

**Minutes of Oxton Society Executive Committee Meeting
 5 March 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)
Steve Weber	(SW)	(Planning and Amenities)
Bob Knowles	(BK)	(History Group)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	
Chris Jarrey	(CJ)	
Ian Wray	(IW)	
Annette Capper	(ACa)	
Carolyn Weber	(CMW)	

1. Apologies:

Griff Round	(GR)	(Treasurer)
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2. Welcome

The Committee welcomed Annette Capper, the new Chair of the Friends of the Arno.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 9 January 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

• **Conservation Areas Wirral**

Local Plan – the Secretary of State had written to WBC saying that the Local Plan process would be taken over if no plan produced. An outline plan and timetable was expected by 10 April.

Hamilton Square – close to finishing a brief for consultants to prepare a management plan.

• **Friends of the Arno**

ACa reported that FOA were planning underplating in the rose garden. They had a new look newsletter and refurbished notice boards. Work was progressing on the refurbishment of the shed.

• **Blue Plaques**

There was a draft programme for the 16 June event, but final agreement from the owners of the property in Village Road was still awaited.

- **Hanging Baskets**

There was a small amount of maintenance work to be done by JB, SW & JW. A walk round with Phil Piercy from Clerground was required to plan basket installation. SF still to agree action on baskets with Christine Lesley. To consider hanging baskets on the old bank site in conjunction with landscaping scheme. **Agreed** that for next meeting need proposal for ideal number of baskets and costs. **Action: JB/SW/SF**

- **Street Signs**

AB reported that Shaun Brady had sourced some finance from the Heritage Fund for street signs and would speak to AC shortly.

- **Strategy Meeting**

The delayed Strategy meeting would be held 18 April from 6 – 9 pm at Trinity with Palm Grove Church. Officers would introduce each of the four aims, to have SWOT analysis. About 20 people were expected to attend.

- **40 Year Celebrations**

The August Newsletter would have features linking to the 40th anniversary, including highlights of the forty years, the history of the newsletter, how the village centre has changed, some statistics, a quiz and quirky stories from the archive.

The AGM would include displays of material from the archive, a film from 1996 and pictures from past Secret Gardens. AC would discuss common issues from then and now, David Ainsley would reflect on history, and would ask for memories from the floor. Members would also be asked for ideas for the future of the Society.

- **Article 4 Directions**

AC, JW & SW had met with David Ball 4 March to discuss the possibility of Oxton acting as pilot area, but nothing could be put to WBC committee before May elections and all conservation areas would have to be looked at in the round. AC/JW/SW to define more precisely what needs to be done, eg how to designate properties, walls etc which would be affected. The agenda on communication, encouragement and advice would be important and needs to be discussed in parallel.

5. History Group

- The group was giving lots of talks, eg on suffragettes, Edith Smith
- Walks programme for 2019 was now finalised
- History & Heritage Fair 9 March – Oxton stall to focus on maps and aerial photos
- Edith Smith – blue plaque also to be erected in Halton

6. Financial Report

The Treasurer had circulated a report on the outcome of the Christmas Lights event. The high costs of the lights had resulted from the improvement of the power supply points and the change to white lights. These would not be repeated next year, though the costs of installing the lights would rise by 20% as we had an introductory offer in 2018. The report did not appear to include the sums raised under the coordination of Kate Wyness – JW to speak to GR and report back to next meeting. **Action: JW/GR**

7. Membership Report

Five weeks into the membership year 56 people had renewed, 100 still to renew but DB was not concerned. The latest Society stall in Greens had given membership packs to 20 people who

seemed keen but none had yet joined. RE to thank Kate for facilitating stall. **Action: RE**

8. Website/Newsletter

- Newsletter - April would be edited by new editor Pete Flynn
- Website – the company who redesigned the website and hosts it was going out of business as the owner was retiring, but he was hoping to pass the business on.
- Facebook – AC had posted that any posts to the Society Facebook page by businesses outside the Oxtun area would be deleted

9. Planning

A report had been circulated on 3 planning applications. One was for the bank site for a change of use from offices to residential. The only issue was with parking provision and this had been raised with the developer.

SW to produce a code of practice for Planning Group for next meeting, noted that there were already advice notes on the website. **Action: SW**

10. Trees

9 applications had been considered and comments submitted, as noted in the report circulated. Four replacement trees would be planted this year.

The Tree Group Code of Practice had been amended under paragraph 3c and was ready to go on website and in next newsletter. The process of contacting applicants in writing asking if they would like advice had been well received. The Tree Group was congratulated on their work.

11. Village Centre

- HSBC site – nearing completion, need to engage with developer shortly about landscaping scheme
- Cash machine – to be reinstalled, with structure reinforced and increased security
- Ashton House – AB had met NHS trust which owns property, which had now been empty for two years apart from respite unit in Columbia Road. NHS would like to relocate respite unit, had ideas for supported living units. AB and Stuart Kelly had discussed this idea with WBC officers. AB and SW to have meeting next week on site with NHS representative, want to keep pressure on about future of site.
- Thyme restaurant – opening shortly

12. Secret Gardens

No new coordinators had come forward to shadow in 2020, which would be 20th year for Secret Gardens and when current coordinators would finish. Next Task Group meeting 8 April.

Friends of the Arno had requested 40% of profits from plant stall instead of past 20% - **Agreed**

To think about possible increase in ticket price for next year – been same for past 8 years.

13. Date of next meeting

- Next meeting **7 May 2019**, 7.30 p.m., St. Saviour's Parish Hall.