

## FRIENDS OF SOUTH PARK

### Minutes of first Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 22 October 2014 at St Clement's Family Centre, Cross Street, Oxford

<b>Present:</b>	Susanna Bowles (Chair) Lesley Court (minutes) Tom Hayes Andrew Lack Elizabeth Mills Peter Rooke	Caroline Chanides, Parks Development Officer, Oxford City Council Alison Drummond, Events Team, City Council Jane Baldwin, Oxford Preservation Trust Jason Priest & Stuart Langston, Oxford Round Table
	A Bridgewater M Constantinou Angie & Syd Day Julie Evans Peter Forbes Hilary Frisby Javad Gohan Anne Hall (for DRARA) Joe Harrison Gerdi & Richard Hayward	Laura Hollitzer Tom Knollys Sarah Lasenby Sylvia Lymbery Annie McAllister Peter McIntyre Tony May Penelope Newsome Elaine Nicol Jackie Sunderland Rob Waterston

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed thanks to St Clement's Church for the use of the Family Centre for this meeting.

#### 1. **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from: committee members Mark Redhead and Liz Rooke; Cllrs Bev Clack, Mark Lygo and Jamila Azad; Andrew Smith MP; Sgt Neil Applegarth; Margaret Chambers; Rosemary Clayton; David & Christine Colbeck; Clare Newgass; Marie Power; Andrea Siret.

#### 2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Inaugural Meeting held on 13 November 2013 were approved as a correct record.

#### 3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising which were not on the current agenda.

#### 4. **Membership**

It had been agreed that the membership subscription would be held at £1 for the coming year, and those present were encouraged to join/renew in support of the work of FOSP and to enable them to vote at meetings.

#### 5. **Chair's Report**

The group had had a successful first year. Following the previous meeting they had set up a committee as follows:

Chair: Susanna Bowles

Treasurer: Mark Redhead

Secretary: Lesley Court

Membership Secretary: Liz Rooke

Members: Bjorn Bowles, Caroline Compton, Tom Hayes, Richard Hayward, Andrew Lack,

Elizabeth Mills, Mark Redhead, Liz & Peter Rooke

During the year two of these (Caroline Compton and Richard Hayward) had resigned: they were thanked for their input to the group.

The committee had held regular meetings and were most grateful to Oxford Golf Club for the use of their facilities. Achievements during the year related to:

Fitness Trail: FOSP had worked with the City Council regarding the location and style of the quantity, location and style of the new fitness equipment. Two committee members had attended the grand opening of the trail, along with two City Councillors and a group from Cheney School.

One person rued the lack of instructions for use of some items of equipment, and another suggested there be a survey regarding usage of the trail. Several people had been sorry to see some of the original equipment removed (in particular the monkey bars) as it was in good condition and well used. Caroline Chanides undertook to feed these comments back to the Leisure Team.

Depot site: The committee had liaised with the City Council and Oxford Preservation Trust and attended a site visit to better understand the nature of the buildings and the potential opportunities for bringing them back into use.

Jane Baldwin explained that OPT were working with an architect to establish the heritage value of the site and they would then produce viable options for its future use for discussion with the City Council. There would then be consultation with FOSP members and the wider public.

Website: The setting up of the FOSP website had been achievable through generous funding from Headington Action. Those present were encouraged to look at and comment on the website.

Publicity: A few photos and articles had been published in the local press and there had been coverage in the Oxford Mail of the photograph competition. Those present were asked to let the committee know of any local events which FOSP might be able to publicise.

The Round Table representatives suggested that FOSP use Twitter rather than a website: the committee agreed to look for someone to assist with this.

Warneford Lane entrance: FOSP had been successful in getting a new raised footpath across the top of the park. There was still, however, the problem of the muddy entrance at the bottom of Morrell Avenue.

Newsletter: The first FOSP newsletter had been widely circulated.

Objectives: The committee's core objectives for the last year had been in response to the "likes and dislikes" of the park noted at the inaugural meeting in November 2013. These related to:  
*Rubbish:* FOSP were meeting with EF and Friends of Headington Hill Park about this; "Big Belly" bins had been introduced; FOSP were liaising with the Neighbourhood Action Group.

*Drainage:* This will become part of the Management Plan.

*Facilities:* It was hoped that the plans for the depot site would include toilets, which would then be supervised by the users of the depot.

*Pathways:* This will become part of the Management Plan.

*Security:* There were ongoing discussions with the Police.

*Benches:* FOSP would raise funds for more benches, which in turn would increase awareness of the group. Information about memorial benches could be found on the City Council's website: these details would be notified to members and added to the website.

One person suggested having self-closers on the park gates and it was agreed this would be included in the Management Plan.

Problems in the park could be notified to the Park Ranger, whose contact details would be added to the website and circulated to members in due course. *[For info these are:*

*Parks Office: 01865 252240; out of office hours: 07711439090]*

One gentleman asked about recruiting younger people to FOSP and was assured that the committee would continue to work on this.

