in Faringdon struggle to come to terms with the fact that you can get a rather hefty ticket for overstaying your welcome in Budgens car park and park for free and gratis on the yellow lined roads of Faringdon!!

Hey ho!!!!

Name supplied

Ed: the police are responsible for on street parking, VWHDC for the car parks

Speed Bumps/Traffic calming bumps in Market Place - 23/12/06

Peter Hawkins and another anonymous correspondent are puzzled by the purpose of these features in the road. I think I can perhaps help enlighten them.

The traffic bump or sleeping policeman was derived from a Second World War military development known as the tank-trap. Forward thinking strategists in 1939 perceived that lots of German folk were planning motorised tours of our country landing en masse by boat. They foresaw that there might be heavy congestion on the beaches, which might be alleviated by concrete and steel constructions decorated with festive-looking barbed wire that were installed on likely landing spots along the south coast. This proved an immense success; no congestion at all was experienced by Herr Hitler and his chums, who stayed away in droves.

In the eighties and nineties civil engineers refined this war time innovation to assist us domestic motorists get around along with other helpful measures like yellow lines, red routes, one-way streets, no right turns urban through-ways and no through ways. And in the 21st century this has been brilliantly developed with the wonders of speed cameras, congestion charging and the spread of helpful traffic calming measures out of the cities even to rural backwaters like Faringdon. Of course like all good ideas it has really been around for a long time under another guise. Country folk have long since become familiar with the measures farmers have used to assist their live-stock get about: cattle grids, barbed wire and electric fences have been common place in the countryside for generations.

I laugh now when I look back on the science fiction fantasies of travel in the 21st century current in my youth in the 1960's. Then we thought the future would bring crystal moving walkways across the rooftops, rocket ships to distant planets, high-speed tube ways to cross continents, family jet copters and personal jet backpacks. Now the future is here the sheer brilliance of those health, safety, environment, eco/pc, transport department/agency/executive executives is now apparent. The mini tank-traps in the street are there for the convenience and safety of motorists and pedestrians. They ease congestion, calm the traffic and assist everyone to get about with ease and comfort.

Of course they don't find favour with boy racers in their suspension lowered gti s or estate agents in their bouncy castle 4x4s. My top tip is get a Citroen with hydraulic suspension. At speeds over 30mph the bumps won't cause you to spill a drop from a brimming glass of wine and over 70 they're absolutely imperceptible. CXs or, if you can afford it, SMS are best. An automatic is completely controllable with merely an elbow and a big toe leaving the driver free to read or indulge other interests while getting about in speed and comfort.
Stephen Oliver

Dear Lady Constance DeCoverlette(Mrs) -23/12/06

Would be a pleasure to visit the estate again after all this time but unfortunately we're beating the servants all day thursday. They've grown to rely on our punctuality and do so enjoy it. Just off to shoot the goose for Christmas lunch, so much easier we find when tied to the fence.. Toodle pip,

Major Dandy Fotherington-Smythe (Retired, dribbling and bar)

Casino/Master Williams -23/12/06

Message for "Name supplied"(AKA, person without the manners to let everyone know who the killjoy is) take a leaf out of your own book.....stop moaning, your life could be much worse!!
Trish Reynolds

Town Council website - uptodate? - 23/12/06

A question for anyone. Does anyone know how often the Town Council web site is updated, the minutes seem to be out of date.

Name supplied

Ed: It's a question I've asked in the past. I gather they have to rely on the website developer to update - but even then historical minutes are not held - not very effective!! Website for those who want to look is

<http://www.faringdowntowncouncil.org.uk/index.html>

Happy Christmas everyone!! - 23/12/06

Hope you all, regular visitors and others, have a great Christmas and New Year.

A special thankyou to the many people who write to Talking Points frequently - it just wouldn't be any good if you didn't do this

For those who don't write to us, why not resolve to do so from the New Year. We'll publish almost anything- within reason- and more contributions will make it even more interesting

Hil and Gene

DANDY OLD BOY, LETS GO FOR A BEANO!! -23/12/06

How lovely to hear from you again, you really must come up to the house for tiffin. Perhaps you and your good lady wife could come on Thursday when, weather permitting, we are peasant shooting, his lordship will be so happy to see you again,
TTFN.

Lady Constance DeCoverlette(Mrs)

Illegal parking - 23/12/06

Harry you're absolutely correct that parking on the speed hump outside Blockbuster is "dangerous, inconsiderate and downright stupid".

It's also illegal as the the double yellow lines run right over them.

Merry Christmas, everyone!
David Reynolds

Breath of Fresh Air - 22/12/06

What a breath of fresh air to hear the thoughts of such a notable academic namely, Lady Constance DeCoverlette.

Takes me back to my days on the plantation in India as a boy. Mind you the locals there didn't mind to much about where the pony and trap was parked or how loud the brass band was on the bandstand.

Anyway my thought for this diatribe is TOLERANCE in the community, where's it gone? What are people doing that makes them 'livid' when a car is parked for a while outside a shop? When house owners and such have such a dislike to young people, constantly challenging somewhere for them to go or something for them to do.. I suppose they all sang songs round the family piano, or drank lashings of ginger wine thinking good thoughts when they were youngsters?

So there you have it, please consider tolerance and not whinging when dealing with your fellow Faringdonian's, and smile more it makes you feel good

Merry Christmas to all of you...
Major Dandy Fothrington-Smythe

Casino - 22/12/06

Hear Hear, Adam Williams!
Trish Reynolds

CASINO/MASTER WILLIAMS -22/12/06

Please young man, DO NOT SHOUT, it scares the horses for one thing, and even though we have had to put up with a terrible noise all year, we are not deaf.

You are indeed very lucky to have a gritbin for a goal,(the council really do spoil our young don't they?). When I was your age we would have thought we had died and gone to heaven to have the luxury of a gritbin, indeed to have time on our hands to even think about playing football was unheard of. There again, we were doing a fourteen hour day down t'pits. The only skatepark we had was to hold onto the pit pony's tail and spark our boots(you were given boots after you had worked a year)on the rail, and that was only when it was a bank holiday!

stop moaning young man, your life could be so much worse.
Name supplied

Mummers Play - Boxing day - 22/12/06

Market Place at 10 am

The joys of living in a quaint town.. - 22/12/06

Recent postings have made it clear that some people are not aware that living in Faringdon means adapting to our quaint backwater ways.

David Reynolds complains about someone parking on a speed hump outside Blockbusters. Really David It is dangerous, inconsiderate and downright stupid but I don't think it is forbidden in the Highway Code.

Pedestrian Crossings...We have two, one in Gravel Walk and one in Coxwell Road. These admittedly are of little use if you want to cross anywhere in the town centre but the Speed Humps which line up nicely with the pavements making it easy to cross by pram, wheelchair or skateboard do NOT give pedestrians any legal protection if a driver chooses to ignore them. They are not meant to be Pedestrian Crossings !!!

Yellow Lines, double or single, are not intended to prevent anyone parking. They do however allow the police (not the Traffic Wardens from Abingdon) to prosecute drivers who dare to park on them if he/she can find a space.

I understand the chance of getting a ticket is about the same as getting a big win in the National Lottery.

Boy Racers.. Yes they are a nuisance and provided they don't kill themselves or anyone else they may eventually become considerate drivers like the rest of us but many of them (certainly not all) will have recently passed their driving test and unlike most of us will still remember the stopping distance at 50MPH and know the difference between a Pelican and a Toucan crossing.

Yes, we may be a quaint backwater where Youth Clubs, skateparks and loud music are not encouraged but I still think our town centre lights are great.

Merry Christmas

HGM

Set an example - 20/12/06

I think all these later middle/young aged over 40s who drive through the Market Place blasting their horns should give a little more thought to the example they set for our younger generation.

