

PRESENT: Sir Tim Stevenson (President, in the Chair); Peter Thompson, Richard Venables (Vice Presidents); Ian Green (OCS Chairman); Gillian Coates (Vice Chair); Richard Dodd (Hon Treasurer); Chris Church, Liz Grosvenor, Penelope Lenon, Thelma Martin, Ian Salusbury, Louise Thomas (trustees); and a further 88 members.

1 President's Opening Remarks

Welcoming everyone to the Society's 57th Annual General Meeting, the President started by thanking Worcester College for generously providing the venue without charge.

The main change for the Society was Ian Green's standing down at this meeting after nine years in the chair; the President was delighted that Ian Salusbury had stepped forward to succeed him. To reduce the burden of the role, it was proposed that four Vice Chairs be appointed to support him. These and other changes to the Constitution would be put to the vote at this meeting.

To keep the meeting concise, material already shared with members (the Agenda, Chairman's Report, the Minutes of the 2025 AGM and the Accounts for the year to 31 December 2025) would be taken as read, but key information would be displayed on screen during the meeting. The adoption of the reports would be moved formally; any questions would be welcomed before votes were taken.

2 Apologies for absence

Vernon Porter (Hon Secretary), Nigel Fulford (trustee), Katariina Kottonen, Barnaby Lenon

3 Minutes of the AGM held on 2 April 2025

No questions were raised. The motion to accept the Minutes as an accurate record of the 2025 AGM was proposed by Thelma Martin and carried unopposed.

4 There were no **Matters arising** from the Minutes.

5 Annual Report

The outgoing Chairman highlighted elements of the report included within the Annual Review. With reference to the "Unhappy Bedfellows" title, he drew particular attention to the tensions between the government's growth targets for Oxford (notably with regard to housing) and the shortage of physical resources available to meet them, notwithstanding proposals for planning reform and a review of the Green Belt. The Oxford Growth Commission, whose chair would be speaking after the AGM, had been introduced to accelerate progress.

However, the planned reorganisation of local government from the current two-tier model to unitary authorities seemed likely to complicate matters as the district councils currently

responsible for housing would be abolished. And beyond that reorganisation lay devolution, which would see a Thames Valley authority assume responsibility for strategic planning of housing, transport and other such issues over a very wide area. In the meantime, the establishment of an Oxford Development Corporation was recently announced, and it remains unclear how these different bodies will work together.

Looking back over his time in post, he noted the challenges brought by the Covid pandemic which had changed the way in which everyone worked, including the various OCS groups who now meet online as well as face-to-face. He hoped this flexibility might encourage more volunteers to join the groups, where new members were always welcome.

Those nine years had confirmed his view that effective advice and support for development planning depend on early, inclusive engagement, clear evidence and persistence. Outcomes are improved by constructive dialogue between communities, planners, developers and politicians. Transparency builds trust, while local knowledge strengthens policy and design quality. Well-argued civic input can influence complex processes, but only when matched with realism, compromise and the long-term stewardship of place, rather than short-term gains.

He was also clear that OCS's main strength was its members; he wished his successor and the Society every success for the future.

No questions were raised. The motion to accept the Report was proposed by Liz Grosvenor and carried unopposed.

6 2025 Annual accounts

No questions were raised. The motion to accept the Report and Accounts was proposed by Ian Green and carried unopposed.

7 Votes of thanks

The President acknowledged the Society's debt of gratitude to one of its founding fathers, Professor James Stevens Curl, who died in 2025. An appreciation of his contribution as the first OCS Chairman was published in the March edition of *Visions*.

Thanks were also due to three departing trustees:

- After five years, Sara Hendricks stepped down in August when she returned to Australia.
- Penelope Lenon has supported the Hon Secretary for the past six years as well as contributing to the work of the Communications Group. Her minute-taking has been a masterclass in clarity and precision.
- Vernon Porter became a trustee and the Society's Hon Secretary in 2007. His service to OCS over 19 years has been exemplary, not least his being the keeper of the Society's institutional memory. He and his encyclopaedic knowledge will be greatly missed. Anyone interested in succeeding him as Hon Secretary should contact the new Chair.

Further thanks are due to three stalwarts of OxClean who are also stepping down. Anyone who might be interested in succeeding them should contact Gillian Coates:

- Rosanne Bostock was instrumental in establishing OxClean 19 years ago, and has been a forceful advocate for litter-picking across the city ever since.
- Liz Grosvenor and Ingrid Lunt have managed the essential equipment depots for the Spring Clean in Headington and North Oxford respectively for many years.

	<p>The President further thanked all those on the Executive Committee and members of the working groups: the Society was lucky to have both experience and expertise in depth.</p> <p>Last but not least, the President paid tribute to <u>Ian Green</u> for his work in pursuit of the Society's aims and objectives – making contacts, keeping track of events, persuading not crusading. The wide-ranging role he had assumed was such that a redefinition of the whole management structure had been needed in order to find a successor for him. OCS was fortunate that he had agreed to continue working with the Society on his specialist area, strategic planning issues.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Changes to the Society's Constitution</p> <p>The departure of Ian Green had prompted reconsideration of the way in which the Society is run and a redefinition of the leadership structure. Redrafting the Constitution to reflect that had provided an opportunity to update certain other elements. Accordingly, members were asked to vote on a number of changes to the Constitution which had been advertised in advance of the meeting on 6 March and posted on the website, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscription rates • An increase in the number of Vice Chairs from one to four • The minimum number of Executive Committee members • Recognition that the 2011 Charities Act was the governing legislation • Methods of communication with the membership to include e-mail <p>Acceptance was proposed by Ian Salusbury and carried unopposed.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Appointment of Vice President</p> <p>The Executive Committee had recommended that Ian Green be appointed a Vice President in recognition of his contribution and continuing role. The motion was proposed by Louise Thomas, seconded by Gillian Coates and passed unopposed.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Election of Officers for 2026-27</p> <p>The officers of the Society (Ian Salusbury – Chairman; Gillian Coates, Chris Church, Nigel Fulford and Louise Thomas – Vice Chairs; Richard Dodd – Hon Treasurer) were elected unopposed. The duties of the Hon Secretary would be shared until a successor to Vernon Porter was identified.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Election of Committee for 2026-27</p> <p>Two Executive Committee members (Liz Grosvenor, Thelma Martin) were re-elected as trustees unopposed. Craig Cullimore, chair of ADP Architecture and a valued member of the Planning Group, was also elected unopposed.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>No Other Business having been raised, the President thanked all those present for attending before closing the meeting at 8.03pm.</p>