

The Friends of Osterley Park



NEWSLETTER

Issue 137 Summer 2025 £1 (free to members)



Gorgeous Georgians

Dear Friends

If you haven't visited the House since the scaffolding came down following the work last year on the South Wing and since the deep clean has been completed, please do. The House is looking wonderful and is definitely worth a visit.

The Gorgeous Georgians trail is proving very popular with families – the children are very familiar with the Horrible Histories stories even if their parents aren't. As the panel in the garden states "History is horrible. For a start, everybody in history is dead. Some are very dead indeed. Of course history teachers don't tell you this, do they? And then the teacher drones on about boring battles and dusty dates." Margaret's article on the Gorgeous Georgians appears later in this newsletter.

Many Friends have been visiting Osterley for years and can recall when there was no barrier to the gardens, field and woodland behind the House. The decision by the Trust to separate the 'Pleasure Grounds', the Great Meadow and woodland from the remainder of the park with an admission charge dates from March 2007. This allowed the recreation of Mrs Child's Flower Garden where the 18th century guests would have strolled at their leisure, and the restoration of the two Grade 1 listed buildings in the garden – the Robert Adam Garden House and the Temple of Pan – with the admission charge contributing to their improvement. Since then, Andy Eddy (Head Gardener since December 2005) has made other improvements to the gardens, the latest being the paths everywhere in the garden which have benefitted from 29 tonne bags of gravel to repair damage done in recent filming (paid for by the film company!).

The Friends have already enjoyed visits to the Tallow Chandlers Hall (see page 9) and to Standen House in the last month and are looking forward to future local visits and coach trips.

Howard

The minutes of the AGM held on 24 April 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Chairman's report was presented and the examined accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024 were presented. The membership subscriptions for 2026 will remain as £10 for one person and £16 for two people at the same address.

The AGM elected:

- Howard Simmons as Chair
- Peter Bush as Vice-Chair
- Sophie O'Donnell as Hon Treasurer
- Susan Parsons as Hon Secretary
- John Collis, Yvonne Dias, Michael Doran, Margaret Friday, Margaret Lydamore and Vik Sharma as Committee members.

At the first Committee meeting following the AGM, the following roles were confirmed:

Chair – Howard Simmons

Vice-Chair – Peter Bush

Hon Treasurer – Sophie O'Donnell

Hon Secretary – Susan Parsons

Membership Secretary – Yvonne Dias

Local visits – Margaret Friday

Coach bookings – Margaret Lydamore

Coach trips – Vik Sharma

Coffee mornings – John Collis

Website/Community/Publicity – Mike Doran

Newsletter Editor – *vacant*

Summary of the presentation to the Friends on 30 April 2025

The National Trust Strategy for the next decade was launched in January following the largest consultation in the Trust's 130 year history of over 70,000 people. The three key areas were:

- to restore nature – not just on Trust land, but everywhere;
- to end unequal access to nature, beauty and history;
- to inspire millions more people to care and take action.

To achieve their goals, the Trust would need to renew their ways of working in a world that's changing fast. Much had been achieved but there was still much to do.

What did this mean for Osterley? Whilst access from the south and west was good, it was not so good from the north and east, with little public transport, largely due to the barriers of the M4, the Grand Union Canal and the railway. Ealing was consulting on a new regional park along the River Brent and it was hoped to link Osterley into this.

Osterley was working with neighbouring communities with a focus on connecting younger people to the outdoors; he mentioned the Creative Community Air Project displayed currently across the house and garden. Osterley was hosting events involving the community such as Holi, Eid and Diwali and working with Flock Together, a local group of young people. He was well aware of the London Voices – a local schools project – which had ran very well a few years ago and would very much like to see it repeated.

Great disappointment was expressed by Friends present about the continued lack of a buggy particularly at busy times when elderly visitors were reliant on it between the car park and house. Chris advised that a replacement buggy had been acquired from another property; it had started but now needed work to enable it to operate safely. A new buggy (which had still to be ordered) would cost around £31,000 and he was grateful to the Friends who had offered to pay 50% of the cost to match other donations. The absence of a collections tin on the buggy was regretted but it was hoped to install a 'Tap to Donate' machine (the Trust standard model cost £1,000 which was considered to be excessive by those present). Accessibility to the property was essential including an eventual lift in the house although planning permissions etc should not be underestimated.

