

**Minutes of Oxton Society Executive Committee Meeting  
 6 November 2018, 7.30 p.m.**

**Present:**

Rhiannon Evans	(RE)	(Chair)
Jeff Willis	(JW)	(Vice Chair)
Alan Chape	(AC)	(Secretary)
Griff Round	(GR)	(Treasurer)
Councillor Allan Brame	(AB)	
Patrick Toosey	(PT)	(Recruitment)
Steve Weber	(SW)	(Planning and Amenities)
Steve Ferguson	(SF)	
Jane Horton	(JH)	
Bob Knowles	(BK)	(History Group)
John Booth	(JB)	(Hanging baskets)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	
Eileen Lang	(EL)	
Ian Wray	(IW)	
Carolyn Weber	(CMW)	

**Present by Invitation:**

Jay Little	(Secret Gardens)
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Welcome to Ian Wray, who was rejoining the Committee.

**1. Apologies:**

Dave Barden	(DB)	(Membership Secretary)
George Harrison	(GH)	(Tree Group)

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 4 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

**3. Matters Arising**

• **Conservation Areas Wirral**

Local Plan – WBC was progressing this on the basis of the 2014 projection of 800 new homes per annum. Despite the 2016 projection implying a much lower rate. This means that the need for green belt land to be released is likely to be substantial. The consultation period ended 26 October, draft plan to go to WBC cabinet in January 2019 then be subject to Examination in public early next year.

• **Friends of the Arno**

Reported that Gary Murray had resigned as Chair, RE to follow up.

**Action:RE**

• **Blue Plaques**

Proposal for third blue plaque was Cyril Scott, composer, who had lived in Village Road. Suggested get representative of Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra to unveil, and coincide with date having his music played in Williamson.

- ***Hanging Baskets***

The Society had won a Gold Medal in the “Village Category” at the North West in Bloom event: congratulations were expressed to JB for work on the baskets. The Arno had also won an award. Agreed to have photo taken in village to be put on social media – RE to find date. **Action:RE**

SW reported on discussions which had taken place about the future of hanging baskets as JB wished to reduce his commitment. An advert had gone in the latest Newsletter to see if any interest. Other solutions could be:

- to contract out the whole process (cost implications);
- to reduce to a small core operation with a limited run of baskets;
- to contract out the technical plumbing work, have a small group of volunteers for regular work such as feeding and dead-heading and JB to continue as co-ordinator

In addition PT has connection with a building contractor who for no cost would help erection and taking down of baskets with cherry picker.

SW would continue discussions and come to January meeting with a firm proposal. GR to join discussions for financial implications. **Action:SW**

- ***Annual General Meeting***

The idea of a village defibrillator had been raised at the AGM. Costs of this to be looked at, could possibly be placed at the new Willows development?

Many Committee members were unable to attend the AGM due to holiday commitments. To look at holding AGM later, in October

- ***Street Signs***

None of the agreed actions had yet been progressed. However, a new sign had appeared at the Fairclough Lane/Village Rd junction which was not in the agreed style. AB to follow up with Sean Brady of WBC. **Action:AB**

- ***Notice Board***

Paul Smith now responsible for maintaining content of notice board. RE to talk to him about items for board, not to include posters for missing animals. **Action:RE**

#### **4. Christmas Lights**

A new contractor had been agreed, who would do maintenance work on existing lights and power supply and enhance display with new ones on the heritage lampposts.

The original plan had been to do fund-raising next year for further enhancements, But Kate Wyness from Greens had started fund-raising this year with posters and collecting boxes in shops for individual customers to donate, with the idea of changing the coloured lights to white. Support was expressed for the initiative but also concerns over timing as the contractors would need to know soon if this was to go ahead. DFW to convene a meeting of those involved to find out how much raised and way forward. **Action:DFW**

#### **5. History Group**

- Noted that the new village development ‘The Willows’ was named after the house that was originally on the site
- History Open Day on 13 October had been disappointing, with numbers attending down – History Group to consider the way forward.
- Suffragettes and Edith Smith booklets were selling well
- Daily Mail had been in touch with BK re Edith Smith

## 6. Financial Report

GR reported that there was likely to be a deficit of £2K-£3K at the current year end, largely due to investment in the website and Christmas Lights. However, we started the year with reserve of £21K so can withstand a deficit.

## 7. Membership Report

The Membership Secretary had submitted a detailed report but discussion was deferred in his absence

## 8. Website/Newsletter

- A third Newsletter editor had been recruited, Pete Flynn
  - A protocol would be developed for the use of the Society Facebook page by members putting up posts.
- Action:AC**

## 9. Planning

SW reported on 3 planning applications, as noted in the report circulated, none of which raised any significant heritage issues.

## 10. Trees

3 applications had been considered and comments submitted, as noted in the report circulated.

## 11. Village Centre

- HSBC site – the roof was now going on the building. The contractor was in contact with the Society and a joint approach to landscaping would be agreed, to involve Christine Wray in this
- Chutney restaurant had been sold to a local individual
- Brimark site development would start in New Year, following problems with contractors
- Ashton House – AB reported that options were still being considered by NHS

## 12. Secret Gardens

Jay Little and Lesley McGarrity would continue as full Coordinators for 2019, and assist in 2020: an advert had gone in the Newsletter seeking individuals to take over Coordinator roles. Individuals had already come forward to take over publicity, raffle and organization of art stalls. Jay Little reported on discussions that they had held about the future of Secret Gardens, to make it more sustainable and manageable. Proposals include:

- Focussing all Society activities on the Hub and Mount Pleasant, apart from the plant stall which would remain in the village
- Kate Wyness offering to organize Food Fair in village, with a maximum of 10 stalls, get music provided by Birkenhead School and seek sponsorship for deckchairs in village
- Green Shop/Woodcraft Folk to organize children's activities and keep income
- Trying to keep to around 20 gardens open, including some on Mount Pleasant to draw visitors to the Hub
- Not paying for entertainers in future
- Producing a smaller programme with less detail and a larger map, and producing no fliers, just posters

The 2019 partner charities would be Birkenhead Youth Club, Terrill Morgan Memorial Fund and Wirral Women's and Children's Aid.

The Committee **agreed** the proposals set out by the SG Coordinators.  
For 2019 the Society would fund the cost of road closures, but would seek to share with businesses in future. AB to ask WBC about the cost of closure relative to charity events in other parts of Wirral. **Action:AB**

### **13. Other Business**

- Oxton Society stand in Greens shop would be repeated in the New Year
- Agreed that the Society should have a stand in the Williamson on 1 December when the Gallery celebrates 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary – JB to provide stand. **Action:JB**
- A Strategy Review Day would be held in February to update future strategy – working group of RE,JW, AC, GR, SW to plan the day.
- The Society would be 40 years old next year – to consider ways to celebrate

### **14. Date of next meeting**

- Next meeting **8 January 2019**, 7.30 p.m., St. Saviour's Parish Hall.

CMW/8 November 2018