

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

Present:

Rhiannon Evans	(RE)	(Chair)
Alan Chape	(AC)	(Secretary)
Patrick Toosey	(PT)	(Recruitment)
Steve Weber	(SW)	(Planning and Amenities)
Bob Knowles	(BK)	(History Group)
George Harrison	(GH)	(Tree Group)
Cllr Allan Brame	(AB)	
Steve Ferguson	(SF)	
Dave Barden	(DB)	(Membership Secretary)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	
Annette Capper	(ACa)	(Friends of the Arno)
Chris Jarrey	(CJ)	
Dominic Wilkinson	(DW)	
Carolyn Weber	(CWe)	

Apologies:

Jeff Willis	(JW)	(Vice Chair)
Griff Round	(GR)	(Treasurer)
John Booth	(JB)	(Hanging baskets)

Welcome: The Committee welcomed Carla Walker (CWa) who was considering as a new Committee member.

Jay Little and Lisa Stafford (Secret Gardens Co-ordinators) were present for Item 9

The Chair regretted to report the death of Julia Dorman who had been a member of the Secret Gardens Task Group, organizing entertainments for the event. She had written to the family expressing the sympathy of the Society.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 12 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

• **Conservation Areas Wirral**

A note had been prepared on the policy framework revision for the Oxton Conservation Area, to go forward as part of the CAW submission to the Local Plan. It is hoped that the Council will take it on board. The Local Plan is due to appear around the middle of the year, followed by public consultation.

• **Friends of the Arno**

ACa circulated the new FOA leaflet. The AGM had been held and well attended. In November the Friends had held a tree planting event in memory of a deceased member and had attended the RHS Britain in Bloom event in the Town Hall. The Santa's Grotto held on 14 December had been well received.

Joint calendar venture – 3 FOA members were interested in joining a joint Working Party. AC, DB and CWe agreed to be involved from the Society.
Possible FOA/OxSoc visit from the Earl of Shrewsbury – Aca to contact and see if visit could be arranged on Secret Gardens day. **Action: ACa**

- **Blue Plaques**

A CAW leaflet was circulated about a Blue Plaque Trail in the Wirral, which showed three of the plaques in Oxton – the Cyril Scott plaque had been too late to meet the publication deadline.

- **Hanging Baskets**

A report had been submitted by JB indicating that maintenance was needed on some of the watering system connections, and all the 14” brackets needed replacing with 16” ones. The baskets would go up on either 24 May or 7 June. JB had indicated that this would be his last year of involvement with the hanging baskets.

Agreed that the number of baskets required and costings were required, and need to make sure that Clearground are advised of the date for putting up the baskets as early as possible. SW to discuss with JB and report to next meeting. **Action: SW/JB**

- **Street Signs**

No further progress as yet.

- **Christmas Lights**

The Treasurer had submitted the accounts for the Christmas Lights event. There was a deficit of £1,859 (£2,119 in 2018). There had been problems with double parking and access on Willan Street which needed to be addressed next year. The electricity supply to one of the mulled wine stalls had failed part way through the event, which might have affected sales. Thanks were expressed to JW and his team for the organisation of the event.

- **Fund raising event**

CJ reported that he was hoping to arrange an antiques talk and ‘Antiques Roadshow’ event at the Williamson in March. **Action: CJ**

- **40th Anniversary Booklet**

AC would be seeing the designer next week, booklet should be ready in next two months. **Action: AC**

- **New Society Logo**

Two revised versions of the Society logo, including the strapline “Conservation & Community”, were circulated. Agreed to go with version 1, but with the position of the strapline changed so that the gap is at the bottom.

3. History Group

BK reported that the walks programme for the year was being finalized.

The History & Heritage Fair would be held on 7 March in the Town Hall

2020 is the Centenary year of the death of the architect Edmund Kirby and there was to be an exhibition and articles in the Periodical.

BK had been contacted by a young American, Rishi Sharma, who was interviewing veterans of WWII and wanted to talk to Mike Carr, and he had facilitated that.

BK reported on the Silverdale Rd house of Ron Gittins, deceased, which contained an amazing interior and artwork, and might become a community centre – BK to follow up. **Action: BK**

4. Financial Report

No financial report in the absence of the Treasurer.

