



## Minutes of Oxton Society Committee Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022, 18.00 St Saviour's

### Present:

Rhiannon Evans	(RE)	(Chair)
Jeff Willis	(JW)	(Vice Chair)
John Heathman	(JH)	(Secretary)
Alan Chape	(AC)	(Conservation and Partnership)
Griff Round	(GR)	(Treasurer)
Cllr Allan Brame	(AB)	
Dave Barden	(DB)	(Membership Secretary)
Dominic Wilkinson	(DW)	(Planning Group)
Chris Jarrey	(CJ)	
Lisa Stafford	(LS)	(Secret Gardens)
Peter Gommon	(PG)	(Tree planting)
Rowena Beighton-Dykes	(RB)	(History Group)

1. **Apologies** were received from Steve Weber, Heather Alcock, Carla Walker, John Booth, George Harrison, John Field, Annette Capper, Bob Knowles, Don Firth-Williamson

2. **RE** noted with deep sadness the recent passing of Carolyn Weber and Mike Carr. Carolyn was a long-term member of the Society and active committee member carrying out a number of key duties. Mike was certainly our oldest member, but also probably the longest serving resident of Oxton and a keen supporter of the Society. Both will be greatly missed.

### 3. Tree Planting scheme

Pete Gommon was introduced to the committee and outlined the latest approach that the Society would adopt for new tree planting (in member's property) post 2022, and also the present situation with the two planting proposals in process. Despite seemingly high cost, it was agreed to honour the 2022 planting proposals as these were already 'promised'. In future, the Society would generally as a rule, not fund the purchase of trees for members, but would adopt a discretionary funding approach and look at each proposal on its own merits: the requirement needing to be met being to ensure that residents purchase an appropriate tree and that they are supported in its planting by offering expert advice and source of trees. Peter will meet with residents with this facilitating framework approach ie advice on types of appropriate trees and support in selection and planting of trees from Port Sunlight Trust. Our society rules and guidance notes on this are to be amended (**Action JH and JW**)

### 4. Secret Gardens

Lisa Stafford updated the meeting on planning progress for this year's event. Programmes are now printed and being distributed to selling outlets. E-tickets are also selling OK. Points to follow up on:

1. Confirm whether the Lord Lieutenant will be attending (**Action JH**)

2. Visit Barbara Carr at a suitable time to confirm the "Rest Stop" at her house **(Action RE/JH)**
3. Chris Jarrey offered to assist with the task of notices and banners that Steve Weber has usually managed. Link up required with Malcolm Reid **(Action SJ)**
4. Everyone to bake a cake and pass on to Monica Toosey! **(Action All)**

## 5. Approval of previous minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 were approved.

## 6. Conservation

1. Local Plan. Allan Brame informed the meeting that the draft Local Plan had been unanimously approved by the Council and that it would now pass to the government inspectorate to be scrutinized at a public hearing, to be held probably in 2023. The draft was generally good news in that all Wirral green belt was proposed to remain protected from housing development. Alan Chape added that the 'bar' for planning approval appears to have been lifted from a position of 'do no harm' to one of 'make a positive contribution'. How this will be interpreted by the Council is not defined, but may become clearer when Design Standards documentation is drawn up and released. In this latter regard it is still unclear how the Council will have the capacity in manpower to administer the proposed plan.
2. Local Listing scheme. AC outlined that the Oxtun conservation area will be taking part in a pilot scheme along with two other Merseyside areas. The aim of the scheme being to recognize significant properties and designate them (with a non-binding designation of "A non-designated heritage asset"). This would aim to encourage the property owner to protect their property from negative development or refurbishment. The Society would also be minded to assist the property owners in this regard. The Planning Group are to identify 10-20 properties to be considered for this designation **Action AC** to draft documentation to take this initiative forward.
3. Planning report. See report submitted with agenda. JW informed the meeting that The Society was aware of a telephone call made to Kirsty Cotton by the owner of the property 14 Hughes Lane enquiring about a planning issue. It was agreed that JW will contact the owner and resolve the issue **(Action JW)**.
4. The Conservation leaflet for all residents. JW stated that this would not