

**Minutes of Oxton Society Executive Committee Meeting
 9 January 2019, 7.30 p.m.**

Present:

Rhiannon Evans	(RE)	(Chair)
Jeff Willis	(JW)	(Vice Chair)
Alan Chape	(AC)	(Secretary)
Patrick Toosey	(PT)	(Recruitment)
Steve Ferguson	(SF)	
Dave Barden	(DB)	(Membership Secretary)
George Harrison	(GH)	(Tree Group)
Jane Horton	(JH)	
John Booth	(JB)	(Hanging baskets)
Chris Jarrey	(CJ)	
Ian Wray	(IW)	
Carolyn Weber	(CMW)	
Paul Smith (History Group) attended in place of Bob Knowles		

1. Apologies:

Griff Round	(GR)	(Treasurer)
Steve Weber	(SW)	(Planning and Amenities)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	
Eileen Lang	(EL)	

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 6 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

• **Conservation Areas Wirral**

Local Plan – WBC would submit this by the end of the year, to be examined next year.

Wirral Growth Company – in partnership with a development company there were plans for new office floor space in town centre, movement of WBC staff, new market.

Borough of Culture Heritage event to be held 24 January 10 am-12 noon at Williamson

IW is on Birkenhead Park Heritage Site Bid Group, WBC has appointed two individuals to liaise with this group.

• **Friends of the Arno**

Reported that Annette Capper was new FOA Chair, she was being asked if she would like to join the Committee.

JW reported that he had tried unsuccessfully to sell three water heating urns no longer required by the Society – **agreed** that one be donated to FOA.

• **Business Club**

Agreed that the concept of a Business Club was no longer relevant. Agreed to discuss how to develop relationship with businesses at the Strategy Day. Hope to continue working as appropriate with Kate Wyness.

- **Blue Plaques**

Third blue plaque was Cyril Scott, composer, who had lived at The Laurels, 11 Village Road. Permission was being sought from the owners for erection of plaque. Vasily Petrenko, chief conductor of the RLPO, has agreed to unveil the plaque on 15 June, 12.00-1.00, and there was a proposal for a concert featuring music by Scott on 16 June in the Williamson Sunday Serenades. A booklet about Cyril Scott would be prepared by Graham McLean with support from the History Group. The Williamson has plans to dedicate the new window in the Priory to Cyril Scott and would try to synchronise events in connection with that.

- **Hanging Baskets**

There had been an offer of four free man-days from Phil Piercy, Managing Director of Clearground, a local company, to deal with the putting up and taking down of the baskets and any balance of time to be used for a range of maintenance tasks. In 2019 John Booth and the Society team would deal with bracket, basket and watering system maintenance, but from 2020 John Booth would step back from this. The Society is very grateful to Phil Piercy for the offer and Clearground's contribution would be acknowledged in the next Newsletter.

- **Annual General Meeting**

The next AGM would be held 26 September 2019, at the Williamson. 2019 marks the 40th anniversary of the Society and celebrations of this would be included in the AGM and in the August Newsletter.

- **Street Signs**

AB had followed up the lack of progress with street signs, but there were no funds for this. To be discussed with AB and Shaun Brady **Action:AC**

- **Notice Board**

Agreed that the Britain in Bloom Award Certificate should be put on the noticeboard. JB to liaise with Paul Smith on this. **Action:JB**

- **Queens Award for Voluntary Service**

RE reported that there had been a technical issue with the Society's nomination and key documents had not been received on time, resulting in an assessment meeting being offered at very short notice. The Officers had agreed to withdraw the nomination because of the time factor.

- **Strategy Meeting**

A Strategy meeting would be held 20 February, 5.30 – 9.00, possibly with an external facilitator.

- **Article 4 Directions**

In 2010 the Character Appraisal and Management Plan for the Conservation Area had recommendations for Article 4 Direction Orders to remove permitted development rights for older properties, eg for windows, doors, roof coverings. This would preserve the original features of an identified group of properties which make a particular positive contribution to the area but are not listed buildings.

CAW had raised this issue again recently and a pilot Article 4 scheme was being proposed for two areas – one area was Oxtou, and this would be discussed with David Ball at meeting on 24 January.

Concerns were expressed about the additional costs that might be incurred by property owners in complying with Article 4 Directions. The Committee discussed the need for consultation with all affected properties, and a good publicity and communication strategy.

4. Christmas Lights

The Christmas Lights event had been very successful, and income and expenditure appeared to be much the same as last year. The new lighting contractor was much cheaper, but the cost of replacing all the bulbs with white lights had been substantial. Treasurer to provide a detailed report on the finances of the event . **Action:GR**
RE to write to Kate Wyness of Greens expressing thanks for the White Lights fund raising initiative. **Action:RE**

5. History Group

- Walks programme for 2019 was almost finalized. Two new one-off walks were being done, starting from the Williamson, connected with the Wirral Walking Festival and the Heritage Day
- Suffragettes and Edith Smith booklets were selling well
- Wirral History and Heritage Fair to be held 9 March at the Town Hall

6. Financial Report

No report in the absence of the Treasurer

7. Membership Report

There had been two new members since the last report, and renewal notices for existing members would be going out shortly.

8. Website/Newsletter

- Next Newsletter, edited by CW, would be going out early February
- The Society now had almost 1,000 members of Facebook

9. Planning

A report had been circulated on 3 planning applications none of which raised any significant heritage issues. It was noted that work was now starting on the old Brimark building in Rose Mount.

10. Trees

6 applications had been considered and comments submitted, as noted in the report circulated. The Tree Group had drafted a Code of Practice, which had been circulated. Agreed that subject to some modification to section 3c, the Code be adopted and be added to the website and also included in the April Newsletter. **Action:GH/JW**

Agreed that it would be useful to have a similar Code for the Planning Group. **Action:SW**
SF reported that Port Sunlight had let him know that the cost of tree planting would be around £125 per tree. Agreed to continue with the Tree Planting Scheme for around six trees per year.

11. Village Centre

- HSBC site – work progressing well. Society to engage with the developer over landscaping to the frontage, to have a group in due course, involving WBC.
- Fraiche restaurant was now closed
- Ashton House – AB was to have a meeting with the NHS Trust re plans for the site and report back. Need to take stock once intentions of NHS Trust clearer.

12. Secret Gardens

The advert in the Newsletter for new SG Co-ordinators had produced no interest. Future of SG to be discussed at Strategy Day, current Co-ordinators to be invited. **Action:RE**

13. Other Business

- Oxton Society stand in Greens shop would be repeated in 2019, DB to liaise with Kate over a possible date. **Action:DB**

14. Date of next meeting

- Next meeting **5 March 2019**, 7.30 p.m., St. Saviour's Parish Hall.

CMW/11 January2019