

**Minutes of Oxton Society Executive Virtual Committee Meeting  
 2 March 2021, 5.00 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)	
John Heathman	(JH)	
John Field	(JF)	
Carolyn Weber	(CWe)	

**Apologies** were received from Heather Alcock

Lisa Stafford was present for the item on Secret Gardens

**1. Minutes of previous meetings**

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 20 January 2021 were approved. Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Officers held on 1 February 2021 were circulated.

**2. Matters Arising on the Minutes**

• **Secret Gardens 2021**

3 main sponsors had signed up – Bogan’s Carpets, Brennan Ayre O’Neill and Revive Stone Walls. A minimum of 8 ‘mini sponsors’ was being sought.

12 gardens had so far been recruited, aiming for at least 20. Could consider including not just whole gardens, but particular features – to be discussed. Friends of the Arno and Callister Garden would also be doing videos.

Organisers considering whether possible to run a raffle, and were looking to include entertainers, as last year.

To use Justgiving or similar for donations

• **The Willows**

Defibrillator – now operational. JF reporting weekly to. North West Ambulance.

Bins – AC to talk to Mike Hercules re bins at the Willows development. AB to pursue suggestion of new location for ‘Home’ bins awaiting collection instead of in front of Willows.

**Action: AC/AB**

- ***Hanging Baskets***

A generous offer had been received from a Society member to fund all the hanging baskets this year in memory of family members. The Society has offered to put up a commemorative plaque if desired. It has been difficult so far to contact the businesses which provide the water supply for the baskets as most are closed and there is a need to check that the watering system is working as it has not been used for a long time. The baskets should go up at the beginning of June.

- ***Conservation Areas Wirral/Local Plan***

The old Local Plan was 21 years, WBC has timetable for new plan, which will include a strategic policy framework for Conservation Areas and individual plans for each CA. Draft plan probably ready in March, to be followed by consultation period. Adoption of Plan around mid 2022. The Planning Group would need to do work on the plan when draft available.

### **3. Membership Report**

The Membership Secretary had circulated a report. The new Standing Order system was working well. The estimate for website changes in relation to the Standing Orders was £200, but the final bill was £400.

Adverts on Only in Oxton Facebook page were bringing in new memberships.

### **4. Finance Report**

The Treasurer reported that the Society had spent £6,000 more than income during the financial year, but the deficit was not unexpected as there had been no contribution from Secret Gardens.

### **5. Planning Report**

- SW circulated a report on one new application and an update on an enforcement complaint. The planning application had raised important questions on the role of the Oxton Society in relation to the views of neighbours about applications. Further comments had been submitted to WBC about the enforcement complaint and the enforcement team had a rethink and were now asking for a retrospective planning application to be made.
- The Planning Group, along with two architects, had also met to discuss how to improve the quality of new developments in the Conservation Area. The timing of this was appropriate as the government as part of its review of the planning system has a major focus on improving the quality of development. The biggest development project in the Conservation Area for some time will be the Ashton House site, for which proposals will come forward before too long, and the ideal would be for the Society group to have some input to the design.
- AC and SW would be having a meeting on 10 March with the new interim Head of Planning at WBC to discuss design ambitions for Ashton House among other issues.

### **6. Tree Report**

A report on three applications was submitted, no issues. The advertisement for a new coordinator had not produced any response as yet.

GH reported that most of the tree surgeons that they normally recommend have no retired. SF/JF/CWa/AB to send names of new tree surgeons to GH. **Action: SF/JF/CWa/AB**

### **7. History Group**

Report on meeting held 15 February had been circulated. BK reported that the History Group had just agreed to restart History Walks from 17 May 2021.

## **8. Friends of the Arno**

ACa circulated a report on FOA activity. The Arno and Oxton Fields continued to be very busy during the pandemic. AB reported that the new WBC budget includes some maintenance for the Arno and he was waiting to hear back from Council Officers about the details of the maintenance.

## **9. AGM**

Following consultation with the Charity Commission, AGM's may be postponed during the pandemic so agreed that no AGM be held in April as originally planned but that the September AGM be held as normal looking at the 20/21 year, but with reference back to 19/20 year.

A virtual event for members was still planned for earlier in the year, probably May rather than April, to include conversations on three topics:

- Lessons from the pandemic
- Eco Oxton
- Quality of buildings in Conservation Area

It would be necessary to amend the constitution at the September meeting to allow for the adjournment or postponing of AGM's and the use of virtual meetings.

**Action: Officers**

## **10. Newsletter & Social Media**

CW reported that the next newsletter would be out second week of April.

## **11. Williamson Art Gallery**

WBC had agreed that the Williamson would stay open, but with reductions in funding. There would be two voluntary redundancies and changes to the opening hours. 13,000 people had signed the petition to keep the gallery open.

## **12. Any other business**

RE reported that she had received a note from Ian Wray, who was to be Chair of Birkenhead Park, wishing to discuss a closer relationship with the Society. He would attend the next Committee meeting to discuss.

DFW noted that a new business rep was needed to replace SF – JH offered to be business rep.

BK raised an issue with cycling on Duckpond Lane, where there was a sign asking cyclists to dismount. AB to look into when the sign went up and why. **Action: AB**

Rewilding of Oxton – JF raised issue of possible rewilding of piece of land by Jarrow Close. This might fall under WBC Highways rather than Parks and Gardens. AB had contacted WBC about it in the past – to look back and let JF know what had been said. **Action: AB**

## **13. Date of next meeting**

Next meeting **to be held 27 April 2021, via Zoom.**