

**FRIENDS OF HORSPATH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025**

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2025 at 7.00pm
in the Horspath Hub.**

PRESENT: Trustees: Sheila Frankum, Chair/Treasurer Anna Radcliffe
Raymond Jackson Rebecca Brown
Judy Kent, Secretary John Underdown

Villagers: Shelagh and Ken Lindsay Mike Clarke
Christopher and Margaret Drew Sally Humphrey

APOLOGIES: Rachel Mullins, Gill Gray, Sue and Derek Rowell,
Daphne Tilling

1.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM MEETING ON 25th SEPTEMBER 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING NOT ON THIS AGENDA

There were no matters arising.

3.0 CHAIR'S WELCOME AND REPORT FOR MAY 2024-MAY 2025

Sheila welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

The regular classes and clubs continued throughout the year and there were many private meetings, celebrations, and talks that took place at the Hub during weekends and evenings. We were able to follow up the talk by Mensun Bound this year with a talk by Brian Lowe concerning the support workers set up by Shackleton who had a terrible time when Shackleton did not show up. Thanks to Brian for a very entertaining and interesting talk.

We wouldn't be able to organise all of those without our efficient webmaster, Geoff Roynon, who had made some changes to make the website more efficient and informative, especially for those hiring the hall for personal events.

Our Scarecrow Trail in October was attended not just by villagers, but by many people throughout Oxfordshire. They made it a family day out during the autumn half-term. Thanks to Maureen Underdown and Natalie Oakley for this event whose proceeds we shared with the church. It was also thanks to the people of Horspath who took a lot of effort to make the scarecrows and kept it going for more than a

week despite the weather. We held our Apple Day during this event, so there were even more people to join in.

There had been two markets again this year: the Christmas Market and the Spring Fayre. They were always popular both with those purchasing and those selling.

The Village Magazine continued to keep the village informed of all the events and activities. This was run and edited by John Underdown, Anna Radcliffe and Brian Lowe and went out every other month to every household in the village. Our thanks go to John, Anna and Brian, who worked hard to make sure it was full of information for different groups in the village. Thanks to all those who delivered the magazine, which was no easy task during all weathers and dogs that got in the way!

We also had the Horspath Calendar this year which was a delight, and which raised money for the Hub. Thanks to the skilled photographers and John, who spent a lot of time compiling the calendar.

Our thanks to Victoria, who cleaned the Hub and kept it looking spick and span, and to Rob Gray, who cut the grass regularly. I hope you noticed the gradual development of the garden with its new bench, trees, rockery and roses. Thanks to Daphne Tilling for her skilled development of the rockery. Also thanks to Gill Gray for looking after the rest of the garden flowers, and to Ray Jackson for his care of the roses. Of course, thank you Chris Drew for being our general fixer, be it gardening, fence mending, gate mending, hedge cutting and replacing fallen letters, the list was endless. His talents and dedication knew no bounds. I personally want to say thank you, as he was the one person I went to when a problem arose. We must also thank Neil Lloyd-Jani, our resident taxi driver, who ferried villagers who could no longer drive, to make sure they could attend so many activities that the Hub offered.

We welcomed a new trustee, Mr John Underdown, to the fold. Fortunately, as Age UK no longer ran the Film Club, John had stepped in to run this monthly event, which was proving to be popular.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of March, we learnt that the Post Office at Great Milton was to close owing to the retirement of the Post Mistress. This meant that our Outreach had to close on 28th March. Since then, we ran a campaign to keep our Post Office open, which included a petition we presented to 10 Downing Street. We had the full support of our MP and local Councillor. We were awaiting the decision of the Post Office Minister but were still hopeful. The Friday café that supported the Post Office, remained open, but those who attended were very upset that they could no longer conduct business at the Post Office.

More of all these events and the maintenance of the Hub were to be reported in more detail.

A big Thank You to all the trustees helping to run and support the Hub, especially to John and Shelagh Lindsay, who joined the Committee. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped keep the building fully functional. To the cake makers, the coffee servers, the gardeners, and all those who came to our events.

Unfortunately, we had to accept two resignations from Hub trustees this year: Sally Humphrey, who was with us from the start and who was involved in so many different aspects of the Hub. It was unbelievable she won't be with us. And from Natalie Oakley, who was our go to for help for a number of years and started many different aspects of the running of the Hub. Our grateful thanks for all the hard work and dedication they gave us.

Moving forward, we were looking for people to help. I believed The Hub was doing a very necessary job, but we needed new recruits.

4.0 FINANCIAL STATEMENT - Report by Sheila Frankum

Sheila explained that the accounts went from May to May because that was when the Hub started.

