

WMRA Annual General Meeting 7pm 22nd November 2023
D'Overbroeck's School, Leckford Road

1. Welcome from Chair and Annual Report

Maggie Black, following her first year as Chair, welcomed the 100+ residents and gave a report on highlights of the WMRA's activities.

- A busy and productive year, thanks to the excellent Committee handed on by Simon Mollison, Chair Emeritus.
- Thanks to D'Overbroecks for letting WMRA have the Hall free for the AGM. Thanks also to Mark Jennings and North Oxford Rotary Club for providing the public address equipment.
- Much of the year's focus had been on 'planning', i.e. on 'maintaining, promoting and conserving our common environment'. Bryan Pickup and Helena Webster the key Committee members active in this context would report separately.
- The clock at Phil and Jim had finally been mended and was chiming again. Thanks to Mission Studies.
- WMRA had held a social event on Monday 8 May, the 'Big Help-Out Day' of the Coronation week-end. An 'Open House' was held at the Gardeners Arms, including games, music and a quiz, raising over £600 for Home Start, a local charity supporting families with young children. Thanks to Jo Lane and Charlotte Beatson in particular.
- Coincidentally with the AGM, WMRA was launching a new website. This has been designed with help from Peter Stalker of Jericho Online, and is being managed by Caroline Martin. Website address: www.waltonmanor.org
- Many thanks also to Caroline Martin for running the Newsletter so expertly.
- OxClean in March 2023, run by Mary Pegler, was highly successful. More volunteers always welcome.
- Thanks to our attentive and active local Councillors, all of whom were present: James Fry and Louise Upton from the City Council, John Howson from the County Council

2. Report on Planning issues by Bryan Pickup and Helena Webster

- In their respective capacities of retired property solicitor (Bryan) and architect (Helena), these two Committee members have been monitoring planning applications with regard to community concerns and conservation issues in the Walton Manor area. (See the map on the WMRA website for geographical boundaries.) Where appropriate, they prepare and post concerns on the appropriate Council site.

- The key local site eliciting concern has been the old Frog Orange Party Shop on the corner of St Bernards and Kingston Road. WMRA has been in active consultation with Savills, the Estate Agents, with the Architects, and with seriously affected residents, over development plans. The original application was withdrawn and when a new one is submitted we will alert residents via the Newsletter.
- Two other important applications are the site of the old builder's workshop alongside the Canal adjoining 1A Southmoor Road; and an application to erect 5G transmission equipment on one of Lucy's apartment blocks. The latter has now been withdrawn due to WMRA and residents' objections. For news on all planning issues, see the WMRA Newsletter; join the distribution list at waltonmanorra@gmail.com.
- Contributions for the website on the history of different streets and sections of Walton Manor are sought.

3. Treasurer's Report

Last year's AGM had cost £301, and income was £64. The 'Big Help-out Event' at the Gardener's Arms had cost £331, and the income was £583, all of which was donated to Home Start. Current balance at Metro Bank is £785. Thus we are still in funds without requiring a subscription or fund-raising effort at present.

4. WMRA Committee

Two members of the Committee had stood down in the past year: Simon Mollison and Hugh Davies. Accordingly, two new members have been recruited: Godfrey Cole and Janet Minot. All other members were standing for re-election. Under the Constitution, recently revised, in the future WMRA will be more careful to conform with the rule that Committee members who have served three years need to stand for re-election. This will apply next year to Maggie Black, Mary Pegler, Jo Lane and Charlotte Beatson, and others in future years. The following slate of candidates was then proposed, as a group, and accepted:

Maggie Black	Chair	(Kingston)
Mary Pegler	Secretary	(Plantation)
Jo Lane	Treasurer	(Leckford)
Bryan Pickup	Planning	(Plantation)
Helena Webster	Planning	(Leckford)
Caroline Martin	Information	(Farndon)
Charlotte Beatson		(Farndon)
Tom Landell Mills		(Kingston)
Godfrey Cole		(Southmoor)
Janet Minot		(St Bernards)

5. Presentation by Professor William Whyte

The Speaker for the evening, **Professor William Whyte, Professor of Social and Architectural History at Oxford University**, then gave a very spirited presentation on the new Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities currently under construction in the Observatory Quarter. Professor Whyte was an excellent ambassador for The Centre, of which he is Chair of the Project Board. The contribution of over \$150 million by Stephen A. Schwarzman is the largest ever donation towards an Oxford University institution. Professor Whyte is anxious that the Centre should not be a 'members only' University building, but open to visitors and users of every kind including businesses and residents in the neighbourhood. The new facilities will include a 500-seat concert hall, a 250-seat auditorium, as well as bars and cafes. Great interest was expressed from the audience, and Professor Whyte was given a very positive reception.

6. Social get-together

For the last 15 minutes, residents joined in some socialising before events closed.

23 January 2024. MB with inputs from MP, BP, CB