

**FRIENDS OF HORSPATH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023**

**Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 20th September 2023 at 7.30pm
in the Horspath Hub.**

PRESENT:	Trustees:	Sheila Frankum (Chair)	Rebecca Brown
		Ray Jackson	Sally Humphrey
		Judy Kent (Secretary)	Anna Radcliffe
	Friends of Horspath:	Daphne Tilling	Keith Brooks
		Mike Clarke	

APOLOGIES: Natalie Oakley, Janice Marshall, Gill Gray, Carol and John Cuthbert, Chris and Margaret Drew, Maureen Lowe, Peter Ewart, Sue and Derek Rowell

1.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM ON 29th SEPTEMBER 2022

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

2.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS AGM

There were no matters arising.

3.0 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Sheila Frankum thanked everybody for coming on such a dreadful night.

4.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

Sheila reported that this was the 10th anniversary of purchasing the Hub in September 2013. We had worked hard obtaining grants from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), ACRE, the Parish Council, Villagers' loans and donations. We had worked hard in the summer and submitted a sealed bid. We did not open until March 2014, so on **Saturday 9th March 2024** we shall be holding a tenth-year anniversary party.

Of course the continuation of the Post Office and Friday Coffee Morning were our most important events. More from Anna and Judy later.

The classes and clubs had been running throughout the year. The Hub had been busy providing a venue for many different village events and classes. More from Sally later.

We had been very glad to welcome Kate Hart back to the Hub who had been our Age UK representative for the Film Club and the monthly Friday Information and Advice point at the café. Thanks to Kate for continuing to promote us as a hub for them.

We had had two markets in the past year: a Christmas Market and a Spring Market. Both were very successful community events with a pleasing, friendly atmosphere, and very useful fundraisers.

The Scarecrow Trail last October was another popular event and raised much needed funds. It was thanks to Natalie that this was organised, so please support it this year. We shared the proceeds with the church. This year the theme was Occupations.

The Apple Day last September, which was very much a last-minute idea, went very well. Thanks must go to our supporters and helpers. It was surprising how many men enjoyed apple pressing. We were very grateful to Chris Drew who set up the machine and was an expert by the end of the day.

The Village Calendar last year was a fund raiser for the church, and this year it was our turn. It had proved to be very popular with everyone in the village and beyond. A big thank you to John Underdown, who organised the Horspath Calendar each year and getting sponsors on board.

We organised refreshments in the Hub after last year's Remembrance Service and we will do the same this year on Saturday 11th November.

We had Christmas wreath-making in the week before Christmas which was always over-subscribed.

In December, the Village Magazine was launched. John Underdown had been extremely busy organising this with fellow editors Anna Radcliffe and Brian Lowe. It was not a fund raiser but was sponsored by Stone Pit. Everyone in the village should know what was going on.

We had a Coronation Tea in May which was a very good community event. Thanks to Anna Radcliffe's organisation and sponsorship from the Stone Pit charity, we had an afternoon of bonhomie. The Hub was open all weekend with an exhibition showing the King's interest in the environment.

In June, we hosted a very successful talk by Mensun Bound about the discovery of Shackleton's ship in the South Atlantic. It was a very entertaining and enlightening evening, and we were very grateful to Joanna and Mensun for helping to raise money for the Hub.

Ray was going to tell us about the garden initiative. At last this year, we were beginning to get it into shape.

A very big thank you to Geoff Roynon who had undertaken to organise our website during the last two years. We were very grateful to him as it was an essential part of us being able to run as smoothly as possible.

It had been a sad year because we had lost some very long-term Friends of Horspath:

Nesta Long	George Bown	Esme Shorter
Lettuce Bowen	Mary Biggs	Terry Turner
Edgar Litt	John Gray	Mrs Merrilees

Sheila was also very sad to report the loss of Lawrence Brown having lost his fight with ill health after such a brave battle. He was a trustee and worked so hard to help in the process of purchasing this building and then being chairman for many years, keeping us on our toes and making sure that we were running efficiently. In his name and the others, we would keep the Hub going for as long as the village wanted the facility for their use.

Thank you to all the trustees for their hard work. Sally organised classes, Anna the coffee mornings and markets, Judy did the minutes, Post Office and gift aid, and Natalie was a great fund-raiser. Ray Jackson was the Chair as well as dealing with the maintenance of the building. The Hub could not run without all or their efforts.

5.0 FINANCIAL STATEMENT **(Appendix 1)**

5.1 Statement of Financial Activities

Income from donations and legacies was £23,581. This will look a lot less next year because SODC had lent us £100,000, which we did not have to pay back if the Hub ran for ten years. It had come down by £10,000 each year and would only have had to have been repaid if the Hub had been sold within the first ten years. £6,071 was from the Stone Pit charity. Expenses were £17,031 and our total income was £12,621.