Name supplied

RIGHT ON RAY -20/12/06

Raymond , One may not always agree with what one says, but of course defend to the death ones right to say it. Remember though dear boy, if any birching was to be done, say, by a pillar of the community of course, a councillor, for instance, some people from "Hug a Birch tree" would soon be on your case over the depletion of the Birch caused by those nasty 4by4 drivers who wish to reinstate law and order, and as for National service, of course dear boy, it's the only way forward, double quick time as well.

Its so refreshing to read posts from such intelligent, forward thinking people, One thought one was the only one, bless you.

Lady Constance DeCoverlette (Mrs)

Sick of illegal parking - 20/12/06

Let's face it, Faringdon has a hard core of noisy ('boy' racers), ignorant and oftentimes blatantly dangerous drivers who have little or no consideration for other drivers and for vulnerable pedestrians - I for one am sick of motorists who double park on London Street especially outside Threshers, Blockbusters and the chip shop, mount the pavement to use the Fast food takeaways on Marlborough Street, outstay their welcome in the parking bays in the Market Square;

I reserve my particular loathing for those able bodied folk who park in the designated disabled bay! The reason why 'they' do it, is because they can!

Apart from occasional forays into Faringdon, by the Abingdon wardens, this is bandit country!

Name Supplied

CASINO etc - 19/12/06

You try being young in this town.

What are we supposed to do move away and wait until we retire? We use a gritbin for a goal! What is going on! Stanford in the vale has probably got more of an elderly and veteran community than Faringdon.

Any complaints from them about their skatepark? Plus WHERE IS YOUR NAME! You should support your opinions, im not going to rob your house, whatever you might think of the 'hoodies' in Faringdon.

Move to Fernam or Little Coxwell and enjoy the peace mate
Adam Williams

Car tampering?? - 19/12/06

I think the lady who found "hair" sticking out of her exhaust will find it is the fibreglass lining of the silencer box breaking down rather than vandalism.

This recently happened to a colleague of mine.
Name Supplied

Speed Humps - 19/12/06

I saw an interesting one a few days ago.

A driver had parked right on the speed hump outside Blockbusters in London Street (ie the narrowest part of the road) while she went in to choose a film.

I just happened to pass in my car as she returned and when I blasted the horn to avoid taking her door off I got the inevitable "what's your problem, mate" glare.

This was a later middle aged woman.

And they say the youth of today are rude. I don't believe it!

David Reynolds
Aged 48 and a bit (is that later middle age?)
Ed: No David, It's young!!

Casino Writer - 19/12/06

I think the person who initially wrote about the casino is perhaps a satirist given his last two posts.
The only things he did not suggest that Faringdon needed were a return to National Service and the birch for single mothers.
Ray

Speed humps- town centre - 19/12/06

I agree with your correspondent who finds these humps confusing with their purpose unclear. In fact I find the whole purpose of the so called town centre "improvements" unclear.

My guess would be that the idea is to keep vehicles out of Faringdon centre altogether with the ridiculous narrow bit between the Nut Tree and the Bargain Centre being purpose designed to cause collisions and encourage cars to drive up on the pavement and mow down pedestrians. After all very few drivers take any notice of the priority arrows - probably because few of them understand what they mean.

So why not completely pedestrianise the town centre, turn London Street, Marlborough Street, Gloucester Street into angled pay and display car parks and use the money to help finance a ring road for through traffic ?
Peter Hawkins

THIS IS TO THE PERSON WHO WROTE "THIS IS TO THE PERSON WHO WROTE CASINO" -19/12/06

Young man, I assume that is what you are, I am as much entitled to my opinion as you are.
My generation fought a war so you could have one, and to write it in the Queens English, not German, or heaven forbid, Japanese.

Perhaps it is you, not I, who should move somewhere else, a large City perhaps where they cater for all types. Small market towns are by definition, small towns that have markets, nothing about skateparks, burger bars, loud music, with equally loud young people spitting on the pavements every second step they take like some ridiculous overpaid footballer, effing and blinding just because someone of my generation is slower at doing things.

Where does it say that everywhere in England has to be the same as everywhere else. Isn't it nice to have somewhere to live that is oldie worldly and quaint. Different isn't bad you know. Drop someone into any shopping centre in this country, and ask them where they are, they couldn't tell you, why? because centres all look the same. Is that what is going to happen to all Market towns such as Faringdon?

Perhaps that is your idea of progress, it certainly is not mine.

Name supplied

Car tampering? - 19/12/06

Hi, I just wanted to let people know what happened to me today.

I was parked in budgens carpark today and when I returned to my car, there was hair sticking out of my exhaust! When removed it looked like part of a halloween witches wig.

I shall be popping into the police station to let the community officer know and hopefully they can keep a look out when there out and about.

But just wanted everyone to be aware.

Emma Nicholls

Corn Exchange - 19/12/06

Following the meeting about the Corn Exchange I undertook to arrange a sound level test involving local residents as a temporary measure. It was also agreed to ask the Town Council to look at employing a noise consultant before embarking on further remedial works.

Unfortunately given the short notice and the Christmas period it is proving difficult to arrange a test this side of Christmas.

We need to get several parties together: hirers, representatives of the Town Council, Environmental Health, and most importantly as many residents as possible. I am sorry to say that this has not been possible.

I hope to organise the test for early in the New Year, and hope that with a little more notice the test should be successful.

In the meantime I understand that the Town Council has already contacted a consultant and had an initial report. The Council will consider these recommendations at the earliest opportunity, and I will work with both the Town Council and the Vale to see what joint arrangements (if any) can be reached.

The enthusiasm for the Corn Exchange is clear, I am sorry that it has not been possible to arrange the test as planned as short notice, but I hope this will not lead to a loss of momentum. I will contact people again as soon as we have a possible date in early January.

Matthew Barber
VWHDC and FTC Councillor

Support for Youth Club - 19/12/06

hi...

a friend and i have been reading about the plans to develop the new youth club, and we'd really love to have a place like that to go, and so would our friends.

we were just wondering if its possible to get involved in helping, or just to find out more about the whole thing.

we have lots of ideas and we'd like to get involved with this project. who do we need to speak to? thanks :)

Name supplied:

Ed: Contact: allan.o'connor@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Youth Centre - 18/12/06

It is worrying to hear that the Youth Centre may not happen. While it is important to consider the effect on

neighbours - but there are very few close by - it seems to me there couldn't be a better location. Safety of the young people is important too, but there is a path on the other side of the road, the crossing point has a clear view in both directions, and presumably the age range for the club means that the young people are of an age to be out in the evening without adults- and so mature enough to cross the roads safely.

Faringdon needs a Youth venue- even before the Healthcheck in 2002 this was known. There have been various attempts at getting a location for a Youth Club in the town. It would be a crying shame if this were to fail as well.

Come on people of Faringdon, contact Allan or write to this site to let your voices be heard

Gene Webb

This is to the person who wrote CASINO - 18/12/06

With all due respect Dont talk about the town as if you own it! it wasnt purpose built for you.

There is a community in Faringdon that consists of people who have lived here all their lives, and not just people like you who have moved here for a quiet retirement! Maybe you should have thought about music and people with a life before you moved into a central area. think about it for a second, you have lived here what, 5 years at the most, I have lived here 12 and most people i know have never moved away.

So please think that there are people in Faringdon who havnt in fact retired yet, and arnt going to for a very long time. These people are entitled to a good time just as much as you were before you retired.

So if you want a picturesque little village, go to it and retire!!
Adam Williams

Purpose built youth centre - may not happen -16/12/06

I am sorry to disappoint readers but I do not want any false expectations for young people in Faringdon.

The Cromwell Centre is far from secured; OCC planning department which has dragged it heels on this case since Sept has informed me that 3 local residents have objected to the proposal to change the use of the building from a highways depot to a youth centre. The application will now go before the Planning Committee on the 15th Jan for a decision.

I understand that the planners are recommending to the committee that a pavement should be built along the road on the same side as the Cromwell Centre. If the committee follow this recommendation it is unlikely that it will happen and the application will be rejected.

