

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Oxfordshire Local History Association,
Chipping Norton Town Hall, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 12.45 pm**

The AGM was preceded by three excellent talks on the theme of Oxfordshire Protests: Ciaran Walsh on *The Otmoor Riots in the Wider Context*; Adrienne Rosen on *Priests, Property, or the Prayer Book?* (examining the Oxfordshire Uprising of 1549); and Simon Draper on *Civil Strife and Public Disorder in Chipping Norton 1607–1914*.

Attendance: the following officers and committee members were present: Christopher Fance (chairman); Liz Woolley (treasurer, membership secretary and e-bulletin editor); Vanessa Moir (journal editor); Carol Anderson (study day organizer); Simon Townley (vice-chairman and acting secretary); Kathy Davies and Malcolm Graham (committee members). Another 15 OLHA members attended (out of 45 people attending the study day overall).

Apologies and declarations of conflict of interest. Apologies were received from Priya Atwal (committee member), and from Bob Heath-Whyte, Catherine Hitchens, Shaun Todd, and Philip Wright (OLHA members). No conflicts of interest were declared.

Minutes. The minutes of the 2023 AGM held at Rycote Park on 16 May 2023 had been distributed in advance. No objections were made to the chairman signing them as a correct record. Proposed: Liz Woolley. Seconded: Kathy Davies.

Matters arising from the minutes. None.

Officers' reports for 2023/24 (circulated in advance):

a. Chairman's report

The Oxfordshire Local History Association, known as OLHA, exists for all those interested in the history of Oxfordshire. It aims to foster and promote the study and publication of local history. It acts as an umbrella organisation for local history groups in the county.

Among its activities, it campaigns to preserve and improve services for Oxfordshire local historians and normally holds regular liaison meetings with the management of the Oxfordshire History Centre, the Bodleian Library, and occasional *ad hoc* meetings with local government officials. In the last year, there have been quarterly meetings with the archivists at the Oxfordshire History Centre and two meetings with the Bodleian.

OLHA's programme of small financial grants still exists but there have been fewer applications made since Covid. OLHA also continues to make regular donations to help fund the Oxfordshire volumes of the Victoria County History and to provide items of equipment for the Oxfordshire History Centre. The AGM in May 2023 was held at Rycote. It was preceded by two splendid talks as described in the report of the Study Day Organiser.

Liz Woolley has continued to compile the very popular monthly e-bulletin of news and events relevant to local historians. Her roles as Treasurer and Website Manager are also invaluable.

Our Journal Editor, Vanessa Moir, produced her first journal in the latter part of 2023, which was very well received. She is now working on the next edition to be published in the autumn this year. The intention is to return to a regular yearly publication.

Since early 2021, the committee had been without a Study Day Organiser. Carol Anderson, former Head of the Oxfordshire Museum Service, was co-opted to the committee in September and since then has become our new Study Day Organiser, for which we are very grateful.

Norma Aubertin-Potter has resigned from the committee. She had been an excellent Secretary since 2011, but ill health has brought about her resignation. We thank her very much for her contribution. This is a post that really does need filling. Volunteers for this position, and for being committee members, will be welcomed.

This year we commissioned graphic designer and OLHA member Kati Lacey to design a logo for OLHA. After some discussion the committee chose what we think is a very striking a design featuring Oxfordshire's county flower, the snake's head fritillary, and we will be using this on all OLHA's printed and digital publications going forward.