## 6. **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report is attached to the Minute Book. FOSP had received a grant of £250 from Headington Action during the year, and there had been income of £56.10 in subscriptions and donations. Setting up and hosting the website had cost £149.62 and the photograph competition had cost a total of £156. There had been no cost involved in running the AGM or committee meetings. There was a balance of 48p as at the financial year end.

## 7. **Election of Officers**

The existing officers were unanimously re-elected as follows:

Chair: Susanna Bowles

Secretary: Lesley Court

Treasurer: Mark Redhead

Membership Secretary: Liz Rooke

## 8. **Election of Committee**

Four existing committee members were re-elected as follows: Tom Hayes, Andrew Lack, Elizabeth Mills and Peter Rooke. In addition Helen Moorhouse would be asked to join the Committee. Rob Waterston and Joe Harrison offered to join the Committee and were unanimously elected.

## 9. **Alteration of Constitution**

A section had been drafted on intellectual property regarding Facebook and the FOSP website and was agreed. It was probable that another clause regarding Twitter would be added at next year's AGM.

## 10. **Talks by representatives of Oxford City Council**

### (a) Caroline Chanides, Parks Development Officer

Caroline explained that Management Plans needed to be prepared for all City parks, and examples of Plans already completed were available at the meeting to demonstrate what was required. The next one to be prepared would be that for South Park and all comments raised earlier in this meeting would be identified in it. Also included would be the covenants and agreements with Oxford Preservation Trust, and it would reference the View Study.

The first step would be to produce an Action Plan, which would assist in applying for funding. There would be an online Customer Satisfaction Survey for comments, FOSP would work with the City Council, and feedback would be obtained from FOSP members.

One participant mentioned that new trees did not appear to have been watered and were therefore lost; Caroline would feed this back. She mentioned that a Tree Warden scheme was being set up.

One member asked if the plans could be displayed in the Central Library as well as on the website.

### (b) Alison Drummond, Events Officer

Alison explained that in the Memorandum of Understanding the City Council were allowed each year to put on four large events - three community ones (including the Fireworks Event), one commercial, plus two funfairs and two circuses. One large event had been cancelled at short notice this year. She had received many enquiries regarding future events. FOSP would be consulted about these and would have a two week period in which to comment.

There was a query about some of the larger events in previous years for which there had been several days of preparation. One person suggested bringing back Jazz in the Park.

## 11. **Photograph Competition**

The idea for this competition had come from Richard Hayward during his time on the committee – to raise awareness of FOSP and to celebrate some of the photogenic features of the park. Elizabeth Mills had taken on responsibility for organising the event and reported that there had been 15 entries, all of high quality. Members of the FOSP committee and also Keith Barnes of the Photographic Workshop on Collins Street had acted as the judging panel and shortlisted nine entries (one of which was not of good enough resolution to print). There were therefore eight

photographs and these had been on display at Joseph Perks in St Clement's for the previous two weeks, for which FOSP were most grateful. The winner was Joe Harrison with a photograph entitled "Sunset through the trees" and he was awarded the £100 prize. Some of the photographs would be included in the Management Plan.

One participant suggested that the photos be included on Google Map with the name of Friends of South Park, which was considered an excellent idea.

## 12. **Any Other Business**

(a) One member suggested picnic tables with seating be brought into the park at the top, possibly in association with the barns.

(b) Proposals for a dog agility course and a community dog show were noted. A request was made for a sign asking people not to leave bread in the park and Caroline undertook to pass this to the Park Ranger.

(c) One lady stressed that it was up to people to look after their children when dogs were near them. Full details were available on the City Council's Parks website and would be forwarded to FOSP. Park Rangers were empowered to issue fixed penalty notices and it was hoped there could be better signage around the park warning people to keep their dogs under control, with byelaws and the relevant telephone number affixed to the park gates. [*Phone number for Dog Warden: 01865 249811*]

(d) One gentleman commented on the number of vehicles using the park; Caroline undertook to feed this back and to include it in the Management Plan.

(e) Concerns were raised about the biodiversity of the park and its attractiveness to antisocial behaviour. It was considered sensible not to drain certain areas because of hedgehogs. Other concerns were the over-mowing between trees during the summer and the self-seeded ash saplings amongst the railings at the bottom of the park, and these would also be built into the Management Plan.

(f) Another issue was the congregating of drinkers on the seating and nearby exercise equipment at the bottom of the park on the Morrell Avenue side which were making people nervous. There was also the smell of drugs in that area.

(g) A request was made for the poop bins to be moved further away from park entrances.

(h) The Round Table representatives present at the meeting asked if FOSP would like to get together a group of people to do a litter pick on the morning following the Fireworks Event in exchange for a donation to FOSP of £250.

(i) A student mentioned the muggings occurring at the top (Cheney) end of the park. The issue of lighting and/or CCTV would be taken up with the Police and the Neighbourhood Action Group.