This is really frustrating as last week we heard that local young people have secured a £10,000 grant to renovate the building. Wishful thinking aside, to my mind the Cromwell Centre represents the only suitable building in Faringdon for a youth venue. I intend to take a group of young people and adults to this Planning committee in Jan.

If YOU do care about a venue for young people then please come with us: contact me on allan.o'connor@oxfordshire.gov.uk for more details

or send your comments to talking points.

We live in a democracy and your voices count.
Allan O'Connor (youth worker)

Speed Bumps/Traffic calming bumps in Market Place - 16/12/06

Can somebody clarify please - are the raised 'bumps' in the road in the town centre for slowing/calming traffic or for pedestrians to cross on with priority over cars ?.

I thought they are there to calm traffic, maybe I'm wrong.

This afternoon my husband and I were driving towards the one outside Harpers. As we approached it a lady with two children glared at us in a rather 'Hyacinth Bucket' fasion and shook her head. We were the only car, nothing behind or in front and we had to go over it slowly because lots of cars were coming the other way and obviously we had to stop at the 'give way sign'. We didn't stop on the bump so this lady had to wait all of 3-5 seconds I guess.

Now, maybe she expected my husband to stop before the bump and then again the other side of it - and had there been a car in front which would have prevented him from going forward anyway, he would have stopped. He would also have stopped for her had there been a queue of cars behind but there were none. We aren't aggressive drivers and will give way to cars and people when appropriate.

Now maybe she shook her head because she didn't like our car, maybe she thought my husband showed bad manners or maybe she had a bee in her ear - I don't know - but perhaps it's time for the road signs in Faringdon to be made more obvious.

Name supplied

Jazz piano teacher wanted for 9 year old - 16/12/06

We are looking for a jazz piano teacher for our son, who has been playing classical and jazz for three and a half years.

We'd prefer a man if possible, but would also be interested in ladies who "get" boys (eg, understand the importance of football and like the occasional joke).

Please email me on: grheliz@gmail.com

Name supplied

Charity music quiz - Portwell Bar - 16/12/06

This Wednesday (20th).

Teams of up to 4 people, £5 per team, spot prizes, proceeds to Oakwood House.

Loads of questions covering all music genres, interspersed with David Reynolds' challenging guitar intros.

Starts at 8.00pm prompt, but grab your seats early!

Cheers

Martin

Congratulations to Peter - 16/12/06

... for the wonderful star guiding us home at night and, surely, putting Faringdon well and truly on the map...again.

I know many people look forward to the appearance of the Folly Tower light and some may have felt a little anxious as time passed with nothing to see.

Worth the wait Peter.

What a treasure you are.

Thankyou.

Sheila

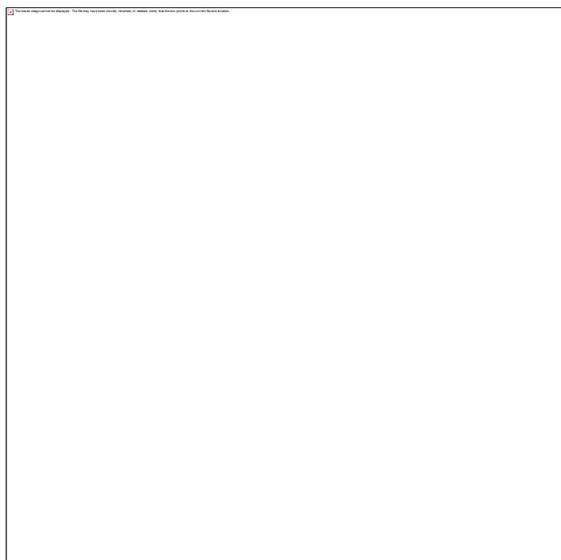
Peace - 15/12/06

Peace broke out at last when the White Star from the top of the Folly travelled? through space and landed on top of the Town's Christmas Tree in the Market Place.?

Thereby uniting the two camps in peace, love and understanding.??

Merry Christmas

A. Well Wisher



Folly star - guiding us home - 15/12/06

How delighted we are to see the star back on top of the Folly this Christmas. It is a talking point for all those driving down the A420 and really puts Faringdon on the map.

We always say it is the light that guides us home (and hence very appropriate at Christmas)! You can bicker all you like about the lights in Faringdon centre, but as long as the star is on the Folly, we're very happy!
Name supplied

Publishing news from Local Writer - 14/12/06

I've got a Doctor Who short story for Christmas in the Christmas Eve edition of The Sunday Times. It's called 'Deep and Dreamless Sleep' and I'm rather proud of it. Do watch out for it.

On December 29th, BBC4, 10pm, I'm one of the people interviewed for BBC4's My Science Fiction Life documentary, time yet to be confirmed. I was filmed at my desk and walking pompously... no, let's say moodily... through the graveyard of All Saints Church, at times with a Dalek. It's based around the BBC's new website of the same name, which is well worth a visit: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mysciencefictionlife/>

On December 28th, XTNCT, the hardback collection of my comic strip collaboration with the fabulous comic artist D'Israeli, is released by Oxford publishers Rebellion:
http://mysql.rebellion.co.uk/~twothousand/books/coming_soon.php

Thanks to everyone who bought issues one and two of my Marvel comic Wisdom off my blog site:
<http://paulcornell.blogspot.com/>

You should have your package of the first two issues arriving in January.

Here's the lovely Trev Hairsine cover for issue three, shipping in February, when we welcome new regular artist Manuel Garcia: http://i24.photobucket.com/albums/c10/Berniceboy/WISDOM3_COVB.jpg

Thanks everyone for having taken an interest in what I did during 2006, which, all in all, I think has been my best year as a writer.

I do love the fact that I've got so many supportive people in my home town. I so appreciate that.

Merry Christmas to you all!
Paul Cornell

Folly light - 14/12/06

I too would like to thank whoever is responsible for the light on the Folly.
I liked last year's and think this one is just as good.

I now have a totally unrelated question: What happens at Rat's Castle?

Name Supplied

Ed: It's a restaurant - occasionally open and by arrangement I think

We will remember them - 13/12/06

New pages on this website.

Have a look at <http://www.faringdon.org/nvremembrance.htm>

If you would like your relative included on this page, simply click the link top right, and fill in the form

Gene Webb

Purpose built Youth Centre - 12/12/06

Graham - I think your suggestion of a purpose built youth centre supported by the community is a lovely idea.

You may not be aware that the Cromwell Centre on Highworth Road is soon (subject to planning permission for change of use) to open up as a Youth Venue and I'm sure that when the facility has been secured then the possibilities for the youth of Faringdon are endless. FAP has been supporting Allan O'Connor in his efforts to make this happen and will continue to support in any way we can with this project.

My understanding is that the facility will make a fabulous youth venue and Allan should be commended for all the hard work he has put into this! I believe that there are other buildings at the site which are currently used by the County Council road department (perhaps someone can clarify this!) - perhaps one day if this is ever relocates there could be potential to expand into this area (I would like to emphasise though that is just me pondering the issue personally and not an 'official' standpoint!)

Your suggestion that the whole community should pull together on this issue is absolutely right. I'm sure one way the community could help is by finding youth volunteers - it is one thing to have a fantastic venue, but without volunteers prepared to work with young people and help run activities it will not be possible to make the most of the facility!

If anyone is interested in volunteering do get in touch with us at FAP - anna.marlow@fap.org.uk - and we will endeavour to put you in touch with the relevant people.

As for the long awaited skateboard park, FAP have been working with the SK8 group to push this issue into the spotlight and great progress has been made. Subject to the appropriate planning approvals, the District Council have agreed (following consultation with SK8, Faringdon Town Council, FAP, Bloor Homes and other relevant bodies) to provide a site for the skatepark next to the relocated cricket club in the extension to Folly Park (this is all part of the much debated section 106 planning gains for Faringdon that result from the new housing development)

I hope all this goes to show that there are a lot of people in the background in Faringdon who are working very hard to get things sorted for the youth of Faringdon and that positive things are afoot!

