ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

MONDAY, 20 October 2025, 7.00 p.m. Small Hall, Exeter Hall, Kidlington

MINUTES

Present:

Richard Venables DL	*OPFA President (M) (in the Chair)*
Bob Johnston	*OPFA Chair (M)*
Liz Bickley	*OPFA Vice-Chair (M)*
Sir Charles Ponsonby	*OPFA Trustee (M)*
Meryl Smith	*OPFA Hon Manager (M)*
John Sword	*OPFA Trustee (M)*
Andrew Parsons	*OPFA Community Development Officer*

M = OPFA Member

1. **WELCOME**
   The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting and confirmed that it was quorate.

2. **APOLOGIES**
   Apologies were received from Paul Bramwell, Hon Treasurer, who was recovering from a car accident the day before. Thankfully he had not been seriously hurt but was still in shock. The meeting sent their best wishes

3. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**
   The Meeting approved the minutes of the AGM held on 21 October 2024.
   There were no matters arising.

4. **PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS**

   Bob Johnston took the Chair for this item. He reported that, following the retirement of the previous President, David Astor, the Executive Committee had invited Deputy Lieutenant, Richard Venables, to take on this role.. .

   Richard has been a Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire since 2016 and was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 2018–19. He holds the Oxfordshire Lieutenancy's Sport and Physical Activity Brief for the County. Richard has a long-standing interest in youth, sport and cultural activities. He is an Ambassador for Oxfordshire Youth and a Patron of Active Oxfordshire In addition, he is an active supporter of Access Sport Oxfordshire, an inclusive sports programme, and co-founder of Horspath parkrun, where he volunteers as an Event Director. He was largely responsible for managing a major new playground project in his home village of Islip some years ago, so he understands our client base.

   The Meeting approved Richard's appointment and welcomed him to the Meeting and the organisation.

   Bob Johnston reported with regret the death of Tony Walker, a loyal OPFA member, who served as a Vice-President from 2012 and before that as Chair and Vice-Chair. This leaves the organisation without any Vice-Presidents and the Executive Committee will consider any new appointments, if anyone suitable is identified...

5. ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

Bob Johnston, OPFA Chair, introduced the Annual Report. He stressed the importance of publicising the fact that the OPFA is the only independent source of information and advice on outdoor playing space issues. He thanked Andrew Parsons for his work on behalf of OPFA during the year. OPFA is fortunate that our members have the benefit of his considerable professional expertise in delivering our information and advice service.

The Meeting received the Report.

6. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2024/2025

In the absence of the Hon. Treasurer MS reported that there was only a negligible deficit for the year, which was no cause for concern, given the charity's healthy level of reserves However, we need to be aware that this situation was only made possible by the receipt of an annual grant from Cherwell District Council and a donation of £1000 from the Ormonde Foundation. MS pointed out that the CDC grant and income from membership fees was reduced in 25/26 and we could not continue to be certain of obtaining donations. There was also the prospect of local government reorganisation in the next couple of years, which might throw a question mark over financial support from new local authorities

The Accounts were received by the Meeting and Paul Bramwell was thanked for his work to produce accruals accounts .

7. HON OFFICERS 2025/2026

Chairman
The Chair reported that Bob Johnston was willing to continue to serve. There were no other nominations or volunteers and the Meeting agreed to recommend that Bob be duly re-elected at the re-convened Meeting.

Vice-Chairman (BJ resumed the Chair)
The Chair reported that Liz Bickley was willing to continue to serve. There were no other nominations or volunteers and the Meeting agreed to recommend that Liz be duly re-elected at the re-convened Meeting.

Hon. Treasurer
The Chair reported that Paul Bramwell was willing to continue to serve. There were no other nominations or volunteers and the Meeting agreed to recommend that Paul be duly re-elected at the re-convened Meeting.

Hon Manager
The Chair reported that Meryl Smith was willing to continue to serve. There were no other nominations or volunteers and the Meeting agreed to recommend that Meryl be duly re-elected at the re-convened Meeting.

The Chair thanked all the Hon Officers for their support for OPFA during the year.

8. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2025/2026

The Meeting was invited to consider the election of up to 6 people to serve on the Executive Committee along with the 4 Hon. Officers. The Chair reported that the following were willing to stand for re-election:

Charles Ponsonby and John Sword
The Meeting agreed that they should be elected to the Committee for the coming year.

This meant that there were 4 vacancies and further nominations/volunteers would be welcome; however there were none forthcoming. It was noted that the Executive Committee had agreed to take steps to recruit some new Trustees/Committee members.

9. **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER 2025/26**
Mike Watkinson MBE had examined the Accounts for 2024/2025 and the Meeting thanked him for his service to OPFA performed free of charge. MS reported that Mike was willing to be Independent Examiner for 2025/2026 and this was agreed by the Meeting with thanks,

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
MEMBERS' REPORTS, NETWORKING AND GENERAL DISCUSSION
No matters were raised or reported

11. CLOSE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The Chair then closed the Meeting.