Comments were also made about the proliferation of litter (Osterley was reliant on volunteers and, regrettably, much of the littering occurred in the evening); a lost natural spring to the east of Middle Lake; better communication of Osterley media appearances (Chris suggested checking the social media: Instagram: #osterleynt); support for improved bus links to/from the Osterley area.

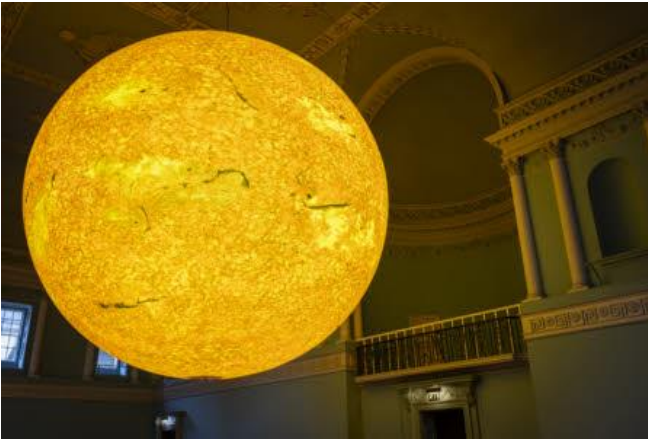
Chris thanked the Friends for their great support during the year. Osterley was a Trust Discovery House and one of the very few Trust properties that had its own support association.

News from Osterley

Hannah Wiltshire

With the weather changing from day to day, this is the time of year when Osterley keeps us on our toes! We've had some busy days over the Easter period, with over 25% increase in sales compared to last year in the shop and café, and a 30% increase in the second-hand bookshop. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped us give our visitors a great experience during this busy time. We saw lots of people going into the house too, with 62% visitors to the Gardens during the Easter period also visiting the House. Lots of families enjoyed the House trail which complimented the Easter trail outside, as well as the Horrible Histories Gorgeous Georgians Trail.

We're delighted to be hosting Luke Jerram's Helios at Osterley in June and July. Come and see Luke Jerram's 7-metre spherical sculpture, Helios, centre-stage at the top of Osterley House's beautiful 18th century portico. Revel in the sun's dramatic beauty and power up close! Visitors can see Helios from 6-10 June and from 11-14 July. Named after the ancient Greek god of the sun, Helios offers a detailed view of our solar system's greatest star, including rare features like sunspots. The sculpture is scaled so that each centimetre represents 2,000 kilometres of the real sun's surface. We're planning events to compliment this artwork, so check our website for details as we get nearer the time.



*Helios sculpture at Bath
Assembly Rooms*

*National Trust Images/James
Dobson*

We also have several Outdoor Theatre performances at Osterley this summer. The Lord Chamberlain's Men return on 8 June with a performance of Twelfth Night. We welcome Folksy back with their family show, Robin Hood, on 13 July. The Duke's Theatre, a new company to Osterley, are bringing us Macbeth on 3 August. Then we round out the season on 9 August with the return of DOT Productions and their performance of Sense and Sensibility. All of these shows promise to be a great experience, so please visit our website to book your space. We are hosting the Eid Picnic on 14 June.

We've had a few changes in the Osterley team recently. Brenton Wallis has moved from the Visitor Welcome team up to Visitor Experience Officer. He'll be managing that team, as well as supporting some events and community work. Dennis Ahern will remain in the House as Welcome Manager, looking after the day to day opening of the House, and managing the House Welcome and Room Guide volunteer teams.

As the weather improves roses start to come out in the garden, all beautifully scented and scattered for you to find. We hope to welcome you to Osterley soon to enjoy them all.

Membership Renewals

Yvonne Dias

Membership stands at 179, sadly we lost three Friends who have passed away. We extend a warm welcome to 14 new members who have joined so far in 2025.

I am pleased to say that most members have renewed and great news, 17 of you who had previously paid by cheque have this year paid electronically.

Thank you to everyone for their continued support. You do not need to be a National Trust member to join the Friends.

We have had some members who have paid twice. For security reasons we would rather not request your bank details and for that reason alone we prefer not to offer refunds for renewals. Members have been contacted and asked if the 'extra' payment can be recorded as a donation or put towards the purchase of 100 Club shares. You can always contact me to check how you pay for your membership.