Anna Marlow Administrative Co-ordinator

Faringdon Area Project

A Fair Trade Town-12/12/06

In my dotage my memory is dim so I wonder if someone could kindly remind me of a few facts regarding the large sign outside the United Reform Church... Namely..

*Who decided we are, apparently, a Fair Trade Town

*Were residents consulted before the decision was taken to brand the town in this way

*If we were how and when was this consultation and how many people responded

*Who paid for the sign and how much did it cost

*How many other towns across the UK are branded in the same way ?

I hope someone "in the know" is able to respond to these queries

Name Supplied

Ed: Have a look at <http://www.faringdonfairtrade.org.uk/> and <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>-will help with some of your questions

Folly Star - 12/12/06

Thank you so much to Peter White for our Folly "Star" this year.
Jill Dean

Purpose built Youth Centre needed - 12/12/06

My name is Graham Cook I am in charge of one of the many youth organisations in & around Faringdon I was born in Faringdon and have lived here for 37 years in all that time the facilities for young people within the town has hardly changed, With the population of Faringdon ever increasing the community as a whole should be looking to the future and building a community youth activity centre that can eventually be self funding.

Instead of all the youth groups in Faringdon & surrounding area fighting for money, space & equipment they should along with FAP, the community as a whole and the town council, look at housing all youth groups in one purpose built activity centre this should not only be buildings to share but with outdoor activities to use like a climbing wall, assault course, confidence course (aerial walkways/aerial slides) all weather football pitch, small 3` deep lake to use to teach canoeing etc (with small camp site, Bar b q area for families), and the all talked about skate park the possibilities are endless.

If we all pulled together as a community this could be a possibility Not only would our young people have somewhere to go/do but the schools could use the facilities for team building etc, the football club could have an all weather pitch to use, and other youth groups/ schools out side Faringdon could use the facilities as well Building something that would benefit the community and young people for years to come is a worthwhile project (a big one) but worthwhile and one that should be seriously looked at

I think the money could easily be raised for this project if the community pulled together as a team

Lets build something the whole community can use and be proud of

Lets give our children something to do in there spare time instead of moaning that there hanging around the town centre

What do you think?
Graham Cook

Folly Light -11/12/06

I can't sort out the rights and wrongs of the Steve Leniec/Peter White problem but Peter isn't taking it out on the people of Faringdon.

So not for the first time and I hope not for the last time Peter thank you for the Folly Light
HGM

Christmas Quiz - 9/12/06

Faringdon Tourist Information have prepared a Christmas quiz sheet- with prizes on offer.
Deadline 3/1/07

[Download a copy here](#)
Gene Webb

Faringdon Singers Concert - 11/12/06

If you didn't go you missed a real treat - a wonderful concert at the Roman Catholic church yesterday. It was so good too, to sing carols with a group of good singers- great volume and sound - and all the high notes were reached!

Faringdon has musical talent other than rock bands!

Gene Webb

CASINO - 11/12/06

What is happening to Faringdon? we have finally managed to stop all this music pollution at the Corn exchange, now, we seem to be getting a Casino- it beggers belief,

I moved here in my retirement for peace and quiet, I was assured that Faringdon was the sleepest town in west Oxfordshire. It should now be twinned with Blackpool!!

What with all this nonsense going on, I for one will not tolerate gambling dens, if we allow this to happen where will it all end?, no, I am putting my house on the market and moving on to somewhere far more quieter, I have found a nice little bungalow at the end of the Heathrow airport runway

Name supplied

FARINGDON PEACE GROUP -11/12/06

How wonderful to read in the last issue of the Faringdon Folly that almost half a century on from the CND marches of the 1960's pensioners from this area are still happy to waste police time and our taxes by chaining themselves to the railings or whatever at Faslane and getting carted off to the cells.

I imagine that if the cost of policing all these protests over the years were to be added up, the total would probably be sufficient to pay for a nuclear missile at the very least.

In the light of the Prime Minister's announcement that our nuclear deterrent will be replaced and in view of the murky Alexander Litvinenko affair, my suggestion is that it might be worthwhile for the protestors to shift their focus.

Surely this should now be on rogue elements in the former Soviet Union and on states like Iran and North Korea who are developing WMD and, from all appearances, would seem to have far fewer inhibitions than the West about using them if it suits them.

Name supplied

Taste the benefits of walking in Faringdon -11/12/06

Do you feel unfit, out of shape, lonely or just a bit low?

Well, why don't you come along to a taster walk and meeting about the Health Walk schemes at 10.30am on Thursday 25th January 2007 at the Jubilee Room, The Pump House, Faringdon.

Walking is almost the perfect exercise because it requires no equipment or expense and quickly brings benefits to your health. Health Walk schemes are designed to encourage people to walk at a pace which makes their heart beat slightly faster than normal and makes them breathe deeply, thereby giving both their heart and lungs a workout.

All sorts of different people come on the walks and we actively seek to encourage people who could benefit their health by becoming more active, whether that be in relation to weight management, recovery from an operation e.g. hip replacement, or mild to moderate depression. Many older people in the county have benefited from schemes in their local area because it can provide a much needed social network especially after a bereavement or as a result of moving house. It would also be great for families to get healthy together and enjoy an inter-generational activity.

The Faringdon & Shrivenham Health Walk scheme will offer First Steps walks which are designed for people who haven't been doing very much exercise recently. The walks will be led by trained making them the perfect safe activity to join. People who attend regular will hopefully notice an improvement in how quickly they are able to do the route and thus see measurable benefits.

The taster walk and meeting (10.30am-12.30pm) is being jointly organised by Oxfordshire PCT, Oxfordshire County Council, Age Concern and other partner organisations. Please come on the taster walk and see what it is all about and how we can make the Faringdon & Shrivenham Health Walk scheme a reality. Any questions please contact Anne Ambler, 01235 200812, or Brian Conroy, 01993 704007.

Parking - 9/12/06

I'm not sure that making that particular stretch of Highworth Road a 'no parking' zone would have any effect whatsoever!!! In fact in Faringdon double yellow lines are a clear invitation to anyone passing to park where they can, and great if you manage to mount the pavement too!!!

London street has become a parking nightmare ('Nightmare on London Street');

I have it on good authority from a friend, that so horrified were the police by the scale of the parking problem that they are bringing in a team next weekend to issue tickets and blitz the area of illegally parked cars. Some might say that this isn't really in the spirit of Christmas however, such is the shortfall in the police christmas fund that the police authority have been forced to consider increasing revenue (triple fold I understand) in the run up to contabulary Christmas party - so be warned; drivers particularly those who park illegally on London and Gloucester street and in other areas of Faringdon, do so at their peril!!!!

Apparently you'll be able to identify the parking attendants (even tho' they come from Abingdon) by the greenery above their hat peaks and the Santa Claus light up pens which have been issued in celebration of this years offensive!!!!

Name Supplied

Festive Faringdon - thanks - 9/12/06

I would like to say a big thank you to all the positive comments about Festive Faringdon as I am chair of the group who organised it.

Our aim at the moment is to replace and add to the christmas lights in Faringdon as many would have seen in the Folly paper last month we donated £1500 to the council for new lights.

As to some of the lights not working they will be replaced next year from this years fund raising.

Also please note the council did match our funds for new lights this year.

Denise Palmer

Christmas Lights -9/12/06

Does anyone out there agree with me that the discussions between Steve Leniec and Peter White have been done to death yet?

Guys, why not pick up the phone and talk to each other, and cut out this assignation by web blog...

We're onto much more interesting arguments now, especially in light of the new Casino, bring it on...

Pat Pending

Christmas Lights - 9/12/06

Peter I for one appreciate your comments and support you regarding these lights.

