

**Minutes of Oxton Society Executive Virtual Committee Meeting
 20 January 2021, 6.00 p.m, via Zoom platform**

Present:

Rhiannon Evans	(RE)	(Chair)
Alan Chape	(AC)	(Secretary)
Jeff Willis	(JW)	(Vice Chair)
Griff Round	(GR)	(Treasurer)
Steve Weber	(SW)	(Planning and Amenities)
Bob Knowles	(BK)	(History Group)
George Harrison	(GH)	(Tree Group)
Cllr Allan Brame	(AB)	
Patrick Toosey	(PT)	
Steve Ferguson	(SF)	
John Booth	(JB)	(Hanging baskets)
Dave Barden	(DB)	(Membership Secretary)
Annette Capper	(ACa)	(Friends of the Arno)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	
Dominic Wilkinson	(DW)	
Chris Jarrey	(CJ)	
Carla Walker	(CWa)	
Heather Alcock	(HA)	
John Heathman	(JH)	
Carolyn Weber	(CWe)	

Apologies were received from John Field

Lisa Stafford was present for the item on Secret Gardens

1. Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 3 November were approved. Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Officers held on 22 December were circulated.

2. Matters Arising on the Minutes

• **Secret Gardens 2021**

Secret Gardens Coordinators had met and agreed that the 2021 event cannot go ahead. To proceed with organising another Virtual Gardens event after garden owners have been informed by SF/PT of cancellation of live event. SF reported that there had been a very good response to original request to garden owners to participate. Funds raised by virtual event could be shared between last year's charities, also possibly Woodcraft Folk and Friends of the Arno – Officers to discuss.

Action: SF/PT/Officers

• **The Willows**

Tree work – AC/JH organising for this to be done February after the lights had been taken down.

Defibrillator – now erected but not yet operational, awaiting authorization details from North West Ambulance. Small team to be responsible for administration.

Noticeboard – had been refurbished by Oxton Joinery to very high standard. To be filled with material shortly and a piece to go in Newsletter. **Action: JW/Paul**

Smith

- **40th Anniversary Booklet & other publications**

Over 100 copies of the booklet had been sold so far. Sales of history publications slow at the moment, affected by closure of the Williamson.

3. Membership Report

The Membership Secretary circulated a report showing that 27 memberships had lapsed but 41 new memberships had been taken out following posts on Facebook. 186 memberships are up for renewal this year. JW working on website to set up new system for paying by Standing Order, but 10% of members still had no email address and would probably continue to pay by cheque.

4. Finance Report

The Treasurer reported that there was c. £27,000 in the bank account but with no Secret Gardens income again this year we would be spending around £5,000 more than income. The alternatives were to live off the reserves, reduce spending eg on hanging baskets, or proactive fundraising. He suggested the possibility of an identified fundraising member of the Committee.

SW said that a decision on hanging baskets needs to be made quickly as Dovecote Nurseries need notice of our order. Agreed that £2,000 should be allocated for a reduced number of hanging baskets, and that we should try to raise around half of that by fund raising. SW/JB to discuss the implications of the decision.

Action: SW/JB

5. Planning Report

SW circulated a report on two new applications, an update on one previous application and note of an enforcement complaint submitted. The report was accepted

6. Tree Report

A report on four applications was submitted, no issues. Until a new coordinator was found, AC agreed to put together the committee report from the information he receives from Ron Jones.

SF reported that Port Sunlight Village Trust had temporarily suspended the service they have always offered with tree planting but would help again next year.

7. History Group

Activities had been somewhat curtailed during the pandemic, but one new member had joined the group. Bk had prepared a second Family Walk Quiz, to be put on the website.

8. Friends of the Arno

ACa circulated a report on FOA activity. BK noted that the sign under the bug hotel had disappeared – Aca to investigate.

Action:

ACa

9. Xmas Lights

The lights would be taken down 31 January. The new tree lights had been very successful, as had the decorated Christmas tree, which would be bigger next year. Thanks were expressed to John Heathman and his team for the organisation of the Christmas Lights.

10. AGM

AGM to be held in April, probably as a virtual event. To have normal business items, followed by suggested three 10-minute recorded sessions:

- Lessons from the pandemic – AB presenting
- Eco Oxton – suggested Peter Gommon presenting
- Quality of buildings in Conservation Area – SW presenting

These sessions would be based on a conversation between 2/3 people.

Officers to consider possible recipients of normal AGM awards. Design Awards already agreed, will need plaque/certificate.

Also possible changes required to the constitution linked to the move to payment by Standing Order – household/individual memberships and joining 'holiday' if people join after 1 November. To be discussed by the Officers at their next meeting.

Action: Officers

11. Newsletter & Social Media

CW reported that the next newsletter would be out second week of February. SF had checked with newsletter delivery team and all were happy to continue delivering during the lockdown.

CWa reported that the Only in Oxton Facebook page was working well.

Website – Blue Plaques page to be revamped, with a map showing the location of the plaques.

12. Williamson Art Gallery

A copy of a letter written by RE/AC to Wirral Borough Council about the proposed review of the Council's museum service had been circulated. AB reported that so far over 10,000 signatures had been received on a petition supporting the Williamson Art Gallery.

13. Any other business

2021 Census - CW noted that the next ten-yearly national Census was to be held 21 March 2021 and that community groups were being encouraged to help publicise the census. Agreed that a piece be put in the newsletter and that the Society noticeboard, Facebook site and Twitter be used to spread the word from 12 February when national publicity was due to start.

Action: CW

Rewilding of Oxton – Aca reported that she had discussed this with the Friends of the Arno gardening group. They will not be able to take it on as they are such a small group and have a backlog of work, but they could offer advice.

14. Date of next meeting

Next meeting **to be held 2 March 2021, via Zoom.**