For those of you who may have forgotten to renew their membership, I urge you to consider setting up a Standing Order or paying by bank transfer. Please include your surname / subs as the bank reference. It's important to get the bank reference right as otherwise we might not know what it's for.

Friends of Osterley have their account with Barclays Bank:

Sort Code: 20-02-06

Account Number: 70389315

Please bear in mind that banks are introducing high charges per cheque banked to deter people from using cheques. If it's difficult for you to pay electronically please make cheques payable to the 'Friends of Osterley' (do not include 'Park'), include details of what the payment is for and send to Yvonne Dias, 84 Spring Grove Road, Hounslow TW3 4BW.

Lastly, all your details are kept in strictest confidence and are used solely by the Friends of Osterley Park Committee for the purpose of keeping you informed of our activities and are not shared with any other member or organisation without your consent.

Legacy Donations

Susan Parsons

Several Friends have asked about donating money in their will to Osterley/The Friends of Osterley Park. Should you be interested, the Trust have provided the following suggested wording to make a gift for use by a National Trust supporter group:

‘I leave to the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty (‘the Trust’) of Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2NA, registered charity number 205846, the sum of £X (for a pecuniary gift) or the % residue of my estate (for a residuary gift), the use to be determined by the Friends of Osterley Park or such similar supporter group that may exist in that area at the date of my death’

The group would then consult with the local Trust Manager to find an appropriate conservation project for the money to go towards and the gift would be tax free.

The Trust always recommends that people use a professional advisor when making or updating a will to ensure it is as they wish.

100 Club

Susan Parsons

The first draw of the year was made at the AGM on 30 April. The lucky winners were: Howard Simmons (£100), Angela Lynskey (£50) and Marion Innes (£20).

The 100 Club is a private lottery and shares can only be allocated to paid-up members of the Friends. Half of the £12 is used by the Friends to fund projects which benefit Osterley; the remaining £6 goes into the prize fund. The next draw will be made at the coffee morning on 28 August.



28 Friends visited this magnificent livery hall on 7 April in a visit organised by Margaret Friday and were shown round the Court, the Great Hall (set up for a banquet) and the Parlour by the Beadle, Richard Kennel. The Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers are 21st in the 1515 Order of Precedence amongst the Livery Companies (now numbering 113) and are one of 38 livery halls located in the Square Mile with 23 other livery companies using the hall. They purchased the hall in 1476 for £166; the 1666 Great Fire of London burnt it to the ground but luckily many of its charters and artefacts were saved and were installed in the new hall built

in 1672. It survived World War II other than a 500lb bomb crashing through the ceiling and ending up in the kitchen below but thankfully not detonating! We were shown a tallow candle which burnt down quickly but they are rather cheaper than the beeswax candles of the Wax Chandlers, being made from animal (cattle) fat and used for candles, soaps and vinegars. Tallow Chandlers comprises around 300 liverymen and freemen (of which 60 are female) and is governed by a Master and four Wardens.

The Gorgeous Georgians

Margaret Friday

For this newsletter we explore the Georgians (1715-1830) as perceived by the Horrible Histories team which has joined up with a National Trust house for the very first time here at Osterley. Horrible Histories were

compiled by Terry Deary and illustrated by Martin Brown. Until August we can explore their take on Gorgeous Georgians looking at Osterley Park House and Gardens via a fascinating trail. Their idea was that history is boring because it is only about dead people, so they attempted to add interest by presenting gory and unpleasant details – the sort that amuse 10 year olds! In our Servants Hall you will encounter a series of themes presented in Horrible Histories and introduced by a rat. They include words used in the 18th century but less common or with a different meaning today. There are suggestions of how to behave when eating and how to sit at table followed by information on 18th century lavatories.



In the Osterley Eating Parlour we have the elegant gilt fluted pedestals on stands, the urn contains water with a faucet but the base of one contains a chamber pot. Following the meal the ladies went to the Drawing Room leaving the men to enjoy their port and cigars. No man had to leave the room missing the latest piece of gossip, they simply used the chamber pot beneath the specially designed urn. Robert Adam thought of everything!