5.2 Balance Sheet at 31 May 2023

Our tangible assets of £315,637 were this building. Loans still to be paid off amounted to £71,058. Our net assets were £261,141.

5.3 Incoming Resources

Grants of £14,664, £10,000 of which was from SODC. Next year, grants would be £4,664 because the terms of the SODC loan would have ended. Donations amounted to £5,216, including coffee mornings, where we made an average of £50 a week. This figure included Mensun Bound's talk, Asda, and the Scarecrow Trail. Income from the hire of the Hall was £6,071.

In total, our income was £29,652.

5.4 Expenses

Last year, we were paying for the printing of our bi-annual Newsletter, but from December last year, we had supported John Underdown with the expenses for the Village Magazine. Water rates were going down. Last year, we had employed a

cleaning company for a deep clean following Covid. Now we had a cleaning lady, which had cut costs. We spent £8,780 on property maintenance, and £950 on professional fees for our accountant. £640 was spent on insurance and we subscribed to a community magazine costing £70 a year.

Our expenses totalled £17,031.

5.5 Summary

Hire of the hall was more than last year, and fund-raising was slightly less.

It was voted to approve the Financial Statement, and Sheila was to email Kelvin Barnes, our accountant.

6.0 OUTSTANDING LOANS

Sheila reported that we had a problem in that there was still £70,000 of loans to pay off. We could pay off £10,000 of that quite quickly. Daphne Tilling asked how we proposed to pay off the £60,000 loan. Sheila said we were trying to solve the problem using solicitors and the Stone Pit charity. Because this was a debt, it was causing a bit more of a problem, but we were talking to our solicitor.

7.0 CLASSES, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

7.1 Weekly and Monthly Activity Charts

Sally Humphrey reported that the usual activities were ever popular: Table Tennis, Yoga, Pilates, Line Dancing, Art, Making Time, the Senior Residents' Club, the Film Club, and the Wine Club. Up-to-date Weekly and Monthly Activities were now on the website.

7.2 The Creative Writing Group

The Group was doing well with two new members. They met about once a month, usually on Thursdays from 4.00pm-5.30pm. It was usually about £2.00 per session.

7.3 The Sculpture Group

John Underdown ran this group on Thursdays from 6.00-8.00pm. It was £50.00 for six sessions with all materials being provided. Participants could make whatever they wanted. He only had five people but needed eight. Sally asked that if anybody was interested, please contact her or John.

Anna suggested that John could exhibit pictures of work already done in the Hub. Sheila added that he would develop people's creativity very well.

7.4 Computer Doctor

Sally said this was a free, drop-in service run by John Underdown. It was every fortnight, the next one being on Wednesday 4th October through to 24th February 2024 from 12.00-1.00pm. John was offering one-to-one tuition on people's personal laptop, tablet or mobile 'phone, which they would have to bring with them. If numbers fell, and if trustees thought it was beneficial, the Hub would make up the shortfall.

7.5 Making Time

The Stone Pit charity paid for the hire of the Hall for Making Time and now offered free transport for people who could not get to the Hub on their own. Among the activities were knitting, crochet, glass painting, painting, quilling, lacemaking and embroidery. They used acrylic paint and then it was lacquered. Tea and cake were served.

7.6 Art Matters

This was a very small group for people with learning difficulties which took place fortnightly on Tuesdays from 1.00-2.00pm. The hall hire was paid for by the Stone Pit charity.

7.7 Seated Wellness

Students paid £7.00 a class in blocks of six sessions at a time. The tutor and Neil, our taxi driver, were paid and the trustees paid the shortfall. It was a lively group and people felt invigorated after every class.

7.8 Babies First

The trustees paid for the hire of the hall. It helped new mothers or fathers with their babies up to one year old. There was no charge, but donations were welcomed.

8.0 FUTURE EVENTS

8.1 Apple Pressing Day

This was to be on Saturday 30th September with refreshments and a raffle. It was a fun day last year.

8.2 Scarecrow Trail

This was to be held from 22nd–29th October and the theme this year was Occupations.

8.3 Horspath Calendar

The calendars would be on sale at the Hub on Friday mornings.

8.4 Christmas Market

Anna said this was to be on Saturday 2nd December from 10.00am-12.30pm and we had a range of stalls. People like Daphne and Judy ran the cake stall and made a great deal of money. Leo Richardson and Jackie Franklin ran the raffle stall. There were too many stalls for the inside of the Hub, so we had gazebos in the garden. Joanne from the Nursery brought rabbits and small animals. Hopefully there was to be a Father Christmas although Anna had not asked him yet.

8.5 Talk

Brian Lowe had offered to give a talk on the History of Oxford, hopefully in November.