Christopher Fance, 8 May 2024 (chair@olha.org.uk)

b. Treasurer's report

The financial year 2023/24 ended on 31 March 2024. The accounts are summarised overleaf and have been examined and signed off by the external examiner Andrew Churchill Stone of Mercer Lewin Ltd, Chartered Accountants, New Barclay House, 234 Botley Road, Oxford OX2 0HP. The key points are:

- During the financial year, expenditure (£10,953) exceeded income (£6,920) by £4,033 but the Association is still in a healthy position financially with £1,141 in the bank at year-end.
- Subscription income (£3,699) was slightly higher than in 2022/23 due to an increase in the number of members.
- A gift aid claim on subscriptions and donations received during 2023/24, resulted in income of £464. This was slightly lower than last year because that year included a back-dated claim.
- Donations received (£120) included those from regular annual donors, plus a one-off donation of £20 from an individual to purchase extra copies of the journal.
- Study day income amounted to £560, mainly comprising fees for the study day held in Bicester in November. Most of the income relating to the earlier (May 2023) study day at Rycote was banked before the end of the previous (2022/23) financial year.
- We transferred £2,000 from our COIF (Charities Official Investment Fund) savings account to our HSBC current account to cover the cost of journal printing and postage (see below).
- An increase in interest rates paid by banks meant that interest gained on our COIF account was £77, almost twice what it was last year.
- Printing of the new style of journal (Vol 11) cost £2,311 and posting copies to members cost £943. These figures are higher than for previous years because of the new format and size of the journal. An additional amount of £84 was spent on postage of other mailings to members who are not on e-mail. (This is considerably lower than the previous year because in that year the postage of the journal was recorded under 'postage' rather than under 'journal'.)
- One grant of £300 was made, to Frog Lane Press, for publication of the book *Hayfield Road Then and Now*. We gave a donation of £50 to Bicester Local History Society following their hosting of the study day in November. We made our usual donation of £1,000 to the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust, and two donations of £1,000 each to the Oxfordshire History Centre, one of which was deferred from the previous year at the Centre's request.
- Study day costs (£1,098) were higher than last year because in 2022/23 there was only one study day.
- Bank charges on our HSBC account included a monthly fee of £5 (totalling £60 for the year) plus fees for cashing cheques sent in by members.

- Miscellaneous expenditure of £993 included our annual subscription to the British Association for Local History (which has gone up to £90); website hosting, domain name renewal and SSL certificate renewal (£153 in total); paying the accountants for two years of examining the accounts (total £300) as they forgot to invoice us last year; and design of a new logo by graphic designer Kati Lacey (£450).

Liz Woolley, 10 May 2024 (membership@olha.org.uk)

[Accounts appended at end of minutes]

c. Membership Secretary's report

At the end of the 2023/24 financial year we had 238 individual members; 83 societies; 9 journal-only subscribers; and 15 complimentary; total: 345. We estimate that on average Oxfordshire local history societies have a membership of c. 40, so OLHA represents about 3,500 Oxfordshire local historians.

Overall membership has grown by just over 12%. We were pleased to welcome 53 new members during 2023/24 (twice as many as last year), including the Oxford Preservation Trust.

Liz Woolley, 10 May 2024 (membership@olha.org.uk)

d. Journal Editor's report

My first issue of the journal was published in December 2023, with 400 copies printed. Thankfully, Royal Mail seemed to be doing deliveries relatively quickly and the issues were delivered before Christmas. We had many compliments on the updates in the latest issue, including one from Heather Falvey, the reviews editor of the national publication *The Local Historian*. We have now sent out around 370 copies, with some new members stating that the journal was their reason for joining.

The process of bringing the journal together was protracted and I learnt many lessons which I am now putting into practice for the next issue. I am more aware of style needs, am giving clearer instructions to authors, and will copyedit earlier. I also didn't realise until the first proof that not many images had been included, and ended up adding more, so this time around I am thinking more about available pictures. For example, I have been asking for images to accompany book reviews in the published issue at the time of review submission.

I also made the size bigger than the previous A5 as I thought this would be better for images and graphs and also more similar to comparable journals. We will look at this again for the next issue given the recent rise in the cost of postage. If the journal could be sent as 'Letter', rather than 'Large Letter' postage that would be good; however, the weight of the journal is the ultimate determinate of the cost of postage.