The exhibition in the Servants Hall contains a copy of the chamber pot in the bed steps found in the State Bedroom (aka the 'posh potty'). Another storage place for a chamber pot also found in Osterley's Yellow Taffeta room is shown here but it is not just a bedside table.



Large silk or cotton panniered dresses were worn from the 1760's until the end of the 1780's. After the French Revolution in 1789 the style changed completely to be replaced by simple high waisted dresses sometimes called Empire Line. This is the style that Sarah Child and her daughter Sarah Anne would have worn into the 1790s. Queen Charlotte, however, refused to adopt the new style and insisted that anyone presented at Court should be dressed in the large dresses and huge wigs fashionable when she became queen. If you have seen *Bridgerton* you will be familiar with their horrible histories interpretation of fashion as worn by the queen until her death in 1818.

If, having viewed the Servants Hall, you make your way to the Temple to Pan you will find a dressing-up box so you can make yourself look like a Gorgeous Georgian assisted by the make-up box and the interactive mirror. Explore the Long Walk where you will find Horrible Highwaymen who haunted Hounslow Common and Putrid Pirates. We know that the East India Company ship *Osterley* was captured by the French (pirates) in 1779, so the Chinese tea and silk never arrived. Spin the wheel to reveal your job as a Georgian child – are you up the chimney or down the

mines or are you a rat catcher? Enjoy the trail with children – they will love history here at Osterley.

Finally using Georgian words see if you can decipher this information: A tattle box has accused a sad man of going for a big bug with a hanger – he may be an eye. Should I call a bolly dog? Interpretation to be found on page 19.

Booking by Email

Margaret Lydamore

Please read the following instructions carefully, and be sure to do exactly as you are asked, giving all the information requested. Otherwise the organisers are involved in a lot of unnecessary follow-up emails.

While forms are attached, we would encourage you to book coach trips and local visits by email and make payments by bank transfer, thus saving postage costs. Please check with Margaret Lydamore at melyd@btinternet.com (for coach trips) or Yvonne Dias at FriendsOP.membership@gmail.com (for local visits) before making a transfer to ensure that there is a place for you – all trips and some visits have an upper limit.

With coach trips in particular it is important that you book as early as possible so that we know what size coach is feasible for us. Our coach trips are costed with quite narrow margins, and we cannot afford to book a large coach if we are not going to fill it. For the same reason, we regret that we cannot give refunds – except in occasional very exceptional circumstances – unless we have a waiting list. When booking you need to state your pickup point (Osterley Car Park or the bus stop opposite Osterley station) and give us your contact information including a mobile number in case we need to reach you on the day. This information is required whether you are emailing or using the forms.

When making payment, please specify which trip/visit it is for. Bank transfers:

Name of Payee: **Friends of Osterley**
Sort Code: **20-02-06**
Account Number: **70389315**
Your reference: **your name/trip or visit**

Payment by **cheque** is a last resort (we expect to be charged soon for paying cheques in). They should be sent to either Margaret or Yvonne as appropriate – address on the attached forms.

Please note that extra £1 charged for non-members of the Friends of Osterley Park has been increased to £2 for the 2025 coach trips and local visits.

Accessibility - A gentle reminder that when you book outings for yourself or anyone else, please consider the nature of the venue and work out whether you can manage without assistance. Not all properties or places that we visit are fully accessible and many do not have lifts. The outing organisers cannot act as carers, so if you have any mobility or other health issues that mean you will require assistance, please bring someone with you to help.



Coach Trips

Vik Sharma

Wednesday, 9 July - Hinton Ampner, Hampshire

Trip Cost (including coach & entry): NT Members: **£30** (please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival). All others **£48.70** (£30 + £18.70). £2 extra for non-Friends.

Pick-up 1 (from Osterley Park car park): 9:10

Pick-up 2 (bus stop opposite Osterley Station): soon after 9:10

Return (to Osterley Park): 5-5:30 PM



Nestled in the rolling hills near Alresford, Hinton Ampner is a quintessential English country estate with a remarkable story of resilience and reinvention.

Originally a Tudor manor, the house was rebuilt in elegant Neo-Georgian style in the 1930s by Ralph Dutton, the last Lord Sherborne, whose refined taste and eye for symmetry transformed it into a showcase of 18th-century sophistication. After a devastating fire in 1960, the house was painstakingly restored under Dutton's watchful eye, preserving its exquisite interiors, rich with antiques, fine art, and a sense of understated grandeur.