8.6 Tenth Anniversary Celebration

Sheila said that, as far as possible, we wanted to invite all the people who had helped. It would be also partly a remembrance of those who had helped and passed away over the past ten years. Tribute was to be made to Lawrence Brown who was a driving force behind the Hub from the beginning and chaired meetings for many years.

9.0 MAINTENANCE

Ray reported that the building was in good shape. Some painting was to be done at the end of October. The boiler had broken down and our plumber had repaired it. The pump had run dry. He bought another pump but was keeping it in his garage so that we could change it if necessary.

9.1 Car Park

Ray said that some people did not like the car park; it was either too small or too big and they were not happy with the finish. He said that it had compacted down now.

9.2 Garden

The next stage was the garden. We had bought the materials for the fencing and for a raised bed with a grant from the Stone Pit charity. The work was to be done on 9th October. The raised bed would divide the garden from the car park. We needed help from people to maintain the garden. Jo Milton had offered to help maintain the garden. The pile of earth by the shed was to go into the raised bed. Daphne Tilling and John Underdown had offered to create a rockery. Everything else had been done.

Sheila thanked Daphne for planting the tubs.

Sheila said that the last couple of times Rob Gray had tried to cut the grass, the village lawnmower had developed flat tyres, so he wasn't able to do it. Also, there was a party here and the husband had strimmed the nettles across the path. Nigel, who borrowed our tables for the Village Show, also did some strimming.

9.3 The Gate

Ray said somebody had bent the gate. Sheila said it was in hand, but the gate had to be taken off for it to be repaired.

10.0 COFFEE MORNINGS AND MARKETS

10.1 Coffee Mornings

Anna reported that this had become established as a weekly event and a hugely enjoyable event. We never closed! So there was no forgetting on which Friday we operated. But it could not happen without the wonderful volunteers: the cooks who always arrived with wonderful homemade cakes, the men who set out the tables and chairs and the people who supported Judy, our Post Mistress, to enable her to feel safe whilst doing her job. And perhaps the one person who had changed the face of Friday morning, Neil. Without him, several people would never get there for coffee and I know that they all immensely appreciated it.

Our coffee was first class, and the cakes were, of course, amazing. Our prices were very competitive with the local cafes.

We held two charity mornings a year, MacMillan Cancer Relief and Children in Need.

Over the last ten years, people had evolved at the Coffee Morning. Sadly some had died or become ill, but new people joined us. Every week friends were made, and lives were made a little bit lighter. We shall definitely celebrate ten years of the Coffee Mornings in March.

10.2 The Hub Markets

Anna said we had two markets a year; one to coincide with the growing season in spring, and our ever popular Christmas Market, with Father Christmas of course, in December. It was a community event, and a happy place. The Hub ran the Raffle, the Cake Stall and the refreshments. Otherwise, stall holders made their own money. They paid a small fee on their stalls. We did make some money which was much needed, but the real aim was to hold a community event.

10.3 Chair's Comments

Sheila said the Coffee Mornings were a mainstay of the Hub and enabled the Post Office to run. She said that we were very grateful for all that you did Anna.

Sheila said we ought to hold another afternoon tea for all the volunteers.

ACTION: Afternoon tea for all the volunteers to be arranged for next summer.

11.0 POST OFFICE REPORT

Judy reported that the total foot fall for the Post Office from 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023 was 888, an increase of 129 on the previous year. This was despite a number of equipment failures in December. It was very gratifying to know how much customers appreciated our Post Office.

There had been a change in procedures for sending parcels abroad, in that Judy had to put in a lot more information, so sending a parcel took a lot longer. Also, a tarik code from the ANP website had to be provided by the customer for any parcels going to Eire. This was all related to Brexit.

On 2nd October 2023, first class stamps were to go up from £1.10 to £1.25, and large first class stamps from £1.45 to £1.75. However, the cost of all other stamps was to remain the same.

The government was planning to remove DVLA custom from the Post Office in April 2024. Although this did not directly affect Horspath Post Office, it would have a very negative effect on Post Offices. Many would struggle to survive. If Great Milton Post Office closed, Horspath Post Office closed. It meant that any interaction with DVLA would have to be done online, which did not suit a lot of people. It was thought that this was the beginning of the end for Post Offices. Judy had a petition available for people to sign if they had not already done so.

There was some very good news. Judy's manager, Christine Donnelly at Great Milton, had told her that if ever she had to give up the Post Office, Christine would do it. This was a great relief to Judy and all the other trustees. However, Judy really enjoyed the job and intended to carry on for as long as possible.

12.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

13.0 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

There were no questions.

14.0 DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Rebecca suggested an earlier time and possibly a short talk to make the AGM more interesting.

Wednesday 25th September 2024