5. Membership Report

The Membership Secretary reported that we now had 464 paid up memberships (452 same time in 2019). The membership stall at the Christmas Lights was successful, with more than ten new memberships. DB and BK were piloting a one-page leaflet about the Society for BK to distribute to non-member households on his next Newsletter distribution round. **Action: DB/BK**

6. Planning

SW reported on a retrospective application for the partial demolition of a sandstone wall in Palm Hill, which was significant as it raised a recent High Court judgement that strengthened the control over the demolition of walls in Conservation Areas. This important change would be incorporated in the advice note on the website, and a small piece would be included in the April Newsletter.

He also reported on an application for the former chemist's shop in Christchurch Road, which had again brought up the issue of inadequate Heritage Statements, and the issue had been raised with David Ball.

7. Trees

GH reported no particular problems with two recent tree applications.

There had been a change in personnel in the Port Sunlight landscaping team, who work with the Society over tree planting. SF was trying to arrange a meeting with them. 2/3 trees were scheduled for planting this year, but 2020 is a National Tree Planting Year and the idea of targeting sites for planting this year was suggested.

Agreed that there should be more articles in the Newsletter about trees and the Tree Planting Fund, to raise awareness.

Agreed that the Tree Group discuss the format of publication of tree comments in the Newsletter, eg whether to include more context on why the trees are so important to the village. GH to report back. **Action: GH**

8. Village Centre

- CCTV – AB reported that the quotation for CCTV was now £3,500. Originally WBC offered £1,000 and the Society £500, but there could now be an increased WBC contribution. There was a possibility of the Neighbourhood Watch Group doing some fundraising, and businesses should be asked to contribute – DFW had sent a letter to all businesses and although there had been a positive response, many did not wish to pay for CCTV. Stirling Wines had agreed to house the equipment and a camera on the side of their building. **Action: AB/DFW**
- HSBC site – AC had written to developer three weeks ago about future landscaping, but no response received. To write again. **Action: AC**
- Defibrillator – No application yet submitted for funding. Issues about responsibility for the defibrillator to be resolved. **Action: RE**
- Ashton House – the site had been sold quickly but no details yet known of the buyer. A stonemasonry firm had done some preparatory work on the wall and indicated that they would start on repair work in January.
- The Courtyard had closed, was to reopen as new similar business

9. Secret Gardens

Jay Little reported that the SG event coincided with the VE weekend celebrations and there were plans to theme some of the activities around this. There were 20 gardens planned for this 20th event, with possible strapline 20/20 in 2020.

Following the death of Julia Dorman, Lesley would take on entertainment arrangements for 2020, but a replacement was needed for next year. Alan McGarrity to step down as Ticket Manager after this year, replacement needed. JW to step down as infrastructure manager this year, replacement needed. Task Group to meet on 27 January.

Two existing charities for 2020 would be Shaftesbury Youth Club and Wirral Fund for Children with Special Needs. Third charity had dropped out and submissions had been invited from nine charities to join. Only one application was received, from Stick 'n' Step, a Wirral based charity supporting children and young people with cerebral palsy. This had been looked at by a small group (CWe, Becky Atherton, Kirsty Cotton) who were recommending accepting the application. **Agreed** that Stick 'n' Step be accepted as a SG charity.

10. Newsletter & Social Media

- Newsletter – February Newsletter was being edited by Pete Flynn, may run to 12 pages. 12 pages costs about £80 more than 8 pages. It is proposed to do an on-line survey, using a free survey package, to seek members' views on the current content of the Newsletter and ideas for future content. CWe to be involved in discussions about future of Newsletter. **Action: CWe/CWa/Pete Flynn**
- **Agreed** that we would now include a short 'welcome' piece in the Newsletter about any business new to the village, as long as it is not seen as being PR for the business, but the idea of vouchers from businesses being included in the Newsletter be not agreed.
- Website – CWe reported on plans to develop a Business section on the Society website, with a page for each business that wished to be included, with details of the business, opening times, contact details, link to any website/Facebook site and photo. **Agreed** that this should go ahead: DFW to include something in his next Business Bulletin, CWe to prepare proforma to go to businesses asking for information, business reps to collect the information. **Action: CWe/DFW**

14. Date of next meeting

- Next meeting **3 March 2020**, 7.30 p.m., St. Saviour's Parish Hall.