And I hope you are doing a Folly top light this year.

Jill Dean

PLACE ONE'S BETS -8/12/06

One has heard a rumour from one's maid servant that the Corn Exchange has been earmarked to be west oxfordshire's premier casino night club, as you know only a few gambling licence's are being given out, so to have one for Faringdon is devine, think about it for a moment, fourteen local popular groups doing to death fourteen versions of "All right now"(one has heard it on Cook's transistor radio, very repetitive one finds, One so much prefers Delius, in B Fenby, ta, ta ta, ta,) is really old hat,

no,the powers that be(mostly my family of course, I am so proud of Tristram) has decreed that the future for Faringdon is baccarat, black jack, stud poker, craps, roulette, slot machine's and of course dancing girls,Which my dear Husband, His Lordship, will no doubt enjoy (think of the employment opportunities for local people, I do my best of course, but one cannot employ everyone, now we are down to four homes, we too have had to make cut backs, all the fault of this Labour government of course! I have so many chimneys, you just cannot

find a small boy for love nor money these days), and you know a far better class of person will be promenading around the town, once we have rid the town of these musical types, we can all get back to a more gentile way of life, where one dresses for dinner, and where everyone knows their place, where the lower classes never question their betters, and, on a personal note, as far as I am concerned, seeing as I own most of the area, One will have Willerby park the Bentley where one bally well likes.

I would like to take this opportunity via this darling little site to wish you all a very merry Christmas, and a gambling new year.

Lady Constance DeCoverlette. (ps, keep off my land!!)

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS -8/12/06

Ref: Steve Leniec's letter 7/12/06

Well I suppose we are all allowed to get our facts wrong once in a while, especially when its about someone else's money!

As for the Rotary Club's hard earned cash being spent on obsolete equipment for the Christmas tree lighting system totalling £1,772.21. It seems that you have been misinformed, maybe by your comptetant contractors. The lighting system supplied was a low voltage 24V AC, SELV (safety extra low voltage) system, fully compliant with the current Code of Praticce fo the Installation, Operation and removal of Seasonal Decorations. We still have two of these systems in excellent working order, one of which can be seen in Highworth Town Centre producing an excellently lit Christmas tree.

I know its asking a bit much, but if you just took the time to read the invoice you keep quoting the sum of £1,730.00 from, then you would see that there are costs on this invoice which do not relate to our installation cost for the Christmas lights installation in 2001. The actual cost was £1,185.21 + VAT, amounting to the figure I gave of £1,393.00. Maybe we undercharged for our work and the Council would like to make it up to us and give us some more monies from the big new pot they now seem to have? As for new strings of lights being added since we installed the lights last, I would be very interested to know where these have been put?? The decoration rope light around the old Town Hall has not been removed for years, and anchor testing is not as expensive as it used to be if the contractor has their own in house testing equipment.

As for the staff at the Town Council spending their time switching our Christmas lights on and off for us all to enjoy, whilst I do appreciate their dedication, I feel sure they could put their time to better use. I guess that the contractor that we have just paid £5,000.00 to do this job for us is probably in the Bahamas on holiday enjoying our cash! They certainly have our Town Council well trained. After all, they had 11 months from last year to sort these problems out and there is just no excuse for this!!

I still maintain that Faringdon is paying too much money to put up the lights in the Town Centre. I estimate that since we last put up the Town's lights in 2001 the Town Council has overspent by £15,000.00 on the cost of installing our lights.

I hope people are pleased that I am monitoring our Christmas lights and bring to their attention the things that are going on, possibly without their knowledge.

Peter White.

Speed humps along Highworth Road? - 8/12/06

Until reading talking points for the first time ever today, I was unaware that there might be proposals for speed humps along Highworth Road. So excuse my ignorance for this and ditto if the question of parking in Highworth Road between Coxwell Street and Westland Road has also be raised before.

If not, I would just like to say that I am sure I am not alone in considering that residents who leave vehicles parked on Highworth Road when they have perfectly good drives to park them on are not only selfish but also unnecessarily put at risk the safety of other motorists and pedestrians.

Rather than talk about road humps, I wonder if the Council has yet considered resolving this safety problem either by making this stretch of road a no parking zone or, alternatively, getting rid of the footway on one side of

the road - so making it wide enough for two vehicles to pass even if cars are parked on one side.

I would be interested to read other views on this
Name supplied

Ed: Glad you've found us - the site has been around for about 5 years - with visitor numbers over 1200 per week. We're so pleased!! There is a group called Traffic Advisory (Councils, Police) - maybe worth contacting them - the Town Council will know who the chair is

Re: 'Light at the end of the tunnel'. -8/12/06

Fantastic news.
Well done to all concerned.
Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich
(aka: name supplied)

Pushchairs? -8/12/06

What pushchairs? Why are you apologising?
Sleepy

Dear 'Name supplied' -8/12/06

I cannot disagree more vehemently.
Grumpy

Dear 'Name supplied' -8/12/06

I agree with everything you say. Let me buy you a drink sometime!
Happy

Lights out - 7/12/06

What a shame - drove back through town tonight and again 3 (must have lost one somewhere!) world weary teenagers prepared to oohh and aaahh at the lights - started with the lovely blue lights on tree and then it changed to errr where had half the lights gone? - it appeared that almost half of the other lights were not working.

What about tomorrow night? - if they are going off at this rate there will be a solitary bulb on top of the tree left - if we are lucky !! - do we need to put some more money in the meter?!

Teresa Lardner - teenager taxi service provider

Door Sales -7/12/06

Did anyone else have the pleasure of the door sales person last night? When politely advised that the householder did not want to purchase goods on his doorstep, particularly when it was dark and when children's book bag was in progress, the seller became sarcastic and abusive.

Now, I do applaud initiative and enterprise, but I find this practice of cold calling (especially when its dark) quite threatening, and an invasion of privacy. Call me old fashioned, but if someone politely says that they are not interested, then they should be left alone. Perhaps if the community police officer reads this site they can offer some guidance on what the correct or most appropriate approach should be.

Full marks for the Faringdon lights, even with the hiccups, now explained, they are lovely.
Full marks for the Park Road area for the festive spirit, however, also take a look up Highworth Road, there are a couple of competitors there.

Oh, and I apologise for my push chair on Saturday, and my kids getting in peoples way. I thought Christmas was a time for all, and perhaps more particularly children.

Happy Christmas everyone.
Devil's Advocate.

Light at the end of the tunnel? - 7/12/06

Last night residents of Gloucester Street and Faringdon musicians agreed to work together to try to find a level for music in the Corn Exchange that is acceptable for everyone.

I would like to thank the residents and the musicians for taking this positive approach and Matt Barber for organising the meeting and for agreeing to coordinate the next steps
Mark Harrison

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.-7/12/06

I am sorry to disappoint Mr White but I have no intention of resigning from the council just yet and I am happy to answer the points he has raised in his posting.

All of the figures that were included in my original posting are correct and can be verified by the town clerk, minutes of council and our AUDITED accounts.

The one point which may have been confused was the figure for the christmas tree lights, £775 was the cost of the lights which were on the tree until this year. It is true that a set of lights were purchased by the Rotary club some years ago for £1,772.21, these are still held in storage by the Town Council, however as any competent electrician would explain they are obsolete. We cannot use them as they were 240 volt and any low level tree lights must be low voltage for health and safety reasons.

The Council certainly did not renege on a £700 VAT refund. We can only reclaim VAT over a 12 month period and bills submitted 18 months after the event cannot be refunded.

It is interesting to learn that Mr White feels the cost of installing the lights should only be £2000. Since Mr White last did the job and charged us £1,730, extra light strings have been added, there are lights around the Old Town Hall and the testing of the anchors is included in the price. Perhaps the £1,730 that Mr White charged the town back in 2001 was too much and he would like to offer us a refund?

