

**Minutes of Oxton Society Executive Committee Meeting
3 September 2019, 7.30 p.m.**

Present:

Rhiannon Evans	(RE)	(Chair)
Jeff Willis	(JW)	(Vice Chair)
Alan Chape	(AC)	(Secretary)
Griff Round	(GR)	(Treasurer)
Patrick Toosey	(PT)	(Recruitment)
Jane Horton	(JH)	
Steve Weber	(SW)	(Planning and Amenities)
Bob Knowles	(BK)	(History Group)
George Harrison	(GH)	(Tree Group)
John Booth	(JB)	(Hanging baskets)
Cllr Allan Brame	(AB)	
Annette Capper	(ACa)	
Chris Jarrey	(CJ)	
Carolyn Weber	(CMW)	

Apologies:

Steve Ferguson	(SF)	
Dave Barden	(DB)	(Membership Secretary)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	
Ian Wray	(IW)	

Present by Invitation: Lesley McGarrity and Jay Little for the Secret Gardens item

Welcome: The Committee welcomed Dominic Wilkinson who would be nominated as a new Committee member at the AGM.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 2 July 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

• **Conservation Areas Wirral**

Local Plan – completion date still unknown

Agreed to make a subscription of £100 to Conservation Areas Wirral

• **Friends of the Arno**

ACa reported that Britain in Bloom judging had taken place, outcome awaited. The Green Flag award had been renewed for the eighth year. A successful application for funding for tools had been made to the Wirral Together fund. Work on the shed was progressing well.

• **Blue Plaques**

RE reported that the recording of Cyril Scott's piano music by Nino Gvedatze was now out, accompanied by a short documentary video on the visit to Oxton. Video to go on Facebook and website.

Action: AC/JW

BK reported that the Edith Smith booklet was still selling well and a reprint was needed, with some updating.

Officers to consider further fundraising for future plaques.

Action: RE

- ***Hanging Baskets***

Britain in Bloom Awards ceremony would be 30/31 October and 1 November

Baskets to be taken down 2 November

Some baskets on the stretch from Home to Impressions had died when there had been a problem with the watering system which had gone unreported during holidays.

Agreed that next year all businesses with baskets should be provided with a sheet with contact numbers to report problems with baskets

Action: JB/SW

- ***Street Signs***

No further progress as yet.

- ***Article 4 Directions***

No further action as yet.

- ***Christmas Lights***

JW reported that a quote of £1,700 inc VAT had been received from the existing contractor, STG Ltd. **Agreed** to accept the quote.

The Xmas Lights Group wanted to enhance the lights by decorating two or three trees in the village centre. The cost of two trees would be £1,040. Kate Wyness from Greens had offered to organize more fund raising. **Agreed** that the Society would match any funds raised up to £500.

It appeared that the Society had been awarded £520 by WBC Britain in Bloom fund: if so this would be used to decorate a third tree

Kate Wyness and DFW had been working on the idea of a Christmas Market in the village centre, with a 1pm start and road closure from 12noon. **Agreed** to back the idea of a Market

XL Group would meet again 18 September to progress arrangements.

3. Strategy Workshop

The Officers would be meeting as soon as possible to progress the objectives

4. AGM

- A meeting date was required to sort out final arrangements for AGM, including refreshments, awards certificates.
- AC was congratulated on the draft 40 Year Celebration booklet that he had produced. A section was still to be added on Society finances, and a few other changes to be made, then the booklet would be printed. A copy to go to all members and then copies to be sold through the bookshop/village shops.
- Quiz – had been included in Newsletter, email reminder needed to all members to bring completed quizzes to AGM. One of History Group to present answers.

Action: JW/RE

5. History Group

The Group had been given a grant of £850 from WBC for the digitization project, to be led by BK/Paul Smith, with input from JW and others, including web designers.

6. Financial Report

The Treasurer presented a snapshot of the finances at the end of July and reported that there was likely to be a small surplus at year end.

