

**Minutes of OUSP Meeting**  
**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 7pm**

Via Teams



1	<p><b>Attendees:</b>  Pete Chilton (Chair)(PC); Janine Bailey (Secretary) (JB); Grace Bailey (GB); Pete Green (PG); Henry Lane (HL); Matthew O’Donoghue (MO’D); Colin O’Toole (CO’T); Adam Slade (online) (AS). Paul Peros (OxVox) (PP)</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Paul Scaysbrook,</p> <p><b>Invited:</b> Jim Goddard, (Head of Safety and Operations) (JG); Andy Taylor (SLO) (AT)</p>	Action
2	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting</b></p> <p>Were agreed online and are available on OUFC website</p>	
4.	<p><b>Matters Arising From Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> November.</b></p>	
4.1	<p>4 Fan Engagement Strategy</p> <p>OUSP finally received the drafted documents in December.  A number of points were briefly discussed regarding content and the process of developing the plan, in particular the role of the proposed CAB and the organisation of Fans Forums. It was agreed that further discussion between OUSP and OxVox would take place outside of the meeting.</p>	JB/PP
4.2	<p>5.3 (GB) Women’s dedicated #HGT match scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> November took place 17<sup>th</sup> December. Good attendance, Des Buckingham and NMcW and Olivia the Ox attended. There is still work to do to get year round support for women’s team and supporters.</p>	
5	<p><b>Actions since last meeting</b></p> <p>16/11 Stand United webinar  23/11 Submitted last in current series of articles for Oxford Mail.  4/12 Monthly update with SLO (notes attached)  6/12 PS and JB met with PP and TL (OxVox)  16/12 OUSP assisted with teddy collection for Helen and Douglas House</p>	
6	<p><b>Head of Safety and Operations</b></p>	
6.1	<p>OUSP welcomed Jim Goddard in his new role, and introduced themselves.</p> <p>Jim gave a summary of his background/experience which includes police (crowd safety management) and event operations. He has had roles as safety officer at Liverpool FC and at Sheffield Utd and has done consultancy work for a number of clubs, including OUFC. He understands the operational and business aspects of football and has good contacts.</p> <p>JG is pleased to be back at OUFC as Head of Safety and Operations. He knows the club, it’s is closer to home and was the new stadium project a big attraction.</p>	
6.2	<p><b>Current/Ongoing Issues:</b></p> <p>There have been a few incidents of fan videos with sexist language on social media at away matches. This is currently in police hands and club will be looking at how to address this. JG explained that increasing anti-social behaviour is a society--wide issue, not specific</p>	

<p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p>	<p>to either football or OUFC, but there are things we can and will do, and will involve supporter groups.</p> <p>There were a couple of complaints about cleanliness (pigeon poo) on Boxing Day. The areas had been cleaned, but clearly had suffered pigeon deposit afterwards. This is impossible to completely eradicate in an outdoor venue, so procedures are in place to address issues which requires fans to notify stewards and/or use report it line. AT observed a tendency among some fans to share these things on twitter when in fact by reporting these incidents to stewards or via the report-it line, the area can be dealt with immediately.</p> <p>Car park overgrowth JG and AT are looking into agreeing responsibility and establishing action plans to deal with some of the areas around stadium, starting with removal of graffiti then addressing car parking areas. JG will look into the legal/insurance aspects of a volunteer working party. AT will keep JB updated.</p> <p>Crossing from Car Park to Ozone The markings are now very difficult to see, with potential of an accident if cars do not stop. JG suggested it can be raised with SAG. Supporter groups could approach the stadium company directly to highlight the risk and potential liability through not maintaining the crossing.  Repainting of blue badge spaces is still awaiting approval. They are not clear to see at night, and in some areas are not possible to see.</p> <p><b>Questions from Supporters:</b> A number of questions were submitted in advance. See appendix for full Q&amp;A</p>	<p>JG</p> <p>JB</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Stadium Parking Update: ANPR</b></p> <p>Stadium is looking to introduce ANPR to limit time parked at stadium to stop unlawful use of car park, e.g. overnight parking. It is not introducing a charge and is unlikely to affect football fans at home matches. There is a potential impact for away matches when car is left for a long time for London Road coaches, this is being evaluated. OUSP will monitor along with club.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p><b>SLO Update</b></p> <p>Notes from monthly SLO catch up were previously circulated and attached. Busy time with matches. The Christmas Extravaganza demonstrated that the downstairs (exhibition) bar is a good space for matchday activities.</p>	
<p>9</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>For info - JN is resurrecting Yellow Army. MO'D has been put in touch with him to enable OUSP and Yellow Army to work together.</p> <p>JB asked if someone would like to take on FSA-supported Green Football weekend – and perhaps provide an article for OxMail? Please respond via Pumble</p> <p>JB requested views on continuing with Oxford Mail articles and suggestions for articles/fans who might like to contribute. Please respond via Pumble</p>	<p>MO'D</p> <p>all</p> <p>all</p>