I accept that two of the older daisy strings have faults, they are 5 years old and due for replacement next year. As the fault is in the light string it is probably not an economic repair and cannot be fixed insitu. The lights in Gloucester st and Marlborough st were off from 6.00pm on the Sunday because the Town Clerk switched them off. The Timer for that section of lights was not operational and staff were switching manually, it would have been unreasonable to expect someone to turn out at 11.00pm on a Sunday night to switch the lights off. The timer is now operating and all of the lights should switch off at 11.00pm. One of the uplighters under the tree outside the Pump House has been deliberately disconnected by person or persons unknown! It is good to know that Mr White is monitoring the lights so closely on our behalf, but can I explain how we are monitoring ourselves to save him the trouble.

There is a daily rota of inspection for faults. Individual bulbs are noted for replacement during our contractors weekly visits, any larger faults are reported to the clerk who will organise an emergency visit. Mr White then goes on to call our contractor incompetent, well Swindon Town Centre, Old Town, Oxford City, Clevedon and Droitwich to name but a few are happy to employ his services and so are we.

The reaction to the Festive Faringdon event and the lights this year has been overwhelmingly positive. So many people have worked to create a season of good will, so come on Mr White join in the festive spirit and celebrate the best lights ever in the Town.

PEACE AND GOOD WILL TO ALL ELECTRICIANS AT THIS SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR.
Steve Leniec

Interesting Talking Points - 6/12/06

Such interesting Talking Points lately. Don't you just love living in the Faringdon democracy!

Two things:

1) Full marks go to the organisers for the jolly day we all had at Festive Faringdon and full marks for the lights on the tree in the Market Place, its truly lovely. BUT a big fat zero scored on the short performance of other

lights including those in Marlborough Street that stopped working soon after. Not good enough.

2) And what I want to know is...where is the Folly Light? I have been looking forward in anticipation each night this week as I wend my weary way home down the A420 as yet to no avail. Peter White, step forward! The people of Faringdon need to know! Put us out of our misery!

Oh and I should say a Big Well Done to those residents on Park Road who provide the wonderful array of Christmas Lights.

Tis' the season to be jolly!

Name supplied

Dear 'Names Supplied' -6/12/06

It's Christmas but as there's no chance of us meeting.
I want to post a little poem as a News Filled Christmas Greeting.
I'll tell you what I've done this year but sadly I admit
I have been known to bend the truth..(In fact... I lie a bit)

Season's Greetings to all you Name Supplieds
My business goes from strength to strength, the profits give me joy,
We gave a Christmas Party for the hoards we now employ.
Our daughter, whom you'll never meet, has got her PhD.
I don't know where she gets her brains but it's probably from me.
Our youngest son now runs a firm which rules the Internet
And you would be astounded at the VIPs he's met.
We've finished the extension, though it cost a hundred grand.
But we had to move the outdoor pool and buy some extra land.
Our indoor pool is fabulous and the Sauna is still there.
But some guests are impossible for they don't know what to wear.
We did have trouble with our cook; she said her rooms were bleak.
But we've hired Llewelyn-Bowen to sort them out next week.
We spent a month in Rio before we went to Spain.
But Spain is full of tourists so we won't go there again.
We kept our place in Florida but bought one up in Maine.
It has a private landing strip and a hangar for our plane.
We've got a Royal Christmas card with love from Charles and Cam.
Oh ****, I haven't sent them one. Oh what a fool I am.
And now we're off to Aspen with the usual jolly set.
Most of them are famous but I'm sure you've never met.
So do pop in to see us if you're ever down our way.
But it might be best to Text us first
as we may be out that day.

Harry G Mitchell (AKA quite a lot of others)

Happy Christmas to Hil, Gene and all Websiters and here's to a lively exchange of views in 2007

No offence intended - 6/12/06

Oops. A touch of irony, not intended to offend volunteers like you Anna, or anyone else for that matter!
(The mulled wine was deliciously warming. Thankyou.)
Sheila

In defence of anonymity - 6/12/06

Might I take this opportunity to re-publish this little ditty by the late lamented Folly Cat? On the subject of anonymity - it says it all.

In Defence of Anonymity

Miaou! - I am the Folly Cat,
and appositely named at that ,

by HGM (or AKA);
anonymous, I slip away.

'Name supplied' but not revealed
I wear my false face like a shield,
fending off the angry slights
that anonymity ignites.
For in this town, I've varied roles
in furtherance of many goals.
I might be neighbour, child or spouse
in bungalow, or flat, or house.
Professional, or artisan;
hermaphrodite, or woman, man.

But, truth to tell, tho' rage be vent
I merely relish argument.
No disguised agenda, me
who pens my case in secrecy.

So, just recall when next you write
with scorn, and irony and spite -
*'He who writes and runs away
may live to write another day'*

Name Supplied

Festive Faringdon - great day out - 6/12/06

I agree Sheila - Festive Faringdon is a great day out for families and it was fantastic to see so many in the Market Square last weekend. As always with these community events Faringdon felt really alive that afternoon and it just shows how positive the town can be.

The comments about pushchairs and spending a penny at local establishments sounds ever so slightly begrudging. Anyone who has actually spent several hours in the town centre on a cold day with young kids will know that it is no easy task! The very fact that they make the effort to attend such an event rather than remain in the warmth and comfort of their own homes with the TV on, means that they have already more than 'paid their dues' (I'm sure if you looked at the takings from the fairground rides and other attractions you would also find plenty of evidence of that!) If people find the presence of pushchairs and kids irritating then perhaps Santa turning on Christmas Lights is not the event for them!!

My young children came down to the town whilst I stood with Julie on a freezing corner serving mulled wine on behalf of FAP - we were there for 6 hours and yes, my children did make use of facilities! I certainly feel like I paid my dues - perhaps I should have got them slaving too to earn their keep!

On the subject of anonymity I think we should be very careful not to dissuade people from writing to Talking Points - I'm sure many people who visit this site and add their comments hold positions within the town which makes it difficult to reveal their identity (Town Councillors, Business people etc) I post on here anonymously at times because I do not want my personal views as a resident confused with the position I hold in FAP. Anonymity is not a bad thing - not having an opinion is a bad thing. Let's applaud people's right to comment and feel passionate about their town and its goings on!

Finally - the tree looks fantastic, I would like to say a huge thank you to all the retailers and businesses who have actually put lights on their trees, the town looks lovely! Merry Christmas!
Anna Marlow

NAME SUPPLIED' makes an awful lot of postings! -6/12/06

Is this the editor just stirring things up; is it one person wearing many hats; many persons wearing one hat??? Don't be shy. Stand by your convictions and at least give us a clue. First name perhaps?

Congratulations to all concerned with 'Festive Faringdon' (the pushchair capital of the world?). A great day out

for families, who I noticed were not averse to 'spending a penny' at local establishments. Given the recent 'Coffee Shop Debate' I hope dues were paid.

The lights are lovely, and I'm really pleased that they, and the Christmas tree, survived the weekend gales.

Isn't Faringdon just the BEST town? (Or it would be if it had a good venue, that could regularly accommodate live music until midnight, up to 200 reasonably behaved adults and a decent well stocked bar).

Here's to New Year's Resolutions that will continue to make Faringdon a lively, welcoming place in 2007. Let us embrace new residents and businesses. Encourage our local entrepreneurs. Provide facilities to engage our young people. Support and applaud the efforts of volunteers.

Don't lurk under a cloak of anonymity. Stop complaining on a website.

GET INVOLVED.

Sheila

Ed: I can assure you - all name supplied are real and different people!

Pretty Christmas Lights - 5/12/06

I would just like to say how pretty the christmas lights look this year - even 4 very world weary teenagers were oohing and ahing as we drove home past them last night - love the blue lights on the tree.