Beyond the house lies a formal garden that's nothing short of breathtaking. Dutton's lifelong passion for horticulture shaped a harmonious series of garden rooms, terraces, and vistas that frame the South Downs like a living painting. From vibrant herbaceous borders to serene topiary-lined paths, each area offers year-round interest and reveals Dutton's mastery of design. Further afield, the estate's parkland and beech woodlands invite peaceful strolls, wildlife spotting, and stunning panoramic views.

Whether you're a history buff, a garden lover, or simply seeking inspiration in beautiful surroundings, Hinton Ampner promises an unforgettable day out.

Café & Gift Shop - visitors can relax in the on-site café, which serves light lunches, teas, and home-baked treats, while the gift shop offers quality souvenirs and locally sourced items.

Accessibility - the property is largely accessible to those with mobility challenges, with step-free access to the ground floor of the house and much of the garden, along with accessible toilets.

Website: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/hampshire/hinton-ampner>

Wednesday, 10 September – Audley End, Saffron Walden

Trip Cost (including coach & entry): English Heritage Members: **£30** (please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival). All others **£45.50** (£30 + £15.50*). £2 extra for non-Friends.

Pick-up 1 (*from Osterley Park car park*): 8.45 – **please note the earlier departure time**

Pick-up 2 (*bus stop opposite Osterley Station*): soon after 8.45

Return (*to Osterley Park*): 5-5:30 PM

* This must be paid at the time of booking to take advantage of the group price



Step back in time at Audley End House, one of England's grandest country estates, nestled in the picturesque Essex countryside near Saffron Walden. Originally a Benedictine monastery, the site was transformed in the early 17th century into a royal palace in all but name - so opulent that Charles II used it as a base for his court. Though later scaled down, the house still dazzles with its richly decorated interiors, fine art collection, and atmospheric Victorian service wing, offering a vivid glimpse into the upstairs-downstairs life of a bygone era.

The gardens are no less impressive. Designed by Capability Brown and restored to their 18th-century glory, they include sweeping lawns, a serpentine lake, and a working organic walled kitchen garden. Stroll through shaded woodland paths or visit the historic stable yard with its resident horses.

Whether you're drawn by the grandeur of its past or the charm of its present, Audley End offers an immersive, inspiring experience.

Café & Gift Shop - visitors can recharge in the café, which serves hearty lunches, light bites, and delicious cakes, many made with produce from the estate garden. The gift shop is well-stocked with books, treats, and unique gifts.

Accessibility - the main house has a lift for wheelchair users, and most of the grounds have step-free routes. Accessible toilets are also available.

Website: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/audley-end-house-and-gardens/>

Thursday, 2 October – Petworth House, West Sussex

Trip Cost (including coach & entry): NT Members: **£30** (please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival). All others **£47.50** (£30 + £17.50). £2 extra for non-Friends.

Pick-up 1 (from Osterley Park car park): 9:10

Pick-up 2 (bus stop opposite Osterley Station): soon after 9:10

Return (to Osterley Park): 5-5:30 PM



Set in the heart of West Sussex, Petworth House is a Baroque mansion of epic scale and elegance, steeped in over 800 years of history. Once the seat of the powerful Percy family, it was later transformed into a cultural haven by the 3rd Earl of Egremont - an avid patron of the arts. Today, Petworth boasts one of the National Trust's most impressive art collections, including masterpieces by Turner, Van Dyck, Reynolds, and Gainsborough. Its gilded state rooms, opulent interiors, and atmospheric servant spaces invite visitors into a world of aristocratic grandeur and creative legacy.

The surrounding 700-acre parkland, sculpted by Capability Brown, is as much a work of art as the house itself. Roam among ancient trees, herds of fallow deer, and serene lakes, with sweeping views of the South Downs. Closer to the house, the formal gardens feature colourful borders, tranquil walks, and hidden corners that make every visit unique.

Whether you come for the art, the history, or the sheer beauty of the landscape, Petworth promises an unforgettable escape into England's cultural and natural heritage.

Café & Gift Shop - the on-site café serves a selection of locally sourced meals, light snacks, and homemade cakes. The gift shop offers tasteful souvenirs, books, and artisan-made homewares.