<p>9.4</p> <p>9.5</p> <p>9.6</p> <p>9.7</p> <p>9.8</p>	<p>JB provided updates on points raised with the club:</p> <p>Portsmouth match – half season tickets</p> <p>Portsmouth match is not included in the half season ticket. Some half season ticket holders were not aware of this. Club agreed to make clear in match stories that half ST holders need to purchase a ticket. (EDIT Post meeting update - Half ST holders have been contacted by email and phone to ensure they are aware). JB commented that the club had generally responded quickly to various requests we had made for additional match information. O USP also suggested it would be a positive move to hold their seats for a period to enable them to stay in their ST location, and are awaiting response.</p> <p>Blue Light Discount</p> <p>A supporter had contacted us, suggesting that the blue light discount was not well known among their colleagues, and asking if it could be better promoted. We are told that the club’s Blue Light ticket offer was intentionally soft launched for 2023/24. There has been good uptake and a programme raising the profile is in place for coming months</p> <p>Discussed correspondence received: re. Fanatics</p> <p>We have been asked for an update on Fanatics, including their fundraising for Arsenal match. The Fanatics is an entirely independent group. We have tried several times to get an update but have not had a response and their original coordinator is not involved now. O USP and Yellow Army are working to re-establish links and move forward with more transparency.</p> <p>CAB and Communications</p> <p>We have been asked where O USP sit with regards to the new CAB that the club are wanting to form, and how O USP are challenging the club in regards to lack of communication between fans and club.</p> <p>O USP stated in our December news that we believe <i>“appropriately structured and implemented, a CAB would provide regular fan engagement at a level which does not routinely take place at present, in a format which can hold the club to account”</i>.</p> <p>It is important that all fan groups are comfortable with the proposal. There are points of detail around the Fan Engagement Plan/CAB we are considering, and we will provide a response after further discussions with OxVox over the coming week.</p> <p>JB and PS will draft responses to these supporters.</p>	<p>HL</p>
	<p>The meeting closed at 9:20</p>	

## Appendix 1 to Minutes of Meeting between OUSP and Jim Goddard, January 2024

### Questions from Supporters for Jim Goddard

A number of questions were submitted in advance, which Jim addressed in the meeting:

#### Current Stadium/Car Park

Q. Jim, in the South Stand Upper (SSU) there are many over 65 in fact many older than 70. There is no easy way for them to get to or down from their seats apart from the Staircases. Could the club find another way to help these people to the upper level?

A. *Our supporters reflect society-wide aging population. Structural changes at the current stadium to accommodate this are not feasible, however in the new stadium better accessibility all-round is being actively addressed.*  
*Discussion was held over whether lift access can be permitted. JG will look into it but there will be real challenges in respect of safety as supporters in SSU must be capable of safely evacuating by stairs in event of emergency.*  
*In some cases it might be appropriate for supporters to relocate to a more accessible seat, which there are in other sections.*

Q. A number of similar questions regarding lighting:  
The walk to the club shop prior to the match on evening matchdays is ridiculously dark creating an unsafe environment

Lack of lighting around the overflow car park against Derby/in general. Saw a few people trip over and I had to use my torch on my phone.

