

News from South Oxford Community Centre

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South Oxford Community Association is a registered charity No. 304351

AUTUMN 2014

Now in our 77th year, South Oxford Community Association looks after the Community Centre in Lake Street. This is a space provided for the benefit of local residents to use for leisure, meetings, and learning.

The centre has to be self-financing - we pay all our own staff costs and bills. Even so, we offer very affordable room hire, and are proud to support many groups and organisations in the area.

Our management committee is friendly, and we are always looking for new members. Please contact our chair Gill Garratt if you'd like to get involved.

Exciting Plans to improve the Centre!

Improvement and development of the outer rooms at the Community Centre has moved a step closer with plans now drawn up and budget allocated from Oxford City Council. Work to develop the buildings should begin in the New Year.

We plan to convert the current martial arts room (DoJo) **into a café and drop-in space**. The DoJo will move into to the adjacent room (currently Room 4) with lavatories and changing area being provided in the middle section. Together with new heating and lighting, this will greatly enhance what the Centre can provide for user groups.

SOCA is now seeking partners to run a regular café service for the community from the Centre. If anyone is interested in providing a café service (or knows of suitable model or potential partners) please make contact with the Management Committee via the office.

We would like a daily café during the pool opening season, and Wednesdays and Saturdays over the winter months. The café could take different forms within a week, and there is potential to provide catering for small conference or training events on site, as well as supporting regular groups using the Centre such as the Hinksey Walkers and the Model Boat Club.

SOCA has also been able to allocate funds to continue to develop facilities within the main building, and is planning to upgrade the lavatory facilities throughout the Centre.



The rooms we plan to develop – a café would be on the right

Solar Energy in South Oxford

We are hoping that South Oxford Community Centre will prove suitable as a site for solar panels, as part of a new Community Energy Scheme.

Earlier this year Low Carbon South Oxford & the Low Carbon Hub called a meeting to see if our community would be interested in getting a Community Energy Project off the ground. So far several community buildings have been identified as possible 'roof donors' upon which to install solar photovoltaic systems.

Initial surveys have been carried out and the project looks promising. The next stage is to encourage people to think about being involved in a share scheme, like the one at Osney Lock, led by West Oxford Community Renewables.

If this is something you might be interested in (either as a financial backer, or as a volunteer) please contact lowcarbonsouthoxford@gmail.com.

More information will be posted on the Community Centre website shortly, and a leaflet is being produced for distribution at the Farmers' Market in September.

New Local History Boards unveiled in Hinksey Park

You may have noticed two new information boards at the Lake Street and Marlborough Road entrances to Hinksey Park. They were designed by local historian Liz Woolley, and unveiled by long-term resident and SOCA President Brenda Horwood on 7th September.

Liz, who lives in Marlborough Road, said: "This area is very interesting historically, but it's not as well-known as Jericho or East Oxford. Hinksey Park is much-loved and well-used, both by locals and by people from further afield, for example to swim and to visit the Farmers' Market. The idea of these boards is to make the history of the area – which I think is fascinating – better known to everybody."

The boards tell the story of the waterworks, the pumping station (now the Community Centre) and Oxford's first railway line, which ran along what is now Marlborough Road.

They are linked via QR code to a new South Oxford history website:

www.southoxford.org/local-history-in-south-oxford.

The website will develop over time, and local individuals and groups are very welcome to get involved in contributing information. If you are interested, contact: liz@lizwoolley.co.uk, 01865 242760.

The boards and the development of the website have been kindly sponsored by Four Pillars Hotels, Oxford City Council, Brasenose College, and the Greening Lamborn Trust.

Cautious Optimism on Flood Relief Scheme – report from South Oxford Flood Action Group (SOFAG)

After last winter's floods, there has been increased support for the Environment Agency's proposal to build a flood relief channel around the western side of the city. City and County Councils have now committed to it.

However, the £125m scheme needs Treasury approval, which must be based on favourable benefit/cost ratios and environmental impact statements, perhaps requiring some years of detailed studies and consultations. There's a long way to go, especially as adequate funding for the scheme has yet to be obtained.

Nevertheless preliminary studies are under way, and there has been vigorous debate in the local press. Supporters of the scheme will require a steady nerve to encourage local business and big utilities to make their own contributions. Worries remain that the channel will be a scar on the landscape, but apart from short sections this will be a green channel available for agriculture except in time of flood.



