

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Oxfordshire Local History Association,
Benson Village Hall, Saturday 7 June 2025 at 12.15 pm**

The AGM was preceded by two well-received talks by Simon Townley (*Early Medieval Benson: an Anglo-Saxon Royal Estate Centre*) and John Naylor (*The Viking-Age World of the Watlington Hoard*).

Attendance: the following officers and committee members were present: Christopher Fance (chairman); Liz Woolley (treasurer, membership secretary and e-bulletin editor); Carol Anderson (study day organizer); Simon Townley (vice-chairman and acting secretary). Another 35 OLHA members attended (out of 52 people attending the study day overall).

Apologies were received from: Vanessa Moir (journal editor) and Priya Atwal, Kathy Davies and Malcolm Graham (committee members).

Conflicts of interest: *none declared.*

Minutes. The minutes of the 2024 AGM held in Chipping Norton Town Hall on 18 May 2024 had been distributed in advance. No corrections having been received, acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Peter Clarke and seconded by Nigel Swietalski; *passed unanimously* and duly signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes. *None.*

Officers' Reports for 2024/25. The following officers' reports (circulated in advance) were put to the meeting, proposed by Kathy Lemaire, seconded by Nigel Swietalski; *unanimously accepted.*

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 three meetings with the archivists at the Oxfordshire History Centre and two meetings with the Bodleian.

OLHA's programme of small financial grants has seen more applications. In the last year there were three. Local societies in need of finance for special projects are urged to consider applying. OLHA also continues to make regular donations to help fund the Oxfordshire volumes of the Victoria County History and to provide funds for items of equipment for the Oxfordshire History Centre.

The AGM in May 2024 was held in Chipping Norton. It was preceded by three talks on the theme *Oxfordshire Protests!* This was the first event organised mainly by Carol Anderson, who has undertaken the position of study day organiser. The autumn study day was entirely organised by her. It was held in Burford and entitled *The Far Promised Land: a history of emigration from Oxfordshire* with three talks in the morning. Both events had guided tours in the afternoon. The committee is extremely grateful for the success of these events and for the hard work put in by Carol Anderson to ensure this.

Liz Woolley has continued to compile the very popular monthly e-bulletin of news and events relevant to local historians. Producing such an excellent e-bulletin each month clearly takes up a good deal of time and effort. She does this at the same time as carrying out her roles as treasurer, membership secretary and website manager.

Our journal editor Vanessa Moir produced her second journal in the latter part of 2024. She built on her experience of the previous year, but needed to find a new company to print it. This company is well-established and will hopefully continue to be our publishers in future years. Vanessa is now working on the next edition to be published in the autumn of 2025. OLHA hopes to keep to a regular yearly publication, which was lost in recent years. I would like to thank Vanessa for the end result.

Having mentioned three committee members by name, I would like to thank everyone on the committee for their support and sage advice.

Norma Aubertin-Potter resigned from her post as secretary of the OLHA committee before the last AGM. This is a post that really does need filling. Volunteers for this position, and also for general committee members, will be very welcome.

Christopher Fance, 26 May 2025 (chair@olha.org.uk)

