FRIENDS OF SOUTH PARK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Minutes
Thursday 23 October 2025, 7.00-8.15pm at the Cheney Community Hall

Present; Chris Bell City Council, Isabella Knatress Oxford Brookes, Gracie Ball Oxford Brookes, Neil Holdstock Round Table, Stephen Dawson Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT), Anna Eavis OPT, Sue Harmer FOSP Committee, Sue Brownill FOSP Committee, Andrew Lack FOSP Committee, Mel Hamill FOSP Committee ,Amanda Wood FOSP Committee, Cindy Carlson FOSP Committee, Nick Hamill, Patrick Denby, Jeanne Fay, Richard Duncan, Nick Hindley, Pete Edwards, Geraldine Coggins,Peter Rooke, Tom Knollys, Christine Newton, Roger Jenkins, Matthew Smith

1.	**Apologies**	
	Rob Waterstone, Liz Rooke, Lesley Court, Aeron Buchanan, Dominic Parkinson, George Wormald, Marie Power, Rosemary Clayton, Joanna Gilmour	
2.	**Minutes of last meeting**	
	Accepted	
3.	**Matters arising**	
	None	
4.	**Chair's report**	
	See attached report	
5.	**Treasurers Report** Andrew Lack gave his last treasurer's report before standing down from the role. He reported that the main expenditure in the year was a major contribution to the signage (see item 9). This had used up most of our reserves. Other expenditure was small (eg venue hire) however our income is small consisting of subscriptions only. The committee thanked AL for his invaluable input as Treasurer and presented him with a small gift in token of our appreciation.	
6.	**Election of Officers** **Election of Chair** Sue Harmer passed the chairing to Sue Brownill at this point ● Sue Harmer was re-elected as chair and resumed the role of Chair of the meeting **Election of secretary** ● Sue Brownill was re-elected as secretary It was agreed that the Committee would appoint a Treasurer once a successor for Andrew had been found	SH

7.	**Election of Committee Members** All other Committee members agreed to stand again for the committee and were duly elected. Stephen Dawson's(OPT) continued co-option onto the Committee was agreed	SH
8.	**Raising of the Membership Fee** SH introduced this item referring to the notice which had been previously circulated. She explained that the committee was proposing this as the fee had stayed the same for 10 years and as income had gone down, raising the fee is needed to cover costs such as venue hire and website hosting. A new fee of £5 per person per year was being proposed with a concession of £2 for students. Peter Rooke objected saying that a jump to £5 was too much. The membership fee was to enable people to participate and should therefore be low, rather than as a way of raising funds which could be done other ways. Jemima Hunt said that £5 was reasonable and was similar to the DRARA fee. AL said that £5 was equivalent to a cup of coffee. JH asked the chair for her views. SH said that that current income did not cover costs and that previous significant donations from the Round Table had not happened for the last two years. Geraldine Coggins put forward an alternative proposal of £2 for all members as a way of increasing revenue but not introducing a large increase. The meeting moved to a vote. The votes cast were as follows Agree to the increase to £5 (£2 concession) - 14 Oppose the increase 2 Increase to £2pa 1 The proposal to increase the fee to £5 per person (£2 for students) was therefore passed	
9.	**Signage** SD form OPT outlined the progress that has been made on preparing the signage for the park. He summarised how long it had taken and thanked the people who had helped, particularly Peter Rook and Chris Bell. The designs will be in sympathy with similar boards in other local parks and will outline the history and	

	significance of the park. He also acknowledged the funds from FOSP and reported that OPT had also contributed. He was confident that the final designs will be signed off soon and passed to OCC for final approval. OCC will then install them. Agreement should be reached before Christmas. Once finalised the design can be sent round for information He also showed a map of the location of the boards at the park entrances. The meeting thanked SD for his report and the input of OPT in progressing the signage.	
10.	**AOB** a) Depot; JH reported that she had sent an email to Ed Turner and that the decision was going to the Scrutiny Committee in November. However a planning application was in and it is in the public domain that Oxford Spirit group are the preferred bidder. The meeting thanked JH for this and restated FOSPs views that the new development should prioritise community benefits from the start. b) CB reported that likely events for next year in the park were the RT Fireworks and the Foodie Festival. Members will be informed of other events when they are put forward. c) CB reported that the asbestos had been removed from the derelict toilet block and final sign-off for demolition should be soon.	
11	**Speaker** Stephen Harris, Druce Curator of the Oxford Herbaria and Prof of Plant Science at Oxford University gave a fascinating talk entitled Trees of South Park; Past Present and Future. He discussed the issues of what are native species (not many as most were introduced by the Romans and spread to the UK after the last ice age.) There has always been change in landscapes due to climate change and human activity. He then went on to highlight the future impact of climate change and the need to manage the trees in the park accordingly. Replacing the trees that have died and having succession planting is important but this needs to be thought through carefully. When asked about possible priorities for moving forward he said 1) Think drier and warmer for planting 2) Be clear about what we think the trees in the landscape are there for 3) Think about experimenting with unusual tress 4) Don't just go for a huge diversity – get the balance right.	

	He suggested the following for planting; ● Liquid amber ● Walnut (casia) a tall tree and non fruiting ● For the wetter areas at the bottom of the park; birches, alders, handkerchief tree (note some of these are short lived) The meeting thanked him for his excellent talk and the very useful suggestions for moving forward which can be incorporated into our revised Park Management Plan.	
12.	**Date of next committee meeting** **Oct 2026 date and venue TBC**	