Page 7 – Statement of Financial Activities

The total Income and Endowments were:	£28,710 (£24,579 in 2024)
The total Expenses were:	£13,858 (£10,221 in 2024)
Net Income was:	£14,852 (£14,358 in 2024)
Net funds brought forward:	£275,499 (£261,141 in 2024)
Net funds carried forward:	£290,351 (£275,499 in 2024)

Page 8 – Balance Sheet at 31 May 2025

Fixed Assets of **£315,637** was what we paid for the building. It had been sold in 2013 with planning permission to build a house, which had lapsed now. We had not had it valued since. We might have to reapply for planning permission if we ever had to sell in the future.

At present the tutors owed **£792** as there were some outstanding invoices. We still had **£25,286** current liabilities and we still owed **£35,000**.

Page 12 – Incoming Resources

Grants:	£4,811
Donations:	£5,538
Fundraising:	£7,770
Total:	£18,119 (£15,055 in 2024)
Charitable Activity:	£10,591 (£9,524 in 2024)
Total Incoming Resources:	£28,710 (£24,579 in 2024)

Sheila said we had a total of **£5,538** from the Stone Pit charity for painting the Hall, Seated Pilates and Making Time classes.

The fundraising amount of **£7,770** was from the markets, Apple Day, the Scarecrow Trail and the Coffee Mornings. It was slightly up on last year. Sheila only received money for the hire of the Hall.

Page 13 – Expenses

The costs of water rates, heating, lighting and cleaning had gone up. Property maintenance (**£6,592**) was for painting, roof repair, a new fire door in the Meeting Room, new taps, the projector and paying for paper towels, toilet rolls, etc.

Sundry expenses were for a new mobile phone.
We had changed our broadband provider.
Professional fees of **£1,142** were for the accountant

Chris Drew queried whether we were on a water meter. Sheila said that we were, although they charged the earth. We were with Castle Water not Thames Water. Sheila had sent them the readings. Margaret Drew said the church was with Castle Water with high bills, but they'd challenged them and got the bills reduced.

ACTION: Sheila to negotiate with Castle Water to reduce our water bills.

5.0 OUTSTANDING LOAN - Report by Sheila Frankum

The purchase of the Hub had been funded by an SODC grant of £100,000, plus grants, donations and loans from villagers. We had £35,000 of a loan to pay off and were to make another payment of £5,000 by January. We had applied to Stone Pit for loans with no success, so we were paying off the loan ourselves.

6.0 CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES - Report by John Underdown

John Underdown said this really was a COMMUNITY Hub which continued to be reflected through the diverse opportunities offered each week, month and year. I must give credit to the teachers who simply 'got on with' their respective classes. They were trusted members of the Hub staff who never complained and spent their time enthusiastically engaging people of all ages who continued to come back for more. A varied range of classes were on offer.

Weekly: There were three different classes of **Pilates** and another of **Yoga**. **Table Tennis** and **Line Dancing** were still very active. For the more creative, we had the **Art Class**. Many thanks to those teachers for continuing to offer opportunities for the community. I'd especially want to thank Kim who ran the **Monday Pilates** class. She was considering running a second class directly after the first because

of the increase in numbers. This was great news, but don't overdo it Kim as we can't do without you.

Monthly: These activities dovetailed into our weekly timetable and included **Making Time** where villagers engaged in multiple craft activities and pursued their own hobbies sharing expertise and learning from others. The **Creative Writing** class had grown in numbers and, apart from writing, sparked off lively conversation and laughter - thanks Anna. As well as the weekly **Line Dancing**, Leo Richardson also organised the **Senior Residents' Club** which included meetings, visits and eating out during the year. **The Wine Club** was also very popular and self-funded with people coming from far and wide, but hopefully not driving. Its organisation was definitely thirsty work for Nigel, so thank you. **Massage sessions** continued to take place by private appointment. Maureen and Sheila ran **Sunday Funtime** which saw young children and their parents engaging in a variety of activities including prayer and a story. The involvement of families at this event was encouraging as, for most, that was the nearest they got to any form of worship!

Lastly, I must plug the **Film Club**, which had seen a gradual increase in members. Despite Age UK pulling out, we as Trustees did not want to lose this initiative so purchased our own licence enabling us to carry on with a vast number of films now available. Our eagerly anticipated interval saw us served with drinks and cake, making for an enjoyable afternoon. So, many thanks to Shelagh, Anna and Judy, my usherettes, and Ken Lindsay, the floor manager.