Accessibility is a priority, with step-free access to much of the house, mobility parking, an accessible toilet, and an electric shuttle for easier travel between the car park and house (subject to availability of volunteers).

Website: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/petworth>

Tuesday, 17 June – Train visit to St Albans – Cost £19

Meet Margaret at St Albans City station at 11am. Suggested trains are the 1031 Thameslink from Farringdon or the 1036 train from St Pancras. Please purchase your own return ticket, from £7.05 return with Senior Railcard and Freedom pass.

We will share taxis from the station to St Albans Museum in St Peter Street where we will meet our guide Tony. He will show us round the 18th century courthouse, the cells below and the medieval city. We'll have a lunch stop near the cathedral at around 1pm – there are lots of places to eat. After lunch, Tony will guide us around Verulamium, the Roman town beginning with the hypocaust and mosaics before proceeding to the Verulamium Museum where Roman life is displayed. The museum closes at 4pm after which Tony is walking back to St Albans City centre (20 minutes), or you could take a taxi. You may prefer to stay and further explore St Albans before returning to London.

Cost: £19 includes our guide and entrance to the Verulamium Museum (the St Albans Museum is free)

Not included: train ticket; lunch; taxis.

Tuesday, 15 July – Kingswood House, Sydenham Hill SE21 8QN – 2pm - cost £12

Today we visit Bovril Castle – the home of John Johnston, inventor of Bovril (beef broth). It was built in 1830 but expanded by Johnston. Our guide will show us the restored ground floor which is flat and wheelchair accessible.

The nearest train station is Sydenham Hill. Our tour is at 2 pm but if you would like to enjoy lunch in the café from 1 pm, please tell Yvonne when you book.

Monday, 11 August – Walk in Bloomsbury – 2pm – cost £5

Meet at Tottenham Court Road station outside the large restaurant beside Centre Point on New Oxford Street. We will do a circular walk taking in St Giles Church which features in Hogarth's infamous Gin Alley drawing, Denmark Street also known as Tin Pan Alley, St George's Bloomsbury, the Comedy Club Museum, Bloomsbury Square, Russell Square and Bedford Square. There are several small gardens on the way. Return to New Oxford Street to the restaurant where people might like to dine.

The walk is about a mile; there are places to sit along the way.

Monday, 15 September – Royal Mews – 1.45 for 2pm – cost £17.50

The Royal Mews contains not just the grand golden coach but also those used for State visits along with many of the vehicles used to ferry the Royals and their guests around town. Photography is allowed inside and out so you can get that picture of yourself with your favourite mode of transport including a horse.

Please note there are separate booking forms for Coach Trips and Local Visits

The coffee mornings for Summer are as follows, all at 1030 for 1100 in the Study Base at Osterley Park:

Thursday, 29 May - Micheal Peacock will present the second part of his history of Brentford and how it changed as a result of the industrial revolution and connection to the canal network in the 18th century to today's road and rail transport hub and replacement of old, dirty industry to modern workplaces.

Tuesday, 24 June - Georgia Matthews Visitor Operations & Experience Manager, will talk about the Gorgeous Georgians and plans for 2025/6.

Wednesday, 30 July - Matti Wotton, Chief Archivist of the V&A, will talk about the archives held by the Victoria and Albert Museum across several sites in London and hopefully will be able to give more information on the furniture and fittings from the V&A that are in the House.

Thursday, 29 August – Christine Diwell – Isleworth through the ages

Osterley Book Group

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 3 June at 2.00pm when they will be discussing *The Square of Sevens* by Laura Shepherd-Robinson. Set in Georgian England, this page-turning period drama follows a fortune telling lady on a quest to discover the truth about her late mother.

New members are welcome - please contact Wendy Sim for details - Wendyannsim@hotmail.com

Interpretation from the Gorgeous Georgians (page 9:

A gossip has accused a troublemaker of going for an important man with a sword – he may be a killer. Should I call a police constable?

Chairman

Howard Simmons

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The Friends website gives you all of the current news, meetings, events, publications, and membership information relating to the work of the Friends of Osterley Park in supporting Osterley House and Park. **www.e-voice.org.uk/friendsofosterleypark** Back copies of the newsletter are available on the website.

Next newsletter: to be published at end August 2025.