

Bodleian Social Science Library: Committee on Library Provision and Strategy

2.00pm, Friday 29 May 2026

Online via Teams

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Introductions and apologies

Academic members: Molly Grace (SoGE, Chair), Dirk Witteveen (Social Policy and Intervention), Mehman Ismayilli (Economics).

Student members: Baltazar Dydensborg (Politics and IR), Cerys Acton (Geography UG), Emma Bowie (Criminology), Great Nnamani (Economics), Mary Anne Ludwig (Sociology PG), Nihar Gokhale (ODID PG), Shuaichu Pan (Politics UG), Shuwei Sun (Geography PG), Sophia Andresen (Social Policy and Intervention).

Library members: Jane Rawson-Jones (Nuffield College Library), Jo Gardner (Social Science Library, Minutes), Louise Clarke (Head of Social Sciences Libraries), Sarah Rhodes (Social Science Library).

Apologies received: Andy Kernot (Social Science Library), David Doyle (Politics and IR), Julius Schneider (Socio-Legal Studies), Lindsay Richards (Sociology), Muhammad Atcha (Socio-Legal Studies).

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

2.1 Request to reduce limit for booking library discussion rooms

Jo Gardner checked the booking patterns on the system. User data is wiped after seventy days, so we can only analyse the effectiveness of booking limits over a seventy-day period. During w/c 16 March to w/c 16 May an average of one person reached the 10-hour limit per week. This indicates that the booking limit is not too generous, and we will continue to check and review the user data.

2.2 Online news sources task group

Louise Clarke confirmed that the task group has been convened to increase awareness and visibility of library-licenced news and current affairs resources to the Social Sciences Division and wider university. Activities will include adding direct links to the MyOxford student app.

2.3 Request for a temporary access card

Jo noted that readers can now request a paper day pass if they have forgotten their card. This will be less time-consuming than having their information checked each time they enter the library in a single day.

2.4 Request to use library laptop chargers outside the library

Jo advised that this would become available as part of a wider service enhancement to lend all equipment to readers to use outside the library. The return time for library equipment will continue to be at or before closing time on the same day.

2.5 Request to add the Politics and IR subject guide to the Politics Undergraduates' canvas site

Jo passed this request on to the Undergraduate Administrator for Politics and will follow up.

3. SSL Refurbishment Project updates

The library entrance will be comprehensively refurbished during August-September 2026 within the Manor Road Building (MRB) Minor Capital Project. The Committee received a presentation on the design to deliver a welcoming entrance, provide two small discussion rooms, and a new distinct zone of study space that offers softer seating and display space for academic texts and wellbeing support.

Louise noted that the library will need to close to readers between Tuesday 4 August and Sunday 4 October, subject to confirmation from the contractors. A staffed library desk will operate via the MRB reception area, hours 9-5 Monday to Friday and 10-4 Saturday, for enquiries and book collection and returns. Library Use Only SSL materials will be requestable for consultation in the Law Library. Scan and Deliver will continue to operate. Some services, such as Bodleian Offsite requests to the SSL, inter-library requests from the SSL, and the SafePod, will be suspended.

Mary Anne Ludwig commented that students at St Catherine's College would benefit from additional communication, as they tend to use the SSL as a replacement for their college library which is currently unavailable. Louise responded that St Catherine's College students are welcome at the Law Library, and asked Jane Rawson-Jones to forward updates about the refurbishment and services mitigations to colleges as appropriate. **ACTION Jane.**

In response to a query from Molly Grace about a possible delay to the completion of the project, Louise confirmed that she has stressed the importance of reopening the library for Monday of 0th Week MT to the project team. The sequencing of works to ensure that most disruptive elements are completed first and potential for weekend working by the contractors are also under discussion.

4. Information Skills training: Awareness, relevance and promotion

Jo gave a short presentation outlining the iSkills programme, a series of free workshops provided by Bodleian Libraries staff for students and researchers at the University of Oxford. Jo asked the Committee if the workshops were relevant to them and for ideas on how to promote them effectively.

Baltazar Dydensborg and Mehman Ismayilli expressed a preference for more self-directed learning. Mary Anne noted a preference for live workshops and recordings for those that are in high demand. Louise noted that the reference management workshops have high attendance levels, and that all workshops should be provided in person and/or online as appropriate. Shuwei Sun commented that they received directed research training as part of their course and this was very helpful.

Regarding promotion, Molly Grace noted that the communications are effective and the termly updates are particularly beneficial. Emma Bowie agreed that the updates directed to students are helpful. Great Nnamani suggested that college Academic Officers could promote the workshops to their college groups via WhatsApp.

5. Social Science Library report

5.1 Green Impact Report

The Committee received a report from the SSL Green Team, who are participating in the Green Impact Scheme managed locally by the University Environmental Sustainability Team. The Green Team has submitted their toolkit and members anticipate a gold award.

5.2 Subject support highlights

The Committee received the subject support report for this meeting. Highlights include new subscriptions to the International Newsstream Collection and Gallup Inc. survey microdata, as well as a large donation of material relating to Central Asia and the North Caucasus. Helen Worrell will shortly trial a Research Skills workshop for MSc Anthropology students, and Eleanor Peers has been experimenting with 'Roving Librarian' sessions at St. Antony's College Buttery. John Southall delivered a session on Using Open Practices in your Research for the Divisional Doctoral Training Centre in May, and Andy Kernot has been asked to provide bespoke Zotero training sessions for Oxford Internet Institute DPhil students and the Oxford Laidlaw Scholars Programme.

6. Comments from student representatives

Emma expressed gratitude for the air-cooled library environment.

7. Comments from staff representatives

None.

8. Items for the Divisional CLiPS

SSL refurbishment project updates.

9. Any other business and date of next meeting

None; Friday 13 November 2-3pm.