



Registered Charity No. 1170517 [www.headingtonaction.org](http://www.headingtonaction.org)  
[headingtonaction@gmail.com](mailto:headingtonaction@gmail.com)

**Minutes of Committee Meeting held on  
 28 January 2026 at 7.00pm  
 in room JHB201, Oxford Brookes University**

**Present: 16**

Heather Armitage	Friends of Lye valley
Elsa Bell	<b>HONORARY SECRETARY, DEPUTY CHAIR &amp; TRUSTEE</b>
Rosemary Belton	Friends of Bury Knowle Park (FoBKP) <b>TRUSTEE</b>
Patrick Coulter	Headington Neighbourhood Forum (HNF)
Priscilla Goldby	Market coordinator
Liz Grosvenor	<b>ADMINISTRATOR</b>

1.	<p><b>Nail Holdstock in the Chair</b></p> <p><b>The Chair</b> welcomed all to the meeting and participants introduced themselves.</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> as above.</p>	Action
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Neil Holdstock	<b>STRATEGIC FINANCE OFFICER &amp; CHAIR</b>
Sheila Hurst	New Headington Residents' Association (NHRA)
Sumukh Kaul	Headington Neighborhood Forum
Fiona McKenzie	Treasurer
Jane Moore	Connected Communities Lead (CC)
Cllr Glynis Phillips	County (Barton, Sandhills & Risinghurst) <b>TRUSTEE</b>
Cllr Chris Smowton	City (Headington)
Howard Stanbury	Friends of Old Headington (FOOH)
Emma Trundle	Oxford Brookes University
Lesley Williams	Headington Schools Partnership

**Apologies: 7**

Richard Bradley	Independent member
Cllr Liz Brighthouse	County (Churchill & Lye Valley)
Viv Miles	Trustee
Chris Mills	Friends of Headington Quarry (FOQ)
Sonja Roffey	Mileway Gardens RA
Cllr Roz Smith	City (Quarry & Risinghurst) County (Headington & Quarry)
Peter West	OBAG Headington

2.	<p><b>Minutes of last Committee Meeting 26 November and Executive Meeting 22 December</b></p> <p>Correction to Committee Meeting Minutes: Page 2, item 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money not "received"</li> </ul> <p><i>RBe advised that CIL money in the sum of £15K had been allocated so that we can now light the street trees and the Christmas Tree.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FM had sent a clarification prior to this meeting to say that the £3k mentioned in the Minutes had been the case since September. The higher balance in the accounts show funds received in advance for the 2026 Festival.</li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>The minutes were then agreed.</b></p> <p><b>Matters arising:</b> none</p>	

4.	<p><b>Rotating Chair update – 2026</b></p> <p>GP and SK are in the process of finalising the process for recruiting new people. They have had an informal discussion with a potential new Chair and this will be taken forward to our next Exec. Meeting.</p> <p><b>We also need to recruit a new Treasurer by the AGM and we urge members to let us know if they have any possibilities in their respective groups.</b></p>	ALL
5.	<p><b>Winter Lights event</b></p> <p>The Christmas lights switch-on went very well. Thanks were extended to all involved particularly the Round Table for providing the Tree as well as a donation, funds from the Councillors, help from the Brookes students etc. and to the choir that formed at short notice. The whole event cost c.£1,500 and was covered by donations.</p> <p>We are aware that this year there will be fewer food donations from the supermarkets; Waitrose will not have a budget but we will apply to take part in their green token scheme. FM will register us and the resulting funds will be split between the Christmas event and the Festival.</p> <p>RBe pointed out that we need new sources of funding to keep the tree lights on in the natural trees as these costs have spiraled to £15K because of the requirement to take them down and re-install annually. Hitherto we have relied on CIL funds for maintenance etc., but not to the amount we required this year. Doubts were expressed that it would be legitimate to apply for full funding in future years</p> <p>NH is in consultation with the Council over these escalating costs. A sub group to monitor the lighting issue has been formed and comprises PC, RBe &amp; NH.</p> <p><b>Questions were raised as to why a lighting project like this is down to a volunteer organization with limited funds, rather than</b></p>	<p>FM</p> <p>PC/RBe/NH</p>
	<p><b>the Council and that this should be pursued with the relevant bodies.</b></p>	CLLrs