7. Membership Report

No report in the absence of the Membership Secretary

8. Planning

- SW reported that there were significant concerns about the poor quality of Heritage Statements submitted in support of recent applications. Many did not meet the basic requirements set out in the WBC guidance . On several occasions, SW had written to case officers raising problems, with no reply. The matter had been raised with AB who passed them on to the Chair of the Planning Committee and Head of the Development Management Team. This was a matter of wider concern across all conservation areas, which CAW had raised with David Ball.
- SW had produced a draft code of practice for the Planning Group, which had been circulated to the group. He would be meeting GH shortly to discuss incorporating some elements from the Tree Group Code of Practice. **Action: SW**
- Design Award – The Design Award Group had looked at 10 potential schemes. ^ did not make the shortlist because they did not meet the criteria. The Group would be meeting again shortly to discuss the remaining 4 and agree on nominations for Award/Commendation.
- A report was submitted on 5 planning applications that had been considered.

9. Trees

GH reported no particular problems with tree applications, new system of getting in touch with applicants was working well. A report was circulated with details of seven tree applications considered by the Group.

'Trees in a changing climate' conference on 19 October at Town Hall – to be attended by GH and David Coombs from Tree Group, and PT, and they would report back. **Action: GH/PT**

10 Village Centre

- Traffic management – there had been a meeting in the village on 8 August between local councilors and WBC traffic officers. Agreed that there were three main issues: traffic access to new Willows development; congestion at Rose Mount/Victoria Mount junction; speeding in village – there had been no accident records but councilors feel it should be an amenity issue as well as a safety issue.
- CCTV – Kate Wyness and DFW were trying to progress the idea of CCTV in village centre and had circulated a letter to all businesses. There was to be a demo of a system on 11 September to which all were invited. It would need a critical mass of the businesses to contribute to the set-up and maintenance costs. The LibDems had agreed to contribute £1,000 to the project provided that all businesses are on board and the scheme is ready to roll by January 2020. **Agreed** that the Society would contribute £500 under the same conditions. It would be necessary to consider the on-going management of the operation. **Agreed** PT to act as deputy for DFW when he is away.
- HSBC site – change of use from offices to residential still now formally agreed by WBC.
- Ashton House – AB reported that the Health Authority still keen to have care units on Columbia Road side of site, with possibility of involving a developer for the Ashton House side. SW was still awaiting a response about possible Society involvement in

discussions about the work required on the sandstone walls.

- Old Brimark building – work progressing, new owners hoped to move in late October.
- Old chemists shop – if to be a food outlet this would probably require a change of use, AB to check

11. Secret Gardens

- The SG organisers reported that the date for 2020 would be Sunday 10 May.
- Kate Wyness has confirmed that there will again be a Makers Market in the Village Centre
- New Co-ordinators (Kirsty & Paul Cotton and Lisa Stafford) will shadow the event in 2020 and take over from 2021
- Ideally one of the new people would join the Committee – current organisers to discuss with them
- Agreed no change in programme pricing for 2020, but the Treasurer to look into the possibility of Gift Aid on on-line purchases.

Action: GR

- Officers/Committee need to discuss strategy for SG beyond 2020
- RE expressed thanks of the Committee to Lesley and Jay and their team for their work on Secret Gardens 2019.

12. Newsletter & Social Media

- Newsletter - Congratulations to Pete Flynn, RE and Graham McClean on large 12 page anniversary Newsletter. Need to ensure that all photos reproduced in the Newsletter are of sufficiently high quality. **Action: CW**
- Facebook – there were currently 105 people who had asked to be members of the FB group but had not yet been accepted. A large number of these seemed to have no connection with Oxtan and included businesses from outside the area. Officers to discuss in Strategy Group discussions. **Action: Officers**
- Website – JW reported that a part of the Trees section of the site had disappeared – he would re-instate. He was awaiting a statement from our ISP provider to all their customers about the future of the service

13. Appreciation

The Chair reported that this would be JH's last meeting as a member of the Committee. The Committee and the Society was indebted to her for the way in which she had developed the role of the Treasurer during her time in the office, her rigour in developing financial systems and building up a surplus of funds. The Committee expressed their appreciation to her.

14. Date of next meeting

- Next meeting **12 November 2019**, 7.30 p.m., St. Saviour's Parish Hall.