



**The Ninety-Seventh Annual General Meeting of Oxford Preservation Trust  
will be held at the Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College, Pembroke  
Square, Oxford, OX1 1DW at 5.15p.m. on Thursday 20 June 2024**

**Tea served from 4.45 p.m.**

**Please stay for an informal drink after the AGM**

#### **AGENDA**

1. To confirm the minutes of the Ninety-sixth Annual General Meeting
2. To receive the report of the Trustees for the year 2023
3. To receive the audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023
4. Appointment of Auditors
5. Election of Trustees (see overleaf)
6. Chairman's Remarks
7. Director's Remarks
8. Questions
9. Any other Business
10. Address from Anna Keay, Director of The Landmark Trust on their recent work.

You can book your place to attend the AGM online at [www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk](http://www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk) or by emailing [info@oxfordpreservation.org.uk](mailto:info@oxfordpreservation.org.uk)

## **Item 5 – Election of Trustees to fill vacancies.**

Both **Reverend Professor William Whyte** and **Dame Helen Ghosh** have completed three year terms and are due to retire. Both have indicated their willingness to stand for re-election for a further three year term and have been duly nominated.

**William Whyte** has lived in Oxford for more than 30 years, since coming here as a student to read History at Wadham College. He is now Professor of Social and Architectural History and a fellow of St John's College. In addition to OPT, he chairs the Oxford Historical Society and the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire, and also serves as a member of the Board of Visitors to the Oxford Museum of Natural History. An Anglican priest, he is part of the team serving Wolvercote and Wytham. Beyond Oxford, he is a trustee of English Heritage and chair of the Blue Plaques Panel, and serves on the Fabric Commission of Westminster Abbey and the Heritage Committee of the British Academy. He is also senior responsible owner for the University's new Humanities Building. As a historian, his most recent books include *Unlocking the Church: the lost secrets of Victorian sacred space* (2017) and *Redbrick: a social and architectural history of Britain's civic universities* (2015). He is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and the Society of Antiquaries.

**Helen Ghosh** has lived in Oxford for 45 years, since coming here as a student to read History at St Hugh's College. After University, she joined the Civil Service and later became Permanent Secretary at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and then at the Home Office.

In 2012 she left government to become Director General of the National Trust. During her five years there, membership of the National Trust reached 5 million, visitor numbers grew dramatically and investment in conservation substantially increased. Under her leadership, the Trust's strategy focused increasingly on the natural environment and biodiversity, and on attracting more diverse audiences.

Helen is currently Master of Balliol College, lives with her family in Grandpont, and has a deep love of the city of Oxford and its surrounding countryside.

Names and addresses of any further candidates for election, who must be members, should be received by the CEO at Oxford Preservation Trust no later than 18 June 2023, accompanied by a signed notice indicating his/her willingness to serve if elected and signed by two members as proposer and seconder.

By Order of the Trustees.

Anna Eavis, CEO, Oxford Preservation Trust, 10 Turn Again Lane, Oxford, OX1 1QL

Minutes of the **NINETY-SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the Oxford Preservation Trust held at the Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College at 5:15 p.m. on Thursday 22 June 2023.

**Present:** Reverend Professor William Whyte (Chair); nine Trustees; OPT Team: Debbie Dance (Director), Stephen Dawson, Hywel Edwards, Louise Lockyer, Shona Carr, Nina Urai and Jane Hornsby and seventy-two members and invited guests.

**Apologies:** Trustee Ann Campbell and thirty-two members and invited guests.

**The Minutes of the Previous Meeting,** the Ninety-Fifth Annual General Meeting, held on Thursday 23 June 2022, were approved *nem con* and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

**Trustee's Report 2022** The Chair presented the 2022 Annual Report as previously sent to all members. There were no questions arising and the Report was approved.

**The Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021** as previously sent to all members, were presented by the Chair. There were no questions arising and the Accounts were adopted.

The Director proposed that Critchleys LLP be re-appointed as auditors and this was agreed.