6.	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p>FM will circulate a 2026 draft budget to the Executive, for consideration of future expenditure, so that it can be discussed at the next Exec. Meeting.</p> <p>Final figures to 31 December 2025 had been circulated to the Executive. They need to be agreed and statutory accounts signed off by September.</p> <p>The draft annual accounts for 2025 and the budget for 2026 goes to the AGM in March following scrutiny by the Exec.</p>	<b>FM</b>
7.	<p><b>HA Projects/activities updates</b></p> <p><b>Festival 2026 – 30/31 May (RS)</b> Roz sent a note as she was unable to attend the meeting.</p> <p><u>Headington Festival Organising Group 2026 - brief update to HA</u> Shannon, Keith and I met up just after the Christmas break. Keith has already secured some grant monies towards the festival costs. The first meeting of the organising group will be Tuesday, 3rd Feb. We are looking for a few more people to help, please give me a call if interested.</p> <p>We have subsequently heard that the Scouts have agreed to do the litterpicking.</p> <p><b>Connecting Communities (JM)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Directory is currently being re-printed and some categories have been changed to add "Opportunities to Volunteer" and "Nature Conservation".</li> <li>• There will be a Community Activity week advertising the various activities going on – this will be in either July or September.</li> <li>• A suggestion was made that this be advertised to the Residents' Associations represented here.</li> <li>• Gertie and the street contacts are working well.</li> <li>• JM and SK have agreed to work together to exhibit what HA does more widely. This can be a stall with eye-catching banners together with utilising social media.</li> </ul> <p><b>Market: (PG)</b></p> <p>The transfer of monies from the Market Manager has now taken place.</p> <p>The issue of parking charges is ongoing – the council are demanding c.£9k and an application for CIL money has been submitted for our approval.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>JM/SK</b></p>

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	<p>There are 4 areas required for market traders' parking comprising three bays in Kennet Road, two separate bays on London Road, and one in New High Street.</p> <p>CS advised that the high cost is generated by the number of hours of legal work required.</p> <p>PC pointed out that this exercise should have been incorporated into the reorganisation of central parking (OXFORD, HEADINGTON CENTRAL CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE AND WAITING RESTRICTIONS – Order 20). We understand that a decision will not be part of the Traffic Regulation order.</p> <p><b>It seems unfair that we have to pay for this out of our funds for what is a community project. We are paying for a consultation, and it could still get refused.</b></p> <p>Continuing with the current temporary solution will cost us c.3k per year (since doubling of cost at start of 2025). This has been paid up to end of May 2025, but we have not been invoiced since negotiations started with the parking team. If the permanent solution (a one-off payment) is approved and eventually put in place, the parking team have stated that we would be given a 50% discount on what we owe for the interim.</p> <p>The Chair summarised the following message from RBr who was unable to attend tonight.</p> <p><i>Of course, the market is very important as a community resource and we must do whatever we can to keep it operating. But I have two reservations. First, whether this is best use of CIL funds. Second, my view is that the market should be self-sufficient financially, supported by occasional HA funds if necessary for special projects. I recognise the dilemma and I don't want to vote against this application. Can our councillors (of which there are many) do anything to resolve this? Please put my concerns to the meeting. I am content for the attendees to decide.</i></p> <p>PC commented: The annoying aspect of this is that there is plenty of CIL money available (believed to be c.£80K) and our application is a good use of their money. As this is an extraordinary expense for the market to pay we feel we are fully justified in submitting this application.</p> <p><b>We agreed unanimously to approve the application with the amendment – there was one abstention.</b></p> <p>CS pointed out that this sort of problem would be able to be overcome if we had a community council as we would be in charge of the CIL monies for our area. The process for making CIL applications will be discussed at our next Exec meeting.</p>	<p><b>CLLrs</b></p> <p><b>CLLrs</b></p> <p><b>EXEC</b></p>
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**Greening (RBe)**

