Open Spaces Society

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Minutes of the one hundred and eleventh meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Open Spaces Society held at 18.25 on Thursday 3 September 2026 by videoconference

PRESENT	Stuart Bain (chair) Richard Clarke Emma Kate Cooney John Hall Rick Hebditch James Lean (treasurer) Andrew Packman (vice-chair) Tara-Jane Sutcliffe Phil Wadey
IN ATTENDANCE	Georgia Souter (associate trustee) Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

WELCOME

180/26 The chairman welcomed Emma Kate Cooney and Rick Hebditch as new trustees, and Georgia Souter as associate trustee.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

181/26 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 6 AUGUST 2026

182/26 The minutes of the meeting on 6 August 2026 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

MINUTES OF TRUSTEE DECISION ON 14 AUGUST 2026

183/26 The minutes of the decision regarding legal case 26-06 were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

184/26 It was noted with regret that Jess Tyler, our case officer (enforcement) was leaving after three years. The trustees thanked her for her service.

DELEGATED EXPENDITURE

185/26 It was noted that the general secretary had approved £3,000 for counsel's opinion and a pre-action protocol letter on legal case 26-09.

LEGAL CASE 26-07

186/26 The trustees approved further expenditure of £400 for solicitor's correspondence on this case, being one third of the total cost which was shared with two other organisations.

COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

187/26 Memberships were agreed as follows.

General purposes committee: Stuart Bain (chair), James Lean, Andrew Packman.

Finance committee: James Lean (chair), Stuart Bain, Rick Hebditch, Tara-Jane Sutcliffe.

Legal committee: Phil Wadey (chair), Stuart Bain, John Hall, Andrew Packman. Observers: Richard Clarke, Emma Kate Cooney, Georgia Souter.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) working party: Rick Hebditch, James Lean, Georgia Souter, Tara-Jane Sutcliffe, Kate Ashbrook (the working party to appoint its chair).

Eversley Award working party: John Hall, Kate Ashbrook.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

188/26 The confidentiality agreement for associate trustees was noted.

FINANCE

Preparation of budget 2027: items of significant expenditure

189/26 The chair explained that this was a standard item for this meeting. It was noted that with the strategic plan review coming up, ideas might emerge later. The chair encouraged trustees to submit proposals for expenditure if they wished.

Topic for autumn appeal

190/26 It was agreed to make the legal-action fund the topic for the autumn appeal.

TRUSTEE SUCCESSION

191/26 It was noted that at next year's AGM Stuart Bain would stand down but could be re-elected for a third term, and that John Hall would need to stand down having completed nine years' continuous service. Phil Wadey also flagged his intention to step down by the next AGM.

INCLUSIVE-LANGUAGE REVIEW

192/26 The vice-chair took the chair for this item. The recommendations in Stuart Bain's paper were agreed, ie that the EDI working party would scope the review, do initial screening of documents, draft an updated terminology guide, apply changes to induction materials, templates, and governance documents, and bring the updated documents to the board for approval. The website, which was currently being developed, was not included in this.

TRUSTEE RESOURCES

193/26 Trustees said that they were finding the Google page useful. This would be a standing item on every agenda.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Renewals

194/26 The vice-chair took the chair for this item. It was agreed to reappoint Stuart Bain (Bridgend County Borough and Vale of Glamorgan) and Chas Townley (Stroud District, Gloucestershire) for a further three years.

Reports

195/26 The reports and staff comments were noted. The trustees thanked the local correspondents for all their hard work, and the staff for their comments.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

196/26 The trustees were not aware of any new claims or circumstances or problems which may give rise to a claim.

MEETING DATES FOR 2027

197/26 The chair agreed to send a doodle poll to establish the best weekday and time for trustees.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

198/26 The report was noted.

REVIEW OF MEETING

199/26 The trustees were content with the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

200/26 Thursday 8 October at 18.00.

The meeting ended at 19.12.

Meeting dates for 2026
Tuesday 3 November
Thursday 10 December*

* Quarterly meetings

Other meetings

Members' day: Saturday 19 September

Local correspondents' event: 29-30 September.

Strategic-plan awayday: Tuesday 24 November



Stuart Bain

Chair of Trustees