b. Treasurer's report

The financial year 2024/25 ended on 31 March 2025. The accounts [see *final page*] 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, income (£7,580) exceeded expenditure (£6,881) by £699 and the Association is still in a healthy position financially with £1,840 in the bank at year-end.
- Subscription income (£3,968) was slightly higher than in 2023/24 due to an increase in the number of members.
- A gift aid claim on subscriptions and donations received during 2024/25 resulted in income of £473, slightly higher than last year.
- Donations received (£2,082) included those from regular annual donors and from sales of copies of the journal at study days, plus a generous one-off donation of £2,000 from the Wheatley Archive, one of our society members. This was a contribution towards the cost of producing OLHA's journal (see below).
- Study day income amounted to £1,042, comprising fees from the study days held in Chipping Norton in May and Burford in November.
- A reduction in the amount of money held in our COIF (Charities Official Investment Fund) savings account (as a result of a transfer of £2,000 late in 2023/24 to our HSBC current account to cover the cost of journal printing and postage), and a decrease in interest rates paid by banks meant that interest gained on our COIF account was only £15, compared to £77 last year.
- Printing of the journal (Vol 12) cost less than last year (£2,113 compared to £2,311) but the cost of posting copies to members went up from £943 to £963. This was partly due to an increase in the number of members (and hence the number of copies sent out) and partly due to an increase in postage costs generally. We also spent £184 on envelopes and printing a covering letter to go with the journal (explaining that its cost was partly covered by the generous donation from the Wheatly Archive). Overall, the cost of printing and posting the journal was £7.41 per copy, down from £8.14 last year.

- The cost of printing and postage are now so high that we are considering asking members whether they would be prepared to receive the journal as an electronic PDF file, rather than in hard copy. We have already asked overseas members (as the cost of postage alone is now almost as much as the membership fee) and the majority have agreed.
- An additional amount of £31 was spent on postage of other mailings (for example notices of study days) to members who are not on e-mail.
- Two grants were made. One of £350 was to the Jericho Living Heritage Trust towards publication of *A Jericho Scrapbook: the Story of a Special Oxford Neighbourhood*. This is a 240-page handwritten scrapbook compiled by Constance Hawtrey (c. 1877–1967) for a county-wide competition in 1956. The second grant was of £500 to the Bartons History Group for further development of the Bartons Village Archive. We gave a donation of £75 to Chipping Norton Local History Society following their hosting of the study day in May 2024, and a donation of £75 to the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust in lieu of fees for one of the speakers. In addition we made our usual annual donation of £1,000 to the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust. Our usual annual donation of £1,000 to the Oxfordshire History Centre was postponed to next year at the Centre's request.
- Study day costs (£900) were slightly lower than last year.
- 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 £453 included our annual subscription to the British Association for Local History (£90); IT assistance, website hosting, domain name renewal and SSL certificate renewal (£183 in total); and paying the accountants for examining the accounts (£180).

Liz Woolley, 26 May 2025 (membership@olha.org.uk)

c. Membership secretary's report

At the end of the 2024/25 financial year we had 261 individual members, 85 societies, 8 journal-only subscribers, and 15 complimentary (total 369). We estimate that on average Oxfordshire local history societies have a membership of c. 40, so OLHA represents about 3,800 Oxfordshire local historians.

Overall membership has grown by 7%. We were pleased to welcome 28 new members during 2024/25, including the Megalosaurus Society of Stonesfield and Appleton with Eaton History Group.

Liz Woolley, 26 May 2025 (membership@olha.org.uk)

d. Journal editor's report

My second issue of the journal was published in December 2024, with 440 copies printed, and was sent out before Christmas. We had planned to publish it earlier, but as an article was withdrawn and a replacement had to be got ready, the journal was delayed. We sent out around 390 copies. As the printer from last year had retired, I used a new printer, Short Run Press, based in Devon. They are a book printer, which means that it does not cost significantly more to print in colour, compared to general printing companies who do not specialise in printing books and journals, and who charge a lot more for colour printing. This meant that the journal could continue to be printed in colour, which helps make images more attractive.

I put into practice some of what I had learnt preparing the previous issue, including requesting images to accompany the book reviews to ensure that this section of the issue was well illustrated. It was also easier to set up the issue as we had a PDF version of it that was used as an example for pagination. However, despite doing more checking in advance, a lot of corrections were required once the journal proof was created. It is clear that all articles, and especially anything written by me, need to be carefully proof-read, ideally by two people, before files are sent to the printer. Having to do a lot of corrections to a proof is a particular issue because the printer charges us for the amount of time required and therefore it costs us money.