The printer that we used for this issue is actually closing as he is retiring, so we will need to find a new one; this may be between Parchment and a printer I was recommended in Wales. This printer did not charge extra for printing in colour, which may be not possible in the next issue. It will be easier to set up the issue now that we have a PDF version of it that can be used as an example for pagination.

Articles in the next issue should include:

- An article on the history of Florence Park by Frances Moody, which will coincide with its 90th anniversary.
- An article on Joan Vokins and 17th century Quakers in the Vale of the White Horse by Emily Grieg.

- A short article on further research into graffiti in St Mary's Church, Chalgrove, by Robert Heath-Whyte.
- Vignettes on common land, written by myself.
- The next local historian feature interview with Deborah Hayter.
- Book reviews.

The plan is to have all material ready to go to the printers by the middle of September, so that the issue can be printed and sent out by the middle of October.

I have a couple of articles lined up for the next issue and have the potential for more. I am always looking for article submissions, book reviewers and people willing to help assess articles.

Vanessa Moir, 9 May 2024 (journal@olha.org.uk)

e. Study Day Organiser's report

The committee did not have a Study Day Organiser until the end of 2023, and the two study days in 2023 were organised by different members of the committee undertaking different tasks.

The AGM was held on 16 May 2023 at Rycote Park preceded by two talks. The title of the day was *The History of Garden Design in Oxfordshire*. The first talk was given by Timothy Walker, former Director of the Oxford Botanic Garden, entitled *Paradise Lost: 400 Years of Garden Design in Oxfordshire*. He used the Oxford Botanic Garden to illustrate his talk. The second was given by Stephen Wass, entitled *Voyages to the House of Diversion: Hanwell Castle and its Seventeenth-Century Park*. This was based on the remarkable gardens at Hanwell and the archaeological finds there which included a series of terracotta urns, some of which were on display. In the afternoon two groups were shown around the gardens by the owner, and the church by a volunteer. There was a good attendance and the talks and afternoon activities were first rate, attended by good weather.

On 18 November 2023 we organised a study day in Bicester entitled *A History of Shops and Shopping in Oxfordshire*. On this occasion there were four talks of different lengths. Mark Lawrence, a joint Manager of the Oxfordshire History Centre, started with an engaging talk entitled *Heritage Search – an Exploration of Oxfordshire County Council's Online Catalogue and Historic Mapping Platform, with Special reference to Bicester*. This was followed by Garth Lewis talking very entertainingly about *The Department Store F Cape and Co: The Story of a family business and an Oxford Institution*. Garth is a great-grandson of the man who acquired the firm in 1893. The next talk, *Before the Supermarket: Shopping in Post-War Oxford Suburbs* was given by Malcolm Graham, former Head of Oxfordshire Studies, using some remarkable photographs taken in the late 1940s and 1950s by the City Council to monitor poster sites and street advertising. The final talk was given by Bob Hessian, the Chairman of the Bicester Local History Society, *Shops in Bicester and their Development to the Present Day*. In the afternoon a number of intrepid attendees were taken on a rather damp walk around Bicester.

Christopher Fance, 9 May 2023 (chair@olha.org.uk)

f. E-bulletin Editor's report

The e-bulletin was sent to members and to other subscribers on the first day of every month throughout the year. At year-end (March 2024) it was being sent to 574 recipients (compared to 529 the same time last year), including our 83 society members, many of whom forward it

to their own members. Feedback on the e-bulletin has been positive, and the rate of opening is consistently around 65%.

The editor welcomes items of news and notices of forthcoming events; text and images can be sent to membership@olha.org.uk by the 25th of the month prior to publication.

