

MINUTES OF OXFORD POVERTY ACTION TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 22 April 2026, 18.00 pm
On Zoom

1. Present:

Supporters: James Abell.

Committee: Pat Mulvihill, Meg Movshon, Kay Huntley, Celia Fry, Mary Gurr, John Thanassoulis, Zoe Wright, Paul Armstrong, Deborah Ceadel, Jonathan Clark, Ben Chataway.

Agency representatives: Chris Poole, Aspire; Shuvopriyo Roy and Bridget Austin, Connection Support; Roisin Heritage, Edge Housing; Andrew Grillo, Elmore; Sasha East, The Gatehouse; Charlotte Burns, Homeless Oxfordshire; and Roger Lewins, The Porch.

2. Apologies:

Elspeth Garman, Siobhan Stead-Ellis.

3. Minutes of the last meeting:

(19 March 2025): Approved.

4. 2025 Annual Report:

Pat Mulvihill briefly outlined the Annual Report, previously circulated.

5. 2025 Annual Accounts:

Jonathan Clark went through the Annual Accounts, previously circulated. He thanked all our donors, the Core Agencies, and Howard Cox for auditing the accounts. Income for 2025 was less than for 2024 partly because the latter had included a Gift Aid claim covering 4 years and partly because, in common with other charities, we had experienced a drop in donations.

6. Reports from Core Agencies:

- Chris Poole reported that **Aspire** used OxPAT funds to help its clients overcome financial barriers as they progress towards work and independent housing – to purchase items such as bus passes, interview clothing, and white goods.
- Shuvopriyo Roy explained that **Connection Support** focusses on preventing homelessness and mental health crises and works with a wide range of people including those leaving prison or hospital, people recovering from substance abuse and refugees, to help them begin the process of rebuilding their lives. Bridget Austin explained that they are part of the Homeless Pathway service helping people address the issues which prevent independent living.
- Roisin Heritage said that **Edge Housing**'s focus was on people suffering from addiction. While some clients needed long term help, others were able to progress through treatment to supported living. OxPAT funds are used for a weekly breakfast club with associated recovery group, and to cover such items as birth certificates and other ID, meals for someone leaving hospital, a new mattress for a scoliosis sufferer, mobile phones to help with job hunting. One client had been offered a paid job after volunteering at a Marriot hotel.
- Andrew Grillo said that **Elmore** focused on clients with mental health issues and complex needs who struggle to engage with mainstream services. They also use OxPAT funds for items such as mobile phones, bus passes, ID, clothing or even a video doorbell if a client is e.g. suffering domestic abuse.
- Sasha East said that **The Gatehouse** is a drop-in centre for homeless and vulnerably housed individuals. It uses OxPAT funds for items such as phones, transport costs, ID, course fees and equipment required for training. She said it was noticeable that a number of people accessing their services are in work but despite that quite destitute.
- Charlotte Burns said that **Homeless Oxfordshire** handles some of the most complex cases. OxPAT funds are spent on furniture, clothes, especially underwear and coats, ID, and to support clients' hobbies e.g. fishing. The flexibility it provides is really helpful.
- Roger Lewins said **The Porch** provides day services - food, laundry facilities and showers, and also has 4 support workers who help clients with

e.g. addiction recovery or skills development. They are trying to become more of a hub, connecting with the other agencies. Again they use OxPAT funds for bus passes, ID and phones, and for emergency help e.g. when accommodation falls through. They had helped a client with complex needs whose flat had been invested with bed bugs for 4 years to take control of the situation. The flat had been professionally cleaned.

7. Any other business:

- Pat invited Mary Gurr to speak about **OWNS** and **The Living Room**. She said OWNS had operated successfully, supporting 21 clients. 156 volunteers had contributed a total of 3482 hours. All shifts had been covered. They had noticed an increase in the number of female clients- as many as 3 on one night. Again, a number of clients had jobs but were unable to afford accommodation. The Living Room provided bespoke help to 9 or 10 clients. She noted that an appeal to OWNS volunteers had swelled the ranks of OxPAT committee members by 4, and noted that their first hand experience of OWNS would be very helpful.
- Jonathan Clark said that we are in the process of providing content for a new website- it would be very helpful if Agencies could let us have content- stories, photos, anything they could think of to make it interesting.
- Sasha East said that The Gatehouse would be happy to share information on OxPAT events with its supporters and also e.g. provide bucket shakers for collections.

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