The issue came in at 104 pages, slightly longer and therefore thicker than the previous issue, as two of the articles were long. This meant that the envelopes that we had bought last year could not be used and the postage was more expensive as the issue was heavier.

Articles in the 2025 issue should include:

- Short articles: elections.
- Julie Ann Godson's list of men from Oxfordshire who fought at Waterloo.
- Sarah Eddie's article on the history of Brown's Café in Oxford's Covered Market.
- Alison McDonald's response to my short piece on Wolvercote Commoners in the last issue.
- On the spot: an interview with Malcolm Graham.
- Various book reviews: we have five so far written or in process.

For the 2026 issue I hope to have two articles which I have recently been contacted about. Two other articles have been withdrawn from this year's issue as they were not ready in time, but hopefully should be in next year's issue; these are:

- Jane Card: The Great Fire of Harwell (1852).
- Julie Charlesworth and Wendy Humphreys: German migration to Oxfordshire in the 1800s-1900s.

For this year's (2025) journal, the plan is to have all material ready to go to the printer by the middle of September, so that the issue can be printed and sent out by the middle of October. Hopefully, I can actually manage to do this this year!

Vanessa Moir, 26 May 2025 (journal@olha.org.uk)

e. Study day organiser's report

The AGM and spring study day was held on 16 May 2024 in Chipping Norton Town Hall, preceded by three talks on the theme *Oxfordshire Protests!* Contributors to the day explored how the people of Oxfordshire have never been slow to protest against change or injustice. In the opening talk, *The Otmoor Riots in the wider context*, Ciaran Walsh examined the tumultuous events that took place in Oxfordshire in the late 1820s and early 1830s, most notably the Otmoor Riots, in the context of the global struggle that occurred at the onset of modern industrial society. In the second talk Adrienne Rosen addressed the question *Priests, Property, or the Prayer Book?* describing how in the summer of 1549, rebellions erupted in the West Country, Norfolk, and throughout southern and midland England, including Oxfordshire, where the vicar of Chipping Norton was hanged from his own church tower. The concluding talk, *Restless Town: Civil Strife and Public Disorder in Chipping Norton, 1607-1914*, given by Simon Draper, explored the many riots, protests and strikes that have punctuated the town's history, from the borough charter troubles of 1607 to the divisive Bliss Mill strike in 1913-14, via a provocative death in custody in 1845, the Ascott Martyrs' protests in 1873 and the antics of the Skeleton Army in the 1880s.

Afternoon town walks, expertly led by John Marshall and Simon Townley, focused on the built history of the town and included visits to the parish church and the museum. The day was well-attended, and the talks and afternoon walks, aided by the glorious spring sunshine, were first rate. OLHA is grateful to the volunteers of the Chipping Norton Museum and Local History Society for their help in planning the day and for their sterling work serving refreshments.

The autumn study day took as its theme *The Far Promised Land: emigration from Oxfordshire* and was held on 9 November 2024 in Burford. Nicholas Wood, chair of trustees of Burford Baptist Church, the venue for the day, began the morning by providing a brief history of the church and its congregation. In his talk *The First Wave: Tackley Emigrants on the Cataraqui 1845* Neil Wilson explored the reasons for emigration from Oxfordshire in the 1840s, focusing on the sinking of the Cataraqui off King Island in the Bass Strait, with its payload of emigrants including many from Oxfordshire. John Bennett continued the theme in his talk *The Far Promised Land* examining what, a generation after the loss of the *Cataraqui*, again motivated so many people to undertake a lengthy and perilous sea journey from our land-locked county. John also relayed the moving story of the sinking of the emigrant ship *Cospatrick* in November 1875, with the loss of hundreds of emigrants including seventeen members of one family from Shipton under Wychwood. Carol Anderson concluded the morning with a brief look at what the emigrants expected when they arrived and the extent to which their dreams were fulfilled.