I must especially acknowledge Neil, our very own taxi driver, for without his diligence and support some of our classes would not run. So thank you Neil, a free piece of cake has your name on it this Friday.

Despite painting a rosy picture, there were still gaps in our week when more classes could run. We had kept our hire costs competitively low to enable classes to run, but external grants were impossible to obtain now, so we were always seeking new ideas for classes and people to run them.

As Trustees at our regular Hub Management Group meetings, we did receive suggestions for other classes. A Chess Club was mooted or perhaps a board game session. An after-school table tennis club as a kind of post school pre-screen activity. And I know I ought to be holding another Sculpture Class. We could easily create a list of suggested activities, but the list of people to run them was almost non-existent. We would welcome you with open arms if you volunteered and would give you all the support you needed. Perhaps you could become our Social Secretary and tell other what they should be doing.

Another important way to help the situation was to encourage businesses to use our facilities which, with our transport links, local accommodation and excellent places to eat, made this an ideal venue. Their hire fees would be higher and generate much needed funds which, in turn, could supplement our own classes and keep costs down. We had discussed this at HMG level and wanted to begin

this initiative but sought help from others in our community. Oxford Security Services, who already used the Hub for Fire Safety Training, was a good example of this. Did we have a Business Secretary volunteer here tonight?

Judy said that the people here tonight already gave a lot of their time volunteering for the Hub.

Part of the detrimental effect of the closing of our Post Office was that Sheila had the onerous task of taking bags of class and coffee morning money off site. Sheila never complained but this was not a safe practice, especially when you can't sit down and chat to a friendly Post Mistress here. I'm hoping to find a way to encourage tutors to pay their fees by bank transfer into the Hub account.

Finally, we streamlined the way our Hub was to be hired for parties and other functions. It was thanks to Geoff Roynon that we were now able to facilitate this far more efficiently.

Sally Humphrey said that Seated Pilates had 10 members and was a steady group. Some people had had to go into a care home or had died. It cost £4 per session paid in blocks. Neil Lloyd-Janis helped to bring people to class. Seated Pilates was now self-funding.

7.0 BOOKINGS – Report by Sheila Frankum

Sheila said that bookings varied from inside the village and outside. Bookings included baby showers, baby naming, birthday celebrations for young and old, anniversaries, and meetings especially AGM's. We held the Village Show here this year, and a meeting about Northfield building possibilities. Unfortunately this year, we had hosted too many wakes. AGM's held here included the Beekeepers Association, and the Allotments' Association. The Nursery held bingo sessions at the Hub. Sheila said that we had raised the prices a bit with a fair price for villagers, slightly higher for non-villagers, and higher for businesses.

John said we had a lot to offer businesses with good transport, local accommodation and restaurants.

8.0 FUTURE EVENTS

8.1 Apple Pressing Day – Sheila Frankum

Sheila said the Apple Pressing Day last Saturday raised £212. We had lots of apples and pears left over. We missed Chris Drew dressed up in his finery, but a big thank you to Sebastian who ran the apple press this year and brought pears.

Paul Bailey lent us the apple press from Wheatley, sponsored by SODC and the Co-op, and he wanted it to go in the magazine. Thank you to Shelagh and Mike Clarke for doing the raffle.

8.2 Scarecrow Trail – Sheila Frankum

The Scarecrow Trail was to be from **Saturday 25th October until Sunday 2nd November**. The theme was to be pumpkins; there had to be a pumpkin in the scarecrow, but Natalie would have to be informed about what the scarecrow was. It was to cost £6.00 to enter, and the maps were to be sold for £1.00. Natalie and Maureen were appealing for elderly people who would like to have a small scarecrow in their garden. There was to be a special activity for children on **Thursday 30th October** which was to be featured in the Village Magazine.

Anna queried whether the classes could carry on during Scarecrow week. It seemed that Natalie and Maureen did not need the classes to be cancelled.

Natalie had said that last year people had paid for one map and then shared it with 10 people. Mike Clarke suggested charging a bit more for the maps. Sheila said that Natalie and Maureen were very good at selling raffle tickets. John said that the maps were printed free of charge by Minuteman Press.

8.3 Christmas Fayre – Anna Radcliffe

This was to be on **Saturday 29th November** and was to take the same format as last year. Ray was to make mulled wine, and Shelagh was to make sausage rolls. John was to resume his role as Father Christmas again.

