

#### **4. Address by Peter Hulley in support of petition to install lights on path in South Park.**

Thank you for the opportunity to present my petition this evening. As a resident of the Divinity Road area and a student of Oxford Brookes, it has become increasingly evident to me over the past year that it is imperative that lights are fitted along the path at the top of South Park. I understand that the path was opened for use by Cheney School students to use during the day. However, the logic which required the path to be opened - that of it being the most direct route between the school and residential areas around Cowley Road, has inevitably meant that the path has also become the main route for other pedestrians, including Brookes students and other residents, very often at night.

As a student walking to and from Brookes campus at night, it has become evident to me that of all the parts of the route to be left unlit, this is the worst: it is too dark to even see your feet, to the point that it is possible to lose the path; I have often come near to walking into other people. Anyone who has read the comments on the petition will see that there is consensus that the path is scary to walk along at night. This has only been made worse by the knowledge that there was a sexual assault in the park last year.

Many girls of my acquaintance are too scared to walk through the park alone at night, and take the longer route along Cheney Lane. Though this route is only 3 minutes longer, this is long enough to dissuade most people taking it, and it also requires walking along an unpaved path, which most avoid because it is very muddy in winter. Thus a new danger arises; that of pedestrians walking on the road. It is possible to walk along Gipsy Lane, which is the only safe route at night, but hardly anyone does this, as it is significantly longer.

A concern has been raised about the lights causing antisocial behaviour. However, this doesn't make sense. Even if lights do contribute to more antisocial behaviour, surely this is a small price to pay for the sake of real increased safety? The petition has been signed by a mixture of students, parents and local residents. I hope that the council will listen to their concerns. Thank you.

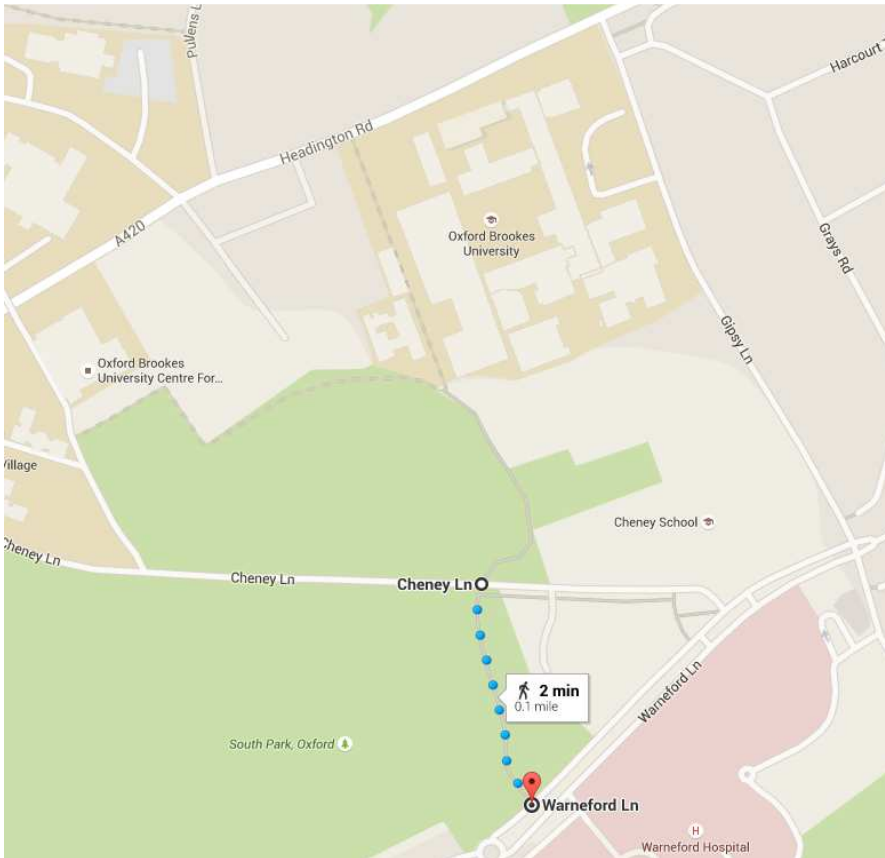
Text of petition: (571 signatures)

#### **Oxford City Council: Install lights along the path at the top of South Park**

About this petition

Oxford City Council should install lights along the length of the path at the top of South Park as a matter of priority. The path's location between student housing / halls in Cowley and Brookes University mean that it is commonly used as a thoroughfare by students. It is similarly used by students at Cheney School. Though it affords a beautiful view over the city's famous dreaming spires during the day, at night it offers no view at all. Many returning from a late night stint at the library or a night out will be familiar with the routine: a growing sense of apprehension when approaching the path; a quickened pace to traverse the path as quickly as possible. The lack of lighting means that on a dark night it's impossible to even see your feet unless you have enough charge on your phone to use it as a torch. The park's reputation as a site of past sexual assault makes the installation of lights a matter of even greater urgency. (Copy and paste this link into your browser for more information:<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-29327722>) If you feel that the path at the top of South Park should have lights installed, sign the petition! Let's aim for 500 signatures, but the more the better! The petition will be presented to the Members of the City Council for consideration.

This is the path in question:



Below is the alternative route, which is unpaved along Cheney Lane.