Why is the lighting to the overflow car park never on when it is dark? I had to help a lady who had fallen before the Derby match. I presume someone would be liable if she takes action?

A. *AT had already followed up the lack of lighting at Derby match with StadCo. Apparently the lights had tripped when they were turned on and needed electrician in for repair. This work has now been done. AT will check tomorrow evening, and monitor going forward.*  
*Most lights around main car parks have now been replaced, and improvement is noticed.*

Q. Still no foliage maintenance in the East Stand car park which is taking up a good 10 spaces or half covering them.

*As discussed in the meeting JG will look into the legal/insurance aspects of a volunteer working party. AT will keep JB updated.*

Q. Despite a lot of criticism, the overall cleanliness of the stadium has constantly been neglected, should we accept this status or will greater emphasis be placed upon holding Stadco to their obligations?

A. *This is a common problem in outdoor stadia. We are absolutely not the worst.*  
*AT explained that a pre-match walkround takes place the day before games. There are always issues caused by the pressure points when many fans use facilities in a short space of time. Procedures are in place to address issues promptly by reporting them to stewards or the report line at the time, but supporters seem reluctant to do this. All agreed that, whilst not perfect, it was better than last season, and that much of the*

*criticism relates to perception - the concourses are old, stained and rundown which makes them look dirty. Inground dirt in concourses and toilets has been industrially scrubbed but the stains cannot be removed.*

*Fans who do see an issue of cleanliness/maintenance should be encouraged to report it on the day in order to get it addressed.*

### Match Experience

1. On drummers:

When are you going to ban drums and the drummers from Stadium Kassam - permanently!

Should we get a drummer in to get the atmosphere going?

*These two points demonstrate that different fans have different views on many things around atmosphere.*

*Whilst the Premier League is strongly against instruments, the EFL and JG are ambivalent on the issue. If used well drums can have a great effect.*

*Discussion was held over whether we should continue to allow away fans to bring in drums when we do not use one. JG will look into this.*

*There have been some attempts to bring in a small drum to East stand to assess, with one fan set up to do this last season but did not turn up. AT is currently in conversation with Yellow Army.*

*The juxtaposition of these questions shows just how much the fanbase is divided on this and the response from the fanbase either way will be split.*

2. The recent pyrotechnics were impressive, can we expect a repeat?

*The Commercial team and safety worked hard on this, JG thought it was fantastic.*

*Yes, the club is looking at a lot of different ways to improve match experience. JG is open to all kinds of ideas and finding ways to make it happen.*

3. From your work with other clubs, what do you feel can most effectively improve the atmosphere at our matches?

*Performance on the pitch!*

*Where he has worked at clubs with great atmospheres, they have had a good stand behind the goal with singing/chanting. Those clubs have history and emotional connection to venue, both stadium and its location in their city. Both are bowls so sound is captured in.*

*Design of OUFC's new stadium is based around bowl with character and specific areas designed to enhance acoustics.*

*Whilst the stadium is not the only issue, it certainly does not enhance atmosphere.*

*Players – fans – stadium – club culture are all part of generating atmosphere.*

4. With you being involved with the club when the ultras felt like they couldn't continue, what are your views on the club no longer having an ultras group and how do you plan to get more noise and colour in the stands to enhance the atmosphere?

*JG was not involved at OUFC at that time.*

*AT provided summary of Ultras group which peaked 2012 – 2016 - the group felt it was getting hard to work within constraints placed by the safety team in place at the time.*

*OxVox tried to facilitate communication between Ultras and Club. it was a group of friends that worked well together but did not bring younger fans in so as they moved up/on/away there was no succession.*

*Similarly Fanatics – started well, got flags etc., then their key players have different life priorities.*

*The Club supports atmosphere group initiatives like this, but it has to come from supporters and not be imposed.*

*MO'D has spoken to lots of atmosphere groups at other clubs, and is in contact with Yellow Army. He and others have reached out to the Fanatics.*

*Need to also be cautious around fans involved in anti-social behaviour and ensure that whatever happens sits within safety certificate.*

*JG – happy to work with any group and talk through their ideas and ensure the plans are compliant.*

5. I note Bristol Rovers chose NOT to follow their local police 'advice', and instead opted to stick with a 3pm Saturday afternoon kickoff. .. OUFC individuals currently appear to bow, scrape and jump through hoops to comply with TVP advice- to the detriment of many supporters ability to attend (IMO unnecessary), after games moved to earlier KO times for so called cat A matches.