8.4 Talk by Ross Gurden – John Underdown

Ross was to give an illustrated talk on **Thursday 20th November at 7.30pm** here at the Hub. The theme was to be ‘Exploring Australia’s Wild Side’. Specialising in wildlife photography, his expedition in Australia was published by the BBC Wildlife Magazine and by Apple+ TV. Tickets were to be £5 each and could either be purchased at the Hub, or via Eventbrite, an online service. Ross, who worked at Berkshire College of Agriculture, had just returned from a safari in Africa; he lived here in Horspath.

9.0 MAINTENANCE OF THE HUB AND GARDEN – Ray Jackson

Ray said that, considering its’ age, the Hub was in a very good state of repair. There were hiccups from time to time, but we had always got Chris Drew there to help. The gate needed to be mended. There was a problem with the bridge, which was in hand and was to be fixed.

The garden was getting better and better. Daphne Tilling had done a superb job with creating and maintaining the rockery. Gill Gray’s end of the garden was looking really good. Bulbs were to be planted shortly.

Sheila said that thanks must go to Chris Goss for spraying the weeds. The ditch was the responsibility of the Parish Council.

10.0 STONE PIT GRANTS – Sheila Frankum

Sheila said that last year we received a Stone Pit grant for Seated Pilates, and we were paying some back because it was not used. We had also had grants for Making Time and for painting the Hall. Stone Pit grants were now ending, and Sheila was making contingency plans for Making Time. It was worth reapplying to the diocese.

11.0 COFFEE MORNINGS AND MARKETS – Anna Radcliffe

11.1 The Markets

We had held two markets in the Hub during the past year. The Christmas Market sported a new Father Christmas who came along with his Elf and did a great job. The Hall was full of families, and a good time was had by all. We successfully made **£687.75** for the Hub. We trialled Shelagh Lindsay's lovely sausage rolls with Ray's mulled wine and these both went down a treat and were to be repeated.

The Spring Market was also financially worth our while. Although we charge only £10 for a large table for the stallholders (very cheap by local standards), we made **£539.66**. However, footfall was very poor and, after a low footfall the previous year, I did not intend to have a Spring Market next year. It was hard work setting up and clearing away and we were all getting older, finding furniture moving exhausting!

So thank you to all our stallholders. Most of them came back again and, although they probably didn't make a lot of money, we were very grateful for their support.

11.2 The Coffee Mornings

These continued every Friday and, since we put the prices up, we had continued to make a good income. This was our only regular source of fundraising so was very important. Coffee was now £2, with tea and chocolate at £1.50. So we had undercut every local café, and the coffee and cakes were of supreme quality.

We couldn't have done any of it without our wonderful band of volunteers who not only made tea and coffee but baked superb cakes. They were so much appreciated, and coffee drinkers absolutely loved them. Thanks also went to Neil, our taxi driver, for ferrying some of our customers to and from the Hub.

It was a happy occasion. People formed new friendships, and we had one large table of people who always liked to sit together. But it wasn't an obligation, and others preferred a quiet table with just one or two people.

We donated the total takings on two Fridays a year to Macmillan Cancer Relief and to Children in Need.

Age UK came on the first Friday of the month to give information and advice. First it was Kate, and then Sarah, and now Kate again.

The loss of the Post Office had significantly affected the coffee mornings. Not just the footfall but the boost which Judy gave us when she was the Postmistress. We lived in hope that it and she would return before long.

ACTION: Judy agreed to ask the Berkeleypark's Office to put up a notice advertising the Coffee Mornings.

12.0 THE POST OFFICE CAMPAIGN – Judy Kent

As I am sure you're aware, our Outreach Post Office closed on 28th March owing to the well-earned retirement of Christine Donnelly at Great Milton.

Following that, we formed a Working Group consisting of Sheila Frankum, Anna Radcliffe, Rebecca Brown, John Underdown, Shelagh Lindsay, Sally Humphrey and me. The aim was to campaign to bring back our Post Office. Despite numerous letters to Post Office Ltd Managers from the Group and villagers, we all got the same reply every time. They had undertaken a review and would not consider reopening our Outreach as there were three Post Offices within three miles of Horspath. It didn't matter that these were inaccessible to my elderly, vulnerable customers. It didn't matter that our Post Office had been taken away from us because of the Horizon scandal and now they were taking away our modest replacement.

I can assure you that we have worked so hard on this campaign. Petitions, both online and on paper, were organised and we obtained 578 signatures. I must give a special thank you to Vladimir, Victoria's son, who was at Wheatley Park School and who took the petition round streets near his home, knocking on doors to obtain more signatures. With the support of our MP, Freddie van Mierlo, Sheila, Anna, Rebecca, Shelagh Lindsay and I presented these, together with supporting information in a box file with a picture of the Hub on the front, to No. 10 Downing Street on 8th July. It was the day President Macron was in London, and some roads were closed off. I had done a telephone interview at 8 o'clock that morning with Radio Oxford.