Teresa Lardner

Humps - technically known as "vertical deflections": -5/12/06

Those who are keen on proliferating vertical deflections throughout Faringdon may wish to consider the following:

1. There are two types of vertical deflection; the kerb-to-kerb hump and the "cushion" (such as those now on Lechlade Road). According to international research, humps are more effective in reducing speed. Cushions are deployed where the intent is to slow cars down WITHOUT SLOWING MOTORCYCLES AND LARGE VEHICLES.
 2. The Vale of the White Horse Council's own statistics show that in 66% of the cases where they have figures in Oxfordshire, the AVERAGE speed of the SLOWEST 85% of traffic remained greater than the 30mph speed limit. In other words, they have excluded the top 15% of speedsters that would have increased the average, probably quite dramatically
 3. A study of traffic calming throughout Europe by Leeds University states: "(vertical deflections) may create problems with noise levels. These are exacerbated if there is a high proportion of HGV's, particularly if lorries are empty or only part loaded". (i.e. as in Lechlade Road).
 4. When questioned as to why speed cameras - the obvious solution - were not deployed in Lechlade Road, Oxfordshire's Principal Traffic Technician stated that he "realise(s) this seems nonsensical in that someone must be hurt before something can be done. However it is intended to counteract the widespread media accusation that cameras are purely a means of making money".
 5. Councils will not deploy speed cameras as a result with the excuse that it is a national issue - all the more reason, therefore, to bypass local government and contact your MP
Name Supplied
-

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS - 5/12/06

I would like to apologise for the delay in responding to Steve Leniec's comments on 4/12/06 about a Christmas fairy tale. Unfortunately I don't believe in fairy tales, and we have been very busy installing working Christmas lights for our valued customers.

Firstly, if Steve Leniec has any role in the Council which involves him looking after the interests of our monies, I suggest he resigns NOW! the information I wrote in my letter to the website was absolutely correct and should anyone like to see copies of our invoices and quotations referring to the figures quoted they are only too welcome to a copy. Just contact my office on 01367 240266 with your details and we will forward copies to you.

As to the facts raised by Steve Leniec, I am very happy to respond as follows:

I am glad he mentioned the V.A.T. Unfortunately, he forgot to mention that the council reneged on a prior arrangement with us to pay the sum of £700.00 V.A.T. owed to us from the work carried out on the new wiring. Despite this, after we were finally invited to a Christmas lights meeting and got the information we required, we completed the work in London Street within two weeks.

As far as the sum of £4,480.00 being the cost of the lights last year, I have my suspicion that this is excluding V.A.T., putting the cost up to £5,264.00? All of the prices I quoted included V.A.T. and I still maintain our Christmas lights can be installed with all the necessary electrical and anchor testing for the sum of £2,000.00. Steve Leniec mentioned modifications to the power supplies. The Town lights were never designed to operate from one power supply, any competent electrician would be able to see that! However, it was designed to operate from one time switch located in the Community Centre using a mains signalling system to control the other supply. As for electrical testing, this was always part of our job prior to energising the system.

The figure of £775 being the actual cost of the new Rotary lights is pure fantasy. Our first estimate to the Rotary Club was £2,249.30. Mr Avenell of the Rotary Club supplied the lamps through his car business and, by excluding other costs, we managed to reduce the cost to £1,772.21. This sum was then paid to us by cheque from the Faringdon Town Council, which we banked on 1st March, 2001. Copies of the estimate and invoice are also available to anyone who would like to contact my office as above.

Finally, we get to Steve Leniec's brave comment "woe betide us if there is one bulb out this year". Just 27 hours from the big switch on, Sunday evening 6 strings of lights were not working up Marlborough St. and Gloucester St., and by 11.00p.m. the Town centre lights were not working, leaving just London St working, and, believe it or not, they were still on at 8.00a.m. the next morning! As well as this, many other things are not working, a flashing beacon outside Davis DIY, on the next string down part of the decoration doesn't work, the light string by All Saints church is only half working and the string of lights outside Budgens has been a mess for the last three years. "A three year fixed contract to install the Town Centre lights" is all well and good, but maybe it should be amended to install WORKING lights in and around the Town Centre, anyway a contract isn't worth the paper its written on if they can't deliver - then don't employ them!

It has to be said that the Town Council is giving away thousands of our pounds to incompetent contractors who cannot make our Christmas lights work correctly. As I mentioned before, the lighting system in Faringdon was state of the art and had worked reliably for 6 years without any of these problems occurring. I suppose there is one other possibility, it may not be the contractors who are incompetent??

OFFER OF HELP

In the interests of everyone, I would like it to be known that if the Town Council would like to approach us, we would be only too willing to help sort out our Town's Christmas lights.
Peter White.

Corn Exchange Facts -5/12/06

I feel I must respond to the recent posting titled "Facts about the Corn Exchange Situation", 2/12/06 because while seeking to appear authoritative, it is actually quite misleading.

The noise problem which has recently come to a head is not caused just by a few inconsiderate groups wanting to play "excessively loud". The way the sound limiter is currently set, it trips at such a low level as to make pretty well ANY amplified live music impracticable. I am not a musician myself but I have been at a sound check and watched as bands and engineers have tried and failed to set up using the sound limiter. Even audience applause has been known to trip the limiter and cut the power.

Local bands have been playing fund raisers and social events at the Corn Exchange for years without complaint until recently. Unless the present problems can be resolved that will all have to stop and that would be a very sad loss.

If anything has changed in recent times it is certainly not the Corn Exchange and I do not think it is the bands. Misinformation will not help us to find the solution.

Name supplied

Name Supplied option is being abused ! -5/12/06

I have always defended the use of Names Supplied on this website being basically a shy, modest person myself but I feel that when harsh criticism is aimed at someone who has been brave enough to give their name the critic should, at very least, provide a pseudonym.

Unfortunately comments are often based on insufficient knowledge and it is a valuable function of this site to clarify some of these issues but there is a vast difference between a Name Supplied motivated by understandable modesty and a Name Supplied who doesn't appear to have the courage of his or her convictions. Harry G Mitchell

Grand Christmas Bazaar - 5/12/06

Saturday 9th December 10.00 - 12.00

The Corn Exchange.

Amnesty Greetings Card Campaign, lots of new stalls, many not seen in Faringdon before.

Cakes galore. Mince pies and punch.

Come and get your portrait done!

Hello Ray 04.12.06 -5/12/06

I think you may have just hit the nail on the head. I also think there is a hidden agenda.

So all the wild rantings and sarcastic comments from Trish will be to no avail

Name supplied

Christmas Lights- the best - 5/12/06

As someone who goes through the Market Place each weekday travelling to work, I must say that the lights in the Town are the best I have seen in 24 years living here.

The tree has better lights than the tree at Bourton-on-the-Water as well!

Well done to all concerned

Colin Eddy

With regards to name supplied 04.12.06 -4/12/06

If you read further than the first paragraph of my comments, you will see that i am in no way insulting the people of Faringdon, on the contrary, i am complimenting them!

This site is a place to air one's opinions, and I am not afraid to do so.

I am irate only because it is so infuriating and frustrating that a minority of residents seem hell bent on ruining and don't appreciate the efforts of the many fantastic, hard working, residents who put a lot into making the town a better place for the "good" people of Faringdon!

Trish Reynolds

Festive Faringdon - Well done - 4/12/06

Well done to the organisers of this year's Festive Faringdon.

Great to see the town centre come alive with people and the lights are pretty too.

I've posted a selection of my photos from the day on my website.

Al Cane.

To see them go directly to the image gallery at http://www.clikpic.com/visualcane/gallery_48190.html

VWHDC plan for the Corn Exchange?? - 4/12/06

Hello I'm sure I'm being a tad paranoid here but here's a thought.

The Vale Council appear pretty determined to make the hosting of live gigs at the Corn Exchange, extremely difficult, if not impossible - what with the new lower level noise limiter settings.

Now, the Corn Exchange is a beautiful building and is in a prime location, and so I'm just wondering if all of this might not be some kind of prelude to closing it completely and selling it to a developer, who would no doubt fill it with some lovely looking apartments.