Liz Woolley, 10 May 2024 (membership@olha.org.uk)

All Officers' reports were accepted with no questions arising. The chairman added that the e-bulletin had been recognized with an award from the British Association for Local History, to be formally presented next month, and extended his congratulations to Liz Woolley.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Officers and Committee. The following agreed [on 4 March 2024] to stand for re-election for the year 2023/24, subject to members' agreement:

- Chairman: Christopher Fance, proposed by Liz Woolley, seconded by Carol Anderson.
- Vice-Chairman [and acting secretary]: Simon Townley, proposed by Christopher Fance, seconded by Liz Woolley.
- Secretary: [no candidates as yet].
- Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Liz Woolley, proposed by Christopher Fance, seconded by Carol Anderson.
- Journal Editor: Vanessa Moir, proposed by Malcolm Graham, seconded by Liz Woolley.
- Study Day Organiser: Carol Anderson, proposed by Malcolm Graham, seconded by Liz Woolley.
- Committee Member: Kathryn Davies, proposed by Carol Anderson, seconded by Liz Woolley.
- Committee Member: Malcolm Graham, proposed by Christopher Fance, seconded by Carol Anderson.
- Committee Member: Priya Atwal, proposed by Liz Woolley, seconded by Malcolm Graham.

No objections were raised, and those listed were therefore re-elected

Nominations for a new secretary were invited, but none received.

Election of independent examiner of annual accounts. Mercer Lewin Ltd, Chartered Accountants, have undertaken this role since 2019, and it is recommended that they should continue. Proposed: Liz Woolley. Seconded: Carol Anderson. **Agreed unanimously.**

OLHA's compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (a matter of report by the Chairman). The Chairman reported that the committee had reviewed the current policy and that no alterations seemed necessary. **No questions or objections raised.**

Consideration of matters raised by members of which due notice (as set out in the Association's Constitution) has been given in advance to the Chairman. **None raised.**

Emergency motions (at the meeting's discretion). **None raised.**

The AGM concluded at 1pm, followed by lunch and by guided walks of Chipping Norton, led by John Marshall and Simon Townley and attended by 26 people.

**OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS
2023/24**

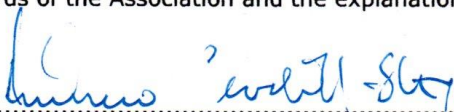
RECEIPTS IN 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024	2023/24 (£)	2022/23 (£)
Subscriptions	3,698.85	3,391.56
Gift Aid claim	463.80	546.03
Donations	120.26	193.10
Study day fees	560.22	959.28
Transfer COIF account to HSBC account	2,000.00	0
COIF interest	77.26	38.88
Totals	6,920.39	5,128.85

PAYMENTS OUT 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024	2023/24 (£)	2022/23 (£)
Subscriptions refunds	10.68	0
Journal printing and mailing	3,352.08	1,809.00
Postage	84.40	463.40
Stationery	0	71.44
Donations and grants	3,350.00	1,250.00
Study days costs	1,098.37	397.00
Bank charges	64.40	64.00
Misc (incl accountant's fees; website costs; BALH annual sub; new logo design)	992.99	227.99
Transfer COIF account to HSBC account	2,000.00	0
Totals	10,952.92	4,282.83

BALANCE SHEET	
<u>Cash at bank on 1 April 2023 (£)</u>	<u>Cash at bank on 31 March 2024 (£)</u>
HSBC current account 2941.79	HSBC current account 832.00
COIF deposit fund 2,231.37	COIF deposit fund 308.63
plus receipts in 6,920.39	plus payments out 10,952.92
Total 12,093.55	Total 12,093.55

ACCUMULATED FUNDS (£)	
Balance at banks (HSBC & COIF) 1 April 2023	5,173.16
Receipts in	6,920.39
Payments out	-10,952.92
Total accumulated	-4,032.53
Balance at banks (HSBC & COIF) 31 March 2024	1,140.63

This statement of the receipts and payments of the Oxfordshire Local History Association for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 is in accordance with books and records of the Association and the explanations given to me.

Signed:  Date: 3 May 2024
Andrew Churchill Stone FCA DChA, Mercer Lewin, Chartered Accountants