Our MP, Freddie, had been exceptionally supportive of our campaign and on 16th July, he presented the petitions to the Speaker of the House of Commons, witnessed by Anna, Rebecca, Shelagh Lindsay, Sue and Derek Rowell and me. That was a very busy day! I did another telephone interview with Radio Oxford at 8.00am. From 11.00am-12.00pm we and some of our villagers were at the Hub to be interviewed and filmed by South Today. A big thank you to all of you who turned up. You were wonderful. Then we made our way to Thornhill Park and Ride to catch the Oxford tube to Marble Arch. We got a taxi to the House of Commons and found a wonderful café in the Jewel Tower where we had a welcome cuppa before meeting Freddie on the Green where Rebecca and Freddie were interviewed by

South Today. There Freddie was accosted by Simon Squibb, an influencer. Freddie referred him to the rest of us standing apart. This man aggressively offered help for our cause and asked what he could do, as he claimed to have 500 million followers. I'm not a quick thinker so I couldn't think of anything useful to say. Freddie had to come and break us up as we had to go into the House of Commons.

An interesting follow up to this was that some weeks later, I received a WhatsApp contact from my cousin's daughter, Tania, who lived on the Cayman Islands. Apparently, she followed Simon Squibb on Instagram and was amazed to see me on his Instagram post on Horspath Post Office. Simon was exaggerating; Tania tells me he had 4.7million followers not 500million.

Freddie organised a Teams (zoom) meeting on 11th September with Freddie, Tim Bearder, Laura Tarling, External Affairs Manager, Post Office Ltd, for the South of England and Wales, Anna, Rebecca and me. Here we learned a lot more about how the Post Office worked. Laura told us that there wasn't an Outreach or Post Office in the land who did not work at a loss. She said that Post Offices were sited in shops, and their purpose was to bring in customers to the shop, but they ran at a loss. Outreach Post Offices were brought in whenever there was a Post Office closure. From 2008 to 2012, there were 750 Outreaches. Over the years, these had increased to 2,500. The Government provided the Post Office and the Outreaches with a subsidy for which the access criteria included 99% of the population had to be within three miles of a Post Office. Laura explained that the usage at our Outreach was an average of 23 customers per week, which was eight customers per hour. She said this was low and the income was low. It required additional payments to make it worthwhile. Over a period of 10-15 years, this became unsustainable. POL had 108 directly managed branches and these were now moving into a franchise situation. Personally, I appreciated the clarification and understood why they would not reopen our Outreach.

We discussed a way forward and came up with a plan for which Laura gave us some useful figures. I was unable to go into any details of the plan at the moment. Freddie came away with a couple of points he wanted to raise in Parliament.

I must stress that if we did get our Outreach back, and that was by no means certain, it was vital that people used it. We would have to advertise it extensively and frequently on the Horspath Residents Facebook page, the Hub website, the Village website and the Village Magazine. If the usage as low, it would fail.

Thank you to John and Rebecca for working so hard to produce a record of our campaign for the Hub's website. Do have a look on the Post Office page.

Finally, I've been so grateful for the support from all the members of the Working Group, and our villagers. I want to thank you all for your hard work. And a big thank you to Freddie who had taken up our cause with such enthusiasm. He had given us direction that we wouldn't have had otherwise.

Ken Lindsay queried how many retired people lived in the village, and Ray replied that there were 230 when Martin Harris did his survey. Judy said that was some years ago and the demographics may have changed now.

John said that they had given Geoff Roynon 70-80 documents regarding the Post Office Campaign to put on the website. He said the week it went live, the viewings raised from about 40-50% to over 260%. Sheila said she thought people would use the Post Office.

Anna said that we had not had any response to the submission of the petition to Parliament and we were told we would get a response in about four weeks.

ACTION: Judy to email Freddie to question this.

13.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Horspath Calendars 2026 – John Underdown

Calendars were to be on sale costing **£7.00**, as last year. The profits were to be shared between the Hub and the church.

13.2 Chairs of Hub Organisations – Sheila Frankum

Sheila explained that she was Chair of the Friends of Horspath charity and therefore chaired the AGM.

Ray Jackson was Chair of the Hub Management Group.

14.0 DATE OF NEXT FRIENDS OF HORSPATH AGM

Wednesday 23rd September 2026 at 7.00pm.

Sheila said thank you so much to everybody who had come and to the Committee who worked endlessly for the Hub. Chris Drew thanked Sheila for all the work that she did.

JLK

6th October 2025