Hinksey Park Floods, January 2014

South Oxford Flood Action Group has arranged a session at the next Neighbourhood Forum (24th Sept.) to educate local residents on measures they can take to protect their individual houses. There will also be the opportunity to find out about government grants.

New Poetry Group at the Centre

The Bring and Share poetry group is South Oxford Community Association's new literary offering. We will be meeting every other Friday 10.30am-12.00pm, from early September, with sessions coming up on 19th September and 3rd October. Anyone with an interest in poetry is welcome; there is a nominal charge to cover costs.

Sessions will include a chance to share some of our favourite poems and also to get some constructive feedback on any poems you have written yourself.

The best thing about a new group is that it's yet to have become set in its ways. So whether you're a tortured hungry soul desperately in need of kindred spirits, or a more sedate being inclined to the pleasure of good company and contemplation or anywhere in between, please make our new poetry group your home. Contact the Office for more information.

Your community – Your voice!

The **Neighbourhood Forums** at South Oxford Community Centre provide local residents with a platform to have their say on a wide range of issues. The Forums, organised by the Community Association and now in their third year, have grown in popularity and tackle a wide range of concerns from nuisance behaviour and graffiti to flood prevention. They are also a really good way to find out what's going on locally and have enabled residents to join in debates about Hinksey Railway Bridge, the management of our green spaces, including Hinksey Park, as well as many other topics of local interest.

We want the Forums to be truly representative, so if you haven't yet been then come along to the next one on **Wednesday 24th September at 7pm**. Items to be discussed include a proposal that South Oxford should be a Conservation Area, and we will also have updates and advice from the Flood Action Group.

Your City Councillors Bob Price and Oscar van Nooijen will be there as will County Councillor John Tanner. So if you want to join in the discussion come and have your say!

Helping Elderly and Vulnerable Residents

Do you know an elderly or vulnerable person in your community who may need help (e.g. if they have a fall, become lost or confused, or there is a flood?). Thames Valley Police's VERA scheme enables officers to record and securely hold contact details for family, carers and key holders for such residents, should these contacts be needed urgently. This helps people get the help they need more quickly. If you'd like to find out more about the scheme, contact Jan Warner on 01865 266328, or the neighbourhood policing team on OxfordCentralNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

León Swim raises £3000

The annual **Sponsored swim for Oxford's twin city of León in Nicaragua** took place at Hinksey Pool on 7th July. The Swim was opened by Bill Heine of BBC Radio Oxford fame (who was in Nicaragua during his Peace Corps period of service). Three of our local councillors took part in the Swim – Suzanna Pressel, Bob Price & John Tanner, and our *gigantona* (an 8ft. tall puppet woman who was brought over from León in 2009) presided over the event from the poolside!

Here are some facts & figures:-

- 31 people took part
- 7 of these were aged 11 or less
- A few were over 70 years of age
- Many swam 50 lengths or more and some even swam over 100
- Peter Harbour (of Abingdon) who last year swam his age in lengths, swam even more this year (93)

If anyone has not yet handed in their sponsorship money, you can leave it at the Pool Reception with your sponsor form (for Gift Aid), or hand it in to Jane Mercer (01865 246608).

A further fund-raising event (Café León) is planned for November. It will coincide with the Farmers' Market and a book sale – watch out for notices!

Friends of Hinksey Park on Facebook

If you would like to share your photos of Hinksey Park and the local area; keep in touch with what's going on locally or share news about events and activities then why not join the Friends of Hinksey Park on Facebook?



South Oxford Farmers' and Community Market

Every Sunday at South Oxford Community Centre, Lake Street 9.30am-12.00pm

Everything you need for your weekly shop from local/organic/Fairtrade producers - Natural Bread Company - bread and pastries; **Cultivate Vegvan** – locally grown, seasonal veg; **Willowbrook Farm** meat and eggs; **North Aston Dairy** - milk, cream and yoghurt; **SESI dried goods refills** – rice, pulses, cereals, sugar, flour etc. – every week from September! **Detergent refills** – washing up and laundry liquid, toilet and surface cleaner – every week (far cheaper than buying new bottles each time); **Oxford Delhi** – curries and prepared Indian foods; **Raf's Italian** – prepared Italian specialities; **Cakes from Kezia**; **Tania's Kitchen** – Portuguese treats; Delicious coffee from **Pukeko**;

This is YOUR local market! Now entering its 3rd year! Come and support it!