In the afternoon there was the opportunity to visit Burford's new archive building and join tours of the town, led by Clendon Daukes and Stephen Cooper, to explore some of its rich history and visit the Tolsey Museum. OLHA is grateful to the volunteers of the Burford Tolsey Museum and Archive for their help in planning and contributing to the programme and for serving refreshments which included 'proper' coffee! The day was well-attended, although the miserably cold weather did deter some participants from joining the afternoon walks.

Carol Anderson, 26 May 2025 (studydays@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 2025) it was being sent to 630 recipients (compared to 574 the same time last year), including our 85 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 between 60% and 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, 26 May 2025 (membership@olha.org.uk)

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Officers and Committee. All the current Officers and Committee have expressed a willingness to continue in place, and were proposed and seconded as follows at the OLHA committee meeting held on 17 March 2025:

- Christopher Fance (chairman): nominated by Vanessa Moir, seconded by Liz Woolley
- Vanessa Moir (journal editor): nominated by Christopher Fance, seconded by Priya Atwal
- Carol Anderson (study day organizer): nominated by Simon Townley, seconded by Liz Woolley

- Liz Woolley (treasurer and membership secretary): nominated by Carol Anderson, seconded by Christopher Fance
- Simon Townley (vice chairman and acting secretary): nominated by Malcolm Graham, seconded by Carol Anderson
- Priya Atwal (committee member): nominated by Vanessa Moir, seconded by Malcolm Graham
- Malcolm Graham (committee member): nominated by Priya Atwal, seconded by Simon Townley
- Kathy Davies (committee member): nominated by Christopher Fance, seconded by Simon Townley

The committee's re-election was proposed by Nigel Swietalski and seconded by Patrick O'Connell; no objections were raised, and those listed were ***duly re-elected***.

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: Christopher Fance; ***agreed unanimously***.

OLHA's compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (a matter of report by the Chairman). The Charman 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 12.30pm, followed by a brief introduction by Catherine Murray and Dave Rushton to the afternoon's guided walks around Benson (led by Catherine, Dave, and Sue Cooper). The walks followed after lunch, attended by 35 people.

**OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS
2024/25**


RECEIPTS IN 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025	2024/25 (£)	2023/24 (£)
Subscriptions	3,967.71	3,698.85
Gift Aid claim	472.95	463.80
Donations	2,082.32	120.26
Study day fees	1041.72	560.22
Transfer COIF account to HSBC account	0.00	2,000.00
COIF interest	15.29	77.26
Totals	7,579.99	6,920.39

PAYMENTS OUT 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025	2024/25 (£)	2023/24 (£)
Subscriptions refunds	0.00	10.68
Journal printing and mailing	3,433.37	3,352.08
Postage	30.60	84.40
Donations and grants	2,000.00	3,350.00
Study days costs	899.90	1,098.37
Bank charges	64.00	64.40
Misc (incl accountant's fees; website costs; It assistance; BALH annual sub)	452.99	992.99
Transfer COIF account to HSBC account	0.00	2,000.00
Totals	6,880.86	10,952.92

BALANCE SHEET			
<u>Cash at bank on 1 April 2024 (£)</u>		<u>Cash at bank on 31 March 2025 (£)</u>	
HSBC current account	832.00	HSBC current account	1,515.84
COIF deposit fund	308.63	COIF deposit fund	323.92
plus receipts in	7,579.99	plus payments out	6,880.86
Total	8,720.62	Total	8,720.62

ACCUMULATED FUNDS (£)	
Balance at banks (HSBC & COIF) 1 April 2024	1,140.63
Receipts in	7,579.99
Payments out	6,880.86
Total accumulated	699.13
Balance at banks (HSBC & COIF) 31 March 2025	1,839.76

This statement of the receipts and payments of the Oxfordshire Local History Association for the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is in accordance with books and records of the Association and the explanations given to me.

Signed:  Date: 7 May 2025
Andrew Churchill Stone FCA DChA, Mercer Lewin, Chartered Accountants