	<p>RBe called for people to identify patches of green to plant spring flowers for next year, by taking pictures, identifying the place and submitting to us.</p> <p>HAr warned that the council are liable to trim these areas and destroy the planting, but the Council are now erecting "NO MOW" signs (as seen in Norton Close)</p>	<b>ALL</b>
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<p>8.</p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>As reported in the last Minutes:  <i>Plans have been submitted by Ruskin College to build 130 dwellings on adjacent land which would fund the updating of the college itself. FOOH have always been opposed to any plans for Ruskin Fields as it is an important green area, and HA constitutionally has to remain neutral as we represent many organisations with differing views. It was generally thought that it would have an adverse impact on the local area, particularly with access onto the ring road and Foxwell Drive. Consultations are taking place, but these plans do not appear in any of the Local Plans. It is understood that the plans include 40% social housing.</i></p> <p>Ruskin Fields has been allocated as a potential development site in the Local Plan. This is a change to the current status in previous plans and the draft</p> <p>HS advised that since the 1930's numerous planning applications have been refused for these three fields. FOOH wish to reverse the allocation of development currently in the 2026 Local Plan before the 2045 Plan is agreed. FOOH is a charity with a stated objective - to preserve the conservation area.</p> <p>A meeting is being held on <b>February 11 at 8pm in the village hall</b> to discuss the making of a representation under Regulation 19 so that FOOH can make a submission that others can endorse.</p> <p>With other developments nearby it is even more important to preserve this open space as we all benefit.</p> <p>The question arises as to whether HA should mount a watch over conservation areas, and the Headington Neighbourhood Plan, which HA has formally endorsed, does stress conservation and biodiversity, as do BBOWT.</p> <p>Headington Action, as an umbrella organization, should probably distribute planning applications to the local RA reps so that they can respond individually. We could invite BBOWT to give us a talk.</p> <p>HAr spoke about the Lye Valley endangered flora. A summary of her report is <b>attached</b>.</p> <p>She also reported that the footpath that eventually leads to the Churchill car park is now a bog. The Council refuse to look after it – it needs 73m of boardwalk to make it traversable.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>EXEC</b></p>
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CS kindly supplied a summary of what is going on locally:

- **Local Plan 2045:** a Ruskin Fields site allocation (i.e., spanning to the ring road, not just the area nearer the College) is in the Local Plan draft, which has just gone out for final (Regulation 19) consultation. This can be found at <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/oxford-local-plan-2045/local-plan2045-proposed-submission>
- **Elections 2026:** Government asked councils whether they felt they had "capacity constraints" that could be eased by postponing the May 2026 local elections in view of upcoming local government reorganisation. It then postponed wherever Councils responded in the affirmative. In Oxford, we obtained a special meeting to debate the matter. A clear majority of councillors spoke in favour of elections proceeding, and the Leader of the Council ultimately wrote requesting that they do indeed go ahead as planned.
- **Post Office:** we continue to monitor as Post Office HQ processes applications from two prospective applicants to replace the nowclosed Co-Op Post Office branch. Their applications must show appropriate secure storage and an acceptable physical arrangement of a Post Office service counter among other requirements. We will continue to ask them to proceed with all haste, and lobby businesses to apply in case that these applicants withdraw or are refused.
- At the meeting it was also announced that renewal of the play area in BKP is planned, with possible improvements of the path from Courtside to the Library.
- PC pointed out that the pathway inside the wall on the surgery side of BKP also needs attention
- A wildflower application for Rock Edge has been approved • These are the Local Government Reorganisation choices:  
**one** large unitary authority (proposed by Oxfordshire County Council) **two** authorities – The Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Council merging with West Berkshire Council to form "Ridgeway council": the other linking Oxford City with Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Councils **three** authorities – one for the north of the county, one for the south and a Greater Oxford authority in the middle (proposed by Oxford City Council). These have been submitted for government consultation and a decision is expected in July.
- Chris Mills was unable to attend today but let us know that the FOQ are putting on entertainment on **21 February from 6.30 to 10.00pm**

9.	<b>DONM</b> <b>25 March AGM and meeting in Exec Suite at Oxford Brookes at 7pm</b>	
10.	The meeting closed at 8.30pm	

LG 2/2/25