

Bodleian Social Science Library: Committee on Library Provision and Strategy

2.00pm, Friday 30 May 2025

Manor Road Building Seminar Room B / Online via Teams

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Introductions and apologies

Academic members: Ariell Ahearn (SoGE, Chair), Alan Beggs (Economics), Julius Schneider (Socio-Legal Studies).

Student members: Baltazar Dydensborg (DPIR), Maki Kumagai (Sociology).

Library members: Aimee Burlakova (St. Antony's College Library), Andy Kernot (Social Science Library), Jo Gardner (Social Science Library, Minutes), Louise Clarke (Head of Social Sciences Libraries), Sarah Rhodes (Social Science Library).

Apologies received: Cerys Acton (Geography), Chiara Rohlfis (Socio-Legal Studies), David Doyle (DPIR Academic), Misha Mir (Criminology).

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

2.1 Bodleian Libraries Reader Survey demographic questions

Louise Clarke has passed on the feedback that the demographic questions at the beginning of the survey may have discouraged people from taking part.

2.2 Reading lists for BA Geography courses

Ariell Ahearn has added this to the agenda for SoGE undergraduate teaching committee meetings, specifically the requirement to send reading lists to the library or publish them on ORLO.

3. Social Science Library Report

3.1 Manor Road Building Refurbishment Project update

Louise reported that the Estates Investment Subgroup (EISG) has agreed to recommend the allocation of £3,925,296 (incl. VAT) to address key functional issues of the Manor Road Building. Priorities for the library will include the refurbishment of the library entrance and adjustments to maximise natural daylight in the reading rooms. Library readers will also

benefit from broader building enhancements such as the refurbishment of the café, the establishment of a roof terrace and improvements to the building's heating and ventilation system. The library works are anticipated to place during Christmas Vacation 2025 or Summer Vacation 2026, and Louise will share the plans with this committee for consultation.

In response to a query from Baltazar Dydensborg, Louise reassured the committee that any disruption due to the building works will be kept to a minimum.

3.2 Subject support reports selected for this meeting: International Development, Politics & International Relations, Public Policy

The Committee received the subject support reports selected for this meeting and the relevant Subject Consultants provided the following highlights:

Sarah Rhodes [International Development] provided Information and Dissertation Search Skills sessions for three of the five student cohorts at the Oxford Department of International Development (ODID). The department is committed to online reading lists, with 74 reading lists available on ORLO for 2024/25. Sarah has recently accepted a donation of approximately 500 unique working and discussion papers from the University of Bradford library; these will be catalogued and integrated into series held at the SSL or stored offsite.

Jo Gardner [Politics & International Relations] provides a welcome session and follow-up research appointments for new Reuters Institute Journalist Fellows every term. This year she provided a new search skills session for Second year Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) students preparing for their theses, and continues to work with colleagues to increase provision of ebooks via Evidence-based Acquisition packages. In response to an enquiry from Alan Beggs, Jo advised the committee that the usage data for these packages is anonymised and COUNTER-compliant. COUNTER is a global standard for measuring and reporting content usage through normalised metrics.

Andy Kernot [Public Policy] supports two large cohorts of students at the Blavatnik School, the Master of Public Policy [MPP] and the MSc in Public Policy Research [PPR]. The School uses ORLO for all reading lists on both courses. This year Andy has provided 1-to-1 research support to students on the MSc PPR, and has received several interesting enquiries from Fellows associated with the School.

4 Bodleian Libraries reports

Louise reported that the initial results from the Bodleian Libraries Reader Survey 2025 are available at <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/about/libraries/performance/reader-survey/2025-results>

The survey received 4,655 analysable responses and these show that, overall, reader satisfaction with library services and provision has increased. Collections remain the most

important aspect of library services for all three University of Oxford groups (undergraduates, postgraduates, academic staff), and also the worst-performing. Library opening hours remain an important issue, but some mitigation may be provided by the forthcoming opening of the Humanities Library which will operate 9am-9pm seven days a week. The Unified Lending Policy has had a modest impact, and respondents noted a significant improvement in group study room provision.

Actions taken by the library service in response to the free text comments will be communicated shortly.

5 Comments from student representatives

Maki Kumagai passed on negative feedback regarding reduced access to Nuffield College Library. Post-meeting: Aimee Burlakova followed this up with the Nuffield College Librarian, who apologises for the ongoing disruption to access due to building works and will happily facilitate access on an individual basis to any postgraduate student needing to read a book that is only available at this library. DPhil students, academic staff and members of St Antony's College can borrow library books. Masters students have reference access only during open hours (10:00 – 15:30 Monday-Friday).

Jo passed on a request from Misha Mir to supply footrests in the Social Science Library. Aimee will investigate provision of footrests in college libraries, and Jo will investigate a source of funds. *ACTION Aimee, ACTION Jo.*

6 Comments from staff representatives

Ariell urged departments to consider using ORLO for course reading lists.

7 Items for the Divisional CLiPS

Ariell would report on progress with the Manor Road Building refurbishment project, and provide highlights from the subject reports.

8 Any other business and date of next meeting

None noted, Friday 14 November, 2-3pm.