Open Spaces Society

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Minutes of the one hundred and twelfth meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 8 October 2026 by videoconference

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

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

201/26 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2026

202/26 The minutes of the meeting on 3 September 2026 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2026 REGARDING LEGAL CASE

203/26 The minutes of the decision regarding legal case 25-08A were approved.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE DECISION ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

204/26 The minutes of the legal committee decision on 25 September 2026 regarding legal case 25-09 were noted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donation

205/26 The general secretary reported that the Nancy Bateman Charitable Trust had made a further generous donation, of £50,000, 'for seeking legal advice and if appropriate taking action to secure compliance with the charity's objects to maintain open spaces'. The trustees expressed their thanks to the trust for its generosity.

Local correspondents' event, 29-30 September

206/26 The trustees present at the event expressed their appreciation of it, and thanked Lucy McKean for organising it and the staff for their contributions.

Enforcement officer

207/26 The trustees discussed the enforcement officer role, the previous postholder having resigned, and noted that a further appointment would be made in due course.

WEBSITE

208/26 The trustees noted the latest position regarding the new website, and agreed the recommendations. They thanked Sarah Hacking and her team for their huge amount of work on the website.

STRATEGY-DAY, 24 NOVEMBER, PREPARATION

209/26 The trustees noted Tara-Jane Sutcliffe's papers on the PESTLE (political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental) exercise, and on the review of the current strategic plan. It was agreed that Tara-Jane would circulate a strengths and weaknesses exercise to trustees and staff.

210/26 The general view was that we needed to simplify the strategy, preferably to one page of high-level aspirations, and then do more work on yearly operational plans and outcomes.

211/26 On the strategy day, 24 November, we would note the areas where there was agreement, and focus on those where there were differing views, the aim being to show how we as a charity provide public benefit.

212/26 It was agreed that a few trustees and the general secretary would meet the facilitator Paul Johnson to discuss the programme for the day. The trustees thanked Tara-Jane for her work on this.

LEGAL DECISIONS BY THE BOARD

213/26 The trustees discussed the proposed governance principles clarifying the respective roles of the legal committee and the board of trustees when considering legal-case recommendations. It was agreed that Stuart Bain would amend the paper to change the order, add a flow diagram, and mention that trustees should feel empowered to seek assurances from the legal committee. The paper would then go on the trustee resources website.

SALARY BENCHMARKING

214/26 The general secretary reported that she had invited a freelance consultant to carry out our salary benchmarking. In due course she hoped that the consultant could review our terms and conditions of employment, and our employment policies.

TRUSTEE INDUCTION UPDATE

215/26 It was proving difficult to find times when all new trustees could meet staff. Stuart Bain would follow up with new trustees to try to find suitable dates and times.

TRUSTEE RESOURCES

216/26 Trustees expressed their appreciation of the trustee website.

MEETING DATES FOR 2027

217/26 It was agreed that the general secretary would circulate the dates for trustees to confirm their availability.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Trustee show and tell

218/26 It was agreed to have a standing item on trustee agendas, after the minutes, for a trustee to speak for five minutes about themselves and their interests.

Face-to-face meeting

219/26 Richard Clarke recommended that the trustees meet at least once annually face to face. This was agreed and would be included in the budget for 2027.

REVIEW OF MEETING

220/26 The trustees were content with the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

221/26 Tuesday 3 November at 18.00.

The meeting ended at 19.02.

Meeting dates for 2026
Thursday 10 December*

* Quarterly meeting

Other meetings

Strategic-plan awayday: Tuesday 24 November



Stuart Bain

Chair of Trustees