*The Club has legal responsibility for safety of everyone at the match. Police and SAG give advice on a range of risks relating to the match in and away from the stadium, working on intelligence and risk. The Safety Officer has ultimate legal responsibility for everything on footprint.*

*Police may have additional intelligence relating to risks both at and away from the stadium. In such circumstances the police could withdraw their presence if their advice is not followed and the club would not then be able to hold the match.*

*In respect of the change of time for the upcoming Reading match - the away match saw disorder at a number of locations away from the stadium, and several arrests. The risks of similar at this fixture were considered sufficiently high, and the club will not put public safety at risk.*

*Club does not “bow and scrape” but considers evidence and risks.*

*Many other factors dictate KO times – not least TV at higher levels and going into next season.*

#### General

1. How does your role differ to the role of the SLO? Will this lead to the SLO now being able to interact with the fans more on things like social media, a bit like Sarah used to do when she was the SLO?

*JG is not an SLO. His role is strategic as part of Senior Leadership Team, under Tim as CEO, and alongside Chief Commercial Officer, Stadium Project Director, Chief of Staff and Finance Director. Each manages an area of the business within the SLT.*

*Under JG oversees operations, safety (including safeguarding), new stadium.*

2. Where do you stand with regards to FA Cup and other cup competitions seating availability - recent FA Cup ties have seen no reserved seating for season ticket holders, no family stand and many areas of the stadium closed with, apparently, no intent on the part of the club to promote these fixtures. - Tickets for recent BSM ties were not even advertised as available!

*There are different rules on tickets for FA Cup matches and league matches. Season Tickets do not count for FA Cup game – it's the nature of it.*

*Partial closure - If stand opens for just a few people the staffing levels needed for stewarding and safety means it is not cost effective. Many other clubs do exactly the same.*

3. What are your views on the current plans for the new stadium? Is the planning application ready to submit?  
*Fantastic plans – has sat in some of the meetings and has been very impressed with discussions. Some great, constructive feedback is now being incorporated into plans before they are submitted.*
4. EXACTLY when will the club be holding an open Fans Forum (as promised by TW & GF that it be BEFORE the end of last season) and
5. Why is communication from the board to supporters so dire? And when can we have a fans' forum?

*All fans across the country want to see their owners/CEOs. JG's view is that all senior level staff can give the answers, and that you may not get anything more from Grant Ferguson than you would get from him or the other executives. He acknowledges that process of communication is needed.*

*OUSP and OxVox are actively working on a Fans Forum, and will meet next week regarding next steps.*

*The fact that the fans who submitted these questions have the opportunity to do so demonstrates that there is a level of communication and feedback in place.*

## Appendix 2 Notes from Meeting with SLO

Paul Scaysbrook, Janine Bailey, Andy Taylor

Notes from discussion:

- AT to forward LPF match report so that PS and GB can review (done after the meeting)
- JB and PS noted that the lighting in the main carparks is much improved, and asked AT to pass on our comments to StadCo
- With the delay in approval for line-marking the blue badge spaces are very difficult to identify when arriving for evening matches. PS and JB stressed the importance of getting these areas re-marked as soon as possible.
- The zebra crossing to the Ozone is now almost impossible to see (especially at night). AT will raise with StadCo
- There are still many car park spaces, especially in the East Car Park, that cannot be used due to the spread of shrubbery. OUSP suggested getting a supporter working party in to cut back these plants. AT will discuss with StadCo
- Discussed arrangements for OUSP's assistance with teddy collection on 16<sup>th</sup> December match