Does anyone think this is even remotely likely or just the workings of a suspicious mind?
Ray

Speed humps: - 4/12/06

Anyone who wants humps outside his or her house should come and sit in Lechlade Road at 5AM when lorries go over them at 50 mph. And then statistically measure the average speed before they claim that they "work"! Even council supplied statistics from Great Milton BEFORE the Lechlade Road humps were installed showed that they were ineffectual in preventing people breaking the speed limit.

Where on earth your correspondent got the idea that "residents on Lechlade Rd were consulted and were given the power of veto" I haven't the faintest idea. The VWHDC paid lip service to dialogue and then did what it wanted to anyway ...

So, if you're serious, come and speak to some real Lechlade Road residents before pontificating without factual basis. You know where we live!
Name Supplied

SPEED HUMPS IN LECHLADE ROAD - 4/12/06

Someone has said that the residents in Lechlade Road were given a power of veto over these humps. That is not true. We were given an "opportunity to air our views" at a meeting in one of the resident's homes and were not heard. The decision seemed to have already been made by the VWHDC to put in these ridiculous cushions. The majority of residents were opposed to these humps.

The "cushions" do NOT slow down most of the traffic and some lorries drive over them at speeds of up to 50mph! They are noisy and make our homes vibrate from 5am every week day morning.

Traffic calming is vital for this section of Lechlade Road because of the dangers for school children crossing the road. However, statistically these cushions have been shown to slow traffic down to an AVERAGE speed of something like 38mph in a 30mph zone.

We were told we couldn't have a camera (which would certainly have slowed down the traffic) as Lechlade Road has a "poor injury accident history". In other words, if a couple of school children had been killed, we would have had a camera!

Highworth Road residents - oppose cushions outside your homes.
They are a lot of money for a lot of nothing except misery for you.
Name Supplied

With regards to Trish Reynolds 02.12.06 - 4/12/06

Irate comments of this nature will solve nothing, it will only make the complainants resolve stronger.

I am sure that the people of Faringdon did not realize that they have been living in the dark ages all these years, thanks for that information. Thanks again for dragging us kicking and screaming into the 21st century, we could not wait for you to come along.

I think your comments are an insult to the general good people of Faringdon.
Name Supplied

COME TO FARINGDON - 4/12/06

400 NEW FAMILY HOMES IN THIS VIBRANT MARKET TOWN

Great music scene within the heart of this town in our lovely old Corn Exchange.

We have a lovely town Centre with disabled access for all.

Free car park for the local well stocked super market.

Great Youth Centre and Skate Park so the kids will never be bored.

who could resist ?

Name supplied

A Big Thankyou - 4/12/06

Could I please send heartfelt thanks to the gentleman who helped me first thing on Saturday morning in the Market Place.

He was very calm and reassuring whilst I was extremely shaken.

I just wanted everyone to know that there are still good samaritans out there - thank you.

Teresa Lardner

Southampton Street Car Park. -4/12/06

Please note that this car park belongs to VWHDC NOT to Budgens.

Complaints about the car park should be directed to the Council. Budgens offer a discount on your shopping of up to 60p provided you press the green button and get a receipt to give to the checkout operator in Budgens prior to payment for your purchases, which effectively makes your parking FREE.

People comment to me that Witney car parking is free. As I understand it, the free parking in Witney is subsidised by local shops - we do the same thing in Faringdon, but in a different way.

On the subject of residents' parking, something I note that feelings can run quite high about, we ought to bear in mind that in many cities in the UK residents have to pay for the privilege of parking outside their own house - at least in Faringdon we don't have that to contend with.

As for Budgens and the efforts of 'rumour control' to spread disinformation, please see the Manager's "About Budgens - from the horse's mouth" entry on this page on 16/11/06. He's said all that needs to be said.

Rod Davis

Speed Humps in Lechlade Road. - 4/12/06

With reference to the correspondent on the subject of the speed humps in Lechlade Road.

The argument about increased carbon emissions is fallacious, as drivers are under no obligation whatsoever to increase speed between the humps.

The humps work - they lower the average speed along the road - and similar humps ought to be installed in Highworth Road and Coxwell Road.

Rod Davis

Speed humps Lechlade Road - 3/12/06

I would like to respond to the posting about the speed humps on Lechlade Rd.

If you drive at or less than the speed limit of 30 mph then you do not need to brake to slow down to go over the humps. They are designed to be driven over at 30 mph without the need for braking - thereby avoiding the need to accelerate afterwards!!

Also residents on Lechlade Rd were consulted and were given the power of veto - if the majority of residents did not want them they agreed not put them in.

I think that speaks for itself and I also think Lechlade Rd is now a much safer place, certainly pulling out of Canada Lane is much less dangerous.

Name supplied

People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.... -2/12/06

.....and people in town centre houses shouldn't hurl complaints about perfectly acceptable music! A message to the person in Gloucester Street who wants to send this town crashing back into the dark ages....as you can see, there are many of your neighbours who are not in the least bit bothered by music events at the corn exchange, indeed they are all for them. They, like you, chose to live next to a public venue, but did so prepared to live with the consequences. This is because they, unlike you, love their town and want to see it develop and thrive!

A lot of people put hard work into Faringdon, they are working hard, giving up a lot of spare time to bring it kicking and screaming into the 21st century. They are doing their best to make this a place that buzzes, a place that people want to come to, and in the case of the 15 minute club, a place where kids have the chance to develop their talents.

What, Mr complainant, do you do for the Town? (apart from try to destroy it)

This town has come too far forward to throw it all away now and it cannot be allowed to go to the dogs because one person wants to live in a silent sterile bubble! Maybe you should go and live on an oil rig in the middle of the north sea where no one can hear you whinge!!

Trish Reynolds

Facts about Corn Exchange situation - 2/12/06

It would appear to me that after reading some of the recent e-mails regarding the Corn Exchange that the facts are not known or being distorted. All groups and discos must go through the noise limiter; this is part of the hire agreement.

There have been no complaints with the Country and Western nights, the Tuesday Dance nights and Disco nights, and indeed the 15-minute club on a Sunday night have responded well to the limits that their organisers agreed to. The complaints arise when groups who want to play exceptionally loud music, bypass the noise limiter. This is against the rules and is clearly not acceptable. By doing this, they risk the Town Council's entertainment licence being revoked, and then everyone loses out.

The Corn exchange is an old building and is an integral part of this historic town. Unfortunately the building has no soundproofing and therefore is not equipped to contain exceptionally loud heavy rock music. It has been agreed to install secondary glazing, but remember, the Town Council only leases the building from the VWH and as yet the lease has still not been renewed. That is why the Town Council are not releasing the allocated money on a building that they do not own.

I also know that none of the complainants I have spoken to, asked at any time, for any entertainment in the Corn Exchange to be stopped, this is well documented in the minutes of the Venue Committee meetings. They have simply asked for the noise to be controlled, as some times it can be quite overwhelming. The Environmental Agency Officer suggested that when any resident has to close all windows and doors, then turn the television up to drown out the noise, he would deem that as intrusive.

Over the years the law has become more stringent over what is now termed Noise Pollution. The measuring of sound and noise is a complicated science and the movement of one or two decibels either way can make a substantial difference. The noise limiter as I understand it, is presently set at 96 decibels and The Environmental Agency have stated that this has to be reduced. If this was to happen then all music would have to stop, so that is not the answer.

I think that with constructive dialogue a balance can be achieved. I am confident and sure that a sensible compromise from all sides is the solution.

Name supplied

Provide double glazing for complainers?? - 1/12/06

Just an idle thought...how about a dusk 'til dawn New Year's Eve fundraiser at the Corn Exchange.

Profits towards double glazing the complainants' houses - thereby allowing us to enjoy our live music without

being constantly disturbed by their wingeing...

Sheila (pensioner and live music fan)
