

**Minutes of the one hundred and eighth meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 21 May 2026
by videoconference**

PRESENT Phil Wadey (chairman)
Stuart Bain (vice-chairman)
James Lean (treasurer)
Andrew Packman
Tara-Jane Sutcliffe

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

APOLOGIES Chris Beney, John Hall

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

85/26 There were no declarations of interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

86/26 The trustees noted with sadness the death of Peter Kidner, our local correspondent in South Somerset from 2007 to 2024, whose legal case *Herrick v Kidner* made a significant difference to rights-of-way law.

87/26 The trustees noted that the Government Legal Department had conceded on case 26-01, in which the Ramblers was leading and for which we had pledged funding.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 24 MARCH 2026

88/26 The minutes of the meeting on 24 March 2026 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 30 MARCH REGARDING LEGAL CASE 26-01

89/26 The minutes of the meeting on 30 March, regarding legal case 26-01, were approved.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 30 APRIL REGARDING LEGAL CASE 26-04

90/26 The minutes of the meeting on 30 April, regarding legal case 26-04, were approved.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 28 MARCH 2026

91/26 The minutes of the legal committee meeting on 28 March 2026, regarding legal case 26-01, were noted.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 26 APRIL 2026

- 92/26 The minutes of the legal committee on 26 April 2026, legal case 26-04, were noted.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 7 MAY 2026

- 93/26 The minutes of the legal committee meeting on 7 May 2026, regarding delegated legal expenditure, were noted.

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE ON 8 MAY 2026

- 94/26 The minutes of the finance committee on 8 May 2026, regarding delegated legal expenditure, were noted.

PROPOSAL FOR DELEGATED LEGAL EXPENDITURE

- 95/26 The trustees approved the recommendations of the legal committee and the finance committee to increase the delegated legal expenditure for the general secretary from £2,000 to £3,000, and for the legal committee from £4,000 to £6,000 (or £3,000 if the general secretary had already exercised her delegated authority).

DELEGATED EXPENDITURE

- 96/26 It was noted that the general secretary had approved £2,000 for counsel's opinion on case 26-02, and £480 to a local correspondent for legal advice in connection with HS2. Both had previously been reported by email.
- 97/26 The general secretary reported that we had been charged VAT on top of the £2,000 for case 26-02, and the trustees approved the extra £400.
- 98/26 The general secretary had also approved £350 for office equipment.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Minutes of finance committee meeting on 28 April 2026

- 99/26 These were noted.

Accounts for 2025 and letter of representation

- 100/26 The treasurer presented the accounts for 2025, which had been independently audited. He said that we could be proud of the outturn, and that we had a strong balance sheet. The accounts were approved subject to confirmation that they complied with the latest edition of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- 101/26 It was agreed to sign the letter of representation.

Management accounts to end March 2026 and investment report

- 102/26 These were noted. The treasurer reported that after the end of the quarter we had received two legacies, of £50,000 and £20,000, and a £50,000 donation from the Nancy Bateman Charitable Trust.
- 103/26 The investment report was noted. The trustees thanked the treasurer for the considerable work involved in dealing with the investments.

Financial policies and procedures

- 104/26 The latest version was approved, and updated to include the delegated expenditure on the legal fund agreed at minute 95/26

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2 JULY 2026

Annual report

- 105/26 The annual report for 2025 was approved without dissent.

Note on criteria for members' contributions after the AGM

- 106/26 The trustees discussed the paper from the chairman setting out the criteria for members' contributions in the afternoon, following the AGM and approved the following policy: 'THAT when members are offered the opportunity to make presentations following the formal business of the AGM, the subject matter of the talks must fall within topics covered by the charitable aims of the society. The General Secretary and AGM chairman may prevent speakers who seek to operate outside this restriction'.

STRATEGIC PLAN

- 107/26 It was agreed that we should consult members on this later in the year, perhaps with an online questionnaire and an opportunity to send written comments.

UPDATE ON TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

- 108/26 It was noted with pleasure that we had received 22 applications following our advertisements, and the recruitment group was sifting them prior to shortlisting.

REVIEW OF MEETING

- 109/26 The trustees were content with the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 110/26 Thursday 18 June at 18.00.
The meeting ended at 18.44.

Meeting dates for 2026

Thursday 2 July AGM

Thursday 6 August

Thursday 10 September*

Thursday 8 October

Tuesday 3 November

Thursday 10 December*

* Quarterly meetings

Other meetings

Members' day, Dorchester on Thames, Saturday 19 September.

Local correspondents' event: Bromsgrove, Tuesday 29- Wednesday 30 September.

Strategic-plan awayday: Henley-on-Thames, Tuesday 24 November



Phil Wadey

Chair of Trustees

