

**Minutes of Oxton Society Executive Committee Meeting
 12 November 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)
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)	
Steve Ferguson	(SF)	
Dave Barden	(DB)	(Membership Secretary)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	
Annette Capper	(ACa)	
Chris Jarrey	(CJ)	
Dominic Wilkinson	(DW)	
Carolyn Weber	(CMW)	

Apologies:

None

Welcome: The Committee welcomed Dominic Wilkinson as a new Committee member.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 3 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

• **Conservation Areas Wirral**

CAW had been invited by the Chair of WBC Planning Committee to attend meeting last week, to discuss input to Local Plan in relation to conservation area policy. A resolution had been agreed to make reference to current Conservation Area Management Plans within the policy, rather than out of date ones, to ensure Officers liaise with Conservation Area Committees on the wording of the policy and to identify priorities for the development of further CA Management Plans where appropriate. **Agreed** that the Planning Group should discuss how to input into this process. **Action: AC/SW/GH/DW**

• **Friends of the Arno**

ACa reported that FOA had been awarded an RHS Britain in Bloom Outstanding Award. Rose planting would be starting in November. The shed was now fully fitted out, thanks to work by JB and others. The FOA AGM would be held 18 November, and a Christmas event was planned for 14 December, with a Santa Grotto. The FOA leaflet had been revised and was with the printers.

FOA had proposed a joint venture with the Oxton Society for a calendar with photos of Oxton and the Arno, for 2021, with possible associated postcards/notecards. It was

suggested that this could be linked to a photographic competition. **Agreed** to discuss the proposal at the next meeting and that it could be useful to have any calendar prepared before Secret Gardens, so it could be sold there.

- **Blue Plaques**

RE reported that a small group had met to discuss the next Blue Plaque and was recommending the Willmer sisters, local newspaper editors, who had lived at 48 Wellington Road

- **Hanging Baskets**

The baskets had received an RHS Gold Award for the third year running at the Britain in Bloom Awards ceremony. It was hoped that there would be local publicity for the Award, and the certificate was to go on the notice board. There would be a ceremony in the Town Hall on 26 November for all Wirral winners – JB to attend. DFW and JB to forward photos from the Britain in Bloom and Wirral ceremonies for use on website, newsletter etc.

Action: JB/DFW

Baskets had been taken down 9 November

- **Street Signs**

No further progress as yet.

- **Christmas Lights**

JW reported that the quote received of £500 per tree to light up three trees in the village centre, which had been accepted by the Committee, was only for the cost of installation and the cost of the new lights would be additional. The original quote had been for pea lights, which would cost £2,400 in addition to installation. JW had agreed with the contractor that we would go for festoon lights instead, which would cost less and be cheaper to install.

The total cost would now be £4,300 (£1,700 for existing village lights, £1,700 for purchase of new tree lights, £900 for installation of tree lights). The Wirral Community Fund grant of £500 would go towards the cost, together with the results of fund raising organised by Kate Wyness and a donation from the OBK.

3. Strategy Workshop

The final draft of the Strategy had been circulated. Major tasks included the reviews of Secret Gardens and the communications strategy, and succession planning, but actions in all four areas needed to be prioritised. We also need to get views back from our members on eg communications, possibly through focus groups. The idea of advisory sessions with local architects was put forward in relation to making changes to character buildings.

Agreed to review the strategy at the May 2020 meeting to look at progress.

4. AGM

The 40th Anniversary booklet was currently with the designer Phill Jenkins. The print run, quality and cost was still to be agreed.

Action: AC/RE/JW/GR

5. History Group

BK reported that walks and publications were doing well. The digitisation project had started with the help of a website designer. The new website would be separate from the main Oxton Society site, but linked.

6. Financial Report

The Treasurer reported that the final payments to the Secret Gardens charities would be made in the next two weeks.

7. Membership Report

The Membership Secretary reported that 50 membership had lapsed this year: 10 of members who had died or moved away, the reason for the remaining 40 lapsing was unknown. 22 new members had joined.

8. Planning

- A report was submitted with an update to a planning application for 38-40 Arno Road: it appeared that there had been a further development and the applications had been withdrawn.
- SW had circulated a draft code of practice for the Planning Group. A revised Planning Policy section was still to be prepared and both would be added to the website when complete. **Action: SW**
- Agreed that Dominic Wilkinson be added as a new member of the Planning Group.

9. Trees

GH reported no particular problems with tree applications.

'Trees in a changing climate' conference held on 19 October at Town Hall, David Coombs from Tree Group and PT attended.

2020 was to be Tree Planting Year, need discussion on whether to be more proactive with tree planting. Tree Group to come up with ideas, with input from SF. **Action: GH/SF**

10 Village Centre

- CCTV – AB reported that costs of possible CCTV had escalated. Funding may be available from the Community Fund, but remaining funds would need to come from village businesses and not all businesses were yet on board with the proposal.
- HSBC site – services were currently being installed. Issue of landscaping to be raised with the developer before the end of the year. **Action: AC**
- Defibrillator – Anne Field wished to be involved in project. Some funds could be available from the Community Fund, some from the BHF, remainder from fundraising. Exact location to be decided. **Action: RE**
- Ashton House – AB and AC had met with David Ball to discuss. The NHS want to sell the site speedily, awaiting developers coming forward with proposals. Local wall expert Steve Walling had been asked to provide consultancy on the condition of the sandstone wall. He and his team did a survey and wrote a report free of charge for the Society – RE had written to thank him for this. He would also soon provide an estimate of the cost of the work required on the wall. Possibility that repair of the wall could be a condition of any planning permission for the site.

11. Secret Gardens

Agreed that a SG representative be invited to attend the next meeting to report on SG progress for 2020. **Action: RE**

12. Newsletter & Social Media

- Newsletter - November newsletter had been printed and was being delivered. The format and content of the newsletter to be reviewed as part of review of communications strategy.
- Website – JW reported that the position with the future of the ISP provider was still unclear.

13. Fundraising proposal

CJ reported on a possible fundraising event with an art expert from Bonhams who would give his time for free to provide a talk and possibly opportunity for members to bring along items to be looked at. This could be a joint event with the Williamson. Agreed that this was a very good idea, CJ to pursue, possibly for a Saturday afternoon in January. **Action: CJ**

14. Date of next meeting

- Next meeting **7 January 2020**, 7.30 p.m., St. Saviour's Parish Hall.

CMW/14 November 2019