**Trustees Appointments:** Two Trustees, Charles Cooper and David Streat had reached the end of their three-year terms as elected Trustees. Charles Cooper was due to retire which had created a vacancy and David Streat had expressed a desire to be appointed for a further three-year term. Mark Beard, chair of Beard Construction and former a High Sherriff of Oxfordshire was nominated and both parties were duly elected.

**Chair's Address:** William welcomed Mark Beard who was much sought after by a number of organisations so that the Trust was delighted that he had accepted their invitation. He thanked the two retiring Trustees, Ann Campbell and Charles Cooper, for their extraordinary contribution and commitment made to OPT during their tenure. Ann Campbell had brought her wealth of legal experience and wisdom and had served as chair of the Castle Committee since 2008, just two years after it opened. Charles Cooper, whose father Graham had previously served as Vice Chairman, had continued the Cooper family tradition by becoming a trustee in 1999 and serving as both Vice-Chair and Chair of the Finance & Executive Committee since 2008. Both Trustees had also been a great personal support to the Director and they would be sorely missed. He also thanked Colin Cook for his contribution during his time as the City Council appointed Trustee for over twenty years. He welcomed Cllr. Lizzie Diggins who took up this appointment in September and recognised the contribution of Carole Souter who had agreed to be co-opted for a further term, serving as chair of the Planning Committee.

William then personally thanked all his fellow Trustees, particularly for the way that they had embraced the new Committee structure which was introduced at the beginning of the year the better to serve the delivery of the Strategy *Towards the Centenary*. With the changes a number of co-opted members had stood down and he thanked Vicky McGuinness, Emily Spencer, John Cole, Tim del Nevo, Robert Mather, and James Offen for their contributions. The decision to end the Area Committees was also noted and Nigel Jones, Robert Mather, and Lucy Hughes were also thanked.

William then drew attention to Debbie Dance's announcement in January of her intention to stand down at the end of the year after twenty-five years' service. He referred to all that she had achieved and how she had transformed OPT during her time as the Director. William assured those present that there would be plenty of opportunities to mark her work in the Autumn.

Turning to OPT's supporters during the year, he thanked the William Delafield Trust for their generous grant towards our heritage projects and core costs over the past year. He thanked all those who had contributed to the Platinum Jubilee Appeal which had enabled the purchase of the Larkins Lane Field in Old Headington. The Corporate and College supporters remained strong and he drew particular attention to Carter Jonas, Critchleys, and Mathews Comfort for their support for the Annual Awards. He expressed his appreciation to members of the Centenary Circle our legacy group for those who have pledged to leave OPT a gift in their will, mentioning the legacies received during the year from The Hon Elizabeth Stamp, Mary Rees, Kate Joyce, and Mark Barrington-Ward all of whom had made a contribution to the Trust in their lifetimes. The members of the OPT patrons' group, the Betjeman Circle, were also thanked for their generous support and he noted with sadness the unexpected deaths of Sarah Martin and Heather Llewellyn. He recognised the importance of the support of all the members and volunteers, some of whom were present and also thanked John Church and the Pembroke College team for their support in hosting the AGM and making everyone so welcome. None of the work would be possible without the dedicated and talented OPT team and he thanked Debbie, and all of the team for their hard work and achievements throughout this year.

**Director's Remarks:** (illustrated with slides) Debbie Dance thanked the Chair for his comments and all the Trustees for giving their continued support to the team. The year had started off apace when the Larkins Lane Field came onto the market in January and the Appeal was launched, which was followed by an additional parcel of land at Harcourt Hill in February. Everyone was delighted when the Swing Bridge was removed from Historic England's national Heritage at Risk register with thanks to them, Network Rail, and the Railway Heritage Trust. The icing on the cake was the receiving of this year's National Railway Heritage Trust Conservation Award against stiff competition, and a major achievement for OPT as our first industrial and railway heritage project. The final works to landscape the site are now happening and will be ready for the full launch of the finished project in the run up to Oxford Open Doors, when the plaque will be unveiled by Network Rail's Chair Peter Hendy, Baron Hendy of Richmond Hill.

Debbie then moved on to talk about OPT's commitment to young people in the heritage sector. OPT has been supporting Shona Carr, who joined us fresh from her degree as Planning & Heritage Officer through the Oxford Brookes MSc Historic Conservation which she will complete in the Autumn, and we provide a small grant and internship to a student on the same course each year, and this year welcome Victoria Grane who is also assisting on the Awards Panel. Louise Lockyer has recently joined the team as our Heritage & Membership Officer after completing her Masters in Cultural Heritage Management. She joins Nina Urai who runs Oxford Open Doors and has been the instigator of some wonderful idea for attracting a younger audience. Nina is currently working with local artist Mani on a great project based on graffiti designed for 18-25 year olds, having won a hard fought place on the Heritage Open Days New Wave programme.

At Oxford Castle the café has been licensed for a year to local operator the Jericho Coffee Traders and we all hope to extend this partnership further. The Trustees have also designated £250,000 arising from the disposal of land at Barton to fund a part time Community Engagement Officer who can build on the education work at Oxford Castle and embed engagement in all OPT's work.

A happy afternoon was spent last November at Larkins Lane Field, Old Headington when Sir Philip Pullman came to plant an oak tree to mark the Queen's jubilee year, and her passing. We were delighted to be joined by local school pupils who chatted with the author and had their books signed by him. The date and time was set to coincide with the planting of the fastigate hornbeams in Sunderland Avenue which commemorate the Coronation of George VI in 1937 and feature prominent in *Northern Lights*. It is hoped to plant an oak tree on the same date in 2023 to commemorate the Coronation of Charles III somewhere prominent on one of OPT's green spaces.

The OPT awards were once again a huge success with 46 entries and where the Green Award winner, the decarbonisation of Wolfson College, was the inspiration for Shona's dissertation.

Turning to the future, the public inquiry into the Environment Agency's Compulsory Purchase Order on Hinksey Meadow arising from the proposed Flood Alleviation Scheme has been set for later in the year and OPT will do their best to see that the interests of the Trust are represented. Also in the Autumn, and in an effort to support the County Council in their improvements to Broad Street, OPT is to host a major stakeholders event to bring all the parties together to look at what might happen in the future. The temporary scheme which removed the parking is a good start and it is interesting to see how relevant landscape architect Kim Wilkie's Broad Street Plan (2004) remains so many years later.

**Questions and Any Other Business:** There were none.

**Address:** The Chair introduced Carole Souter listing her various roles including being Interim Chair of Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), Trustee of the Horniman Museum, Lay Canon of Salisbury Cathedral, and notably Trustee of OPT and Chair of our Planning Committee. It was of her role at HRP she was to speak.

HRP had become a charity in 1998 and by Royal Charter it is intended 'to manage and conserve the buildings and to help everyone learn about them', to 'stir every spirit, to inspire and provoke change'. Trustees are appointed by Government and the Crown and it looks after six properties, the Tower of London, Hampton Court, the Banqueting House Whitehall, parts of both Kensington Palace and Kew and Hillsborough Castle. Income is primarily derived from visitors and HRP took out a loan to survive Covid and visitor numbers remain down on pre-pandemic times. Carole became Chair in August 2022 in a year when the death of the Queen and the ascension and Coronation of Charles III were major events for HRP. They had risen to the challenge, and some, such as at Hillsborough where 78,000 visitors came to sign books of condolence. Hillsborough also celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Good Friday agreement recently when the PM Rishi Sunak and Bill & Hilary Clinton had also attended.

A number of events and exhibitions happen across all the properties and this year have included "Life through a Royal Lens" at Kensington Palace, the extraordinary "superbloom" in the moat of the Tower and the "Coronation Bench", a project for schools that attracted over 1,500 entries.

Looking at challenges for the future the restoration of the Rubens ceiling at the Banqueting House was singled out with the process being anticipated to take ten years.

In summary the similarities between HRP and OPT were looked at. They both respect the traditions of the country. They both have similar principles and ambitions. They are both reaching out to everyone and finally they both are facing the challenges of charity funding.

The Chair gave the vote of thanks, thanked the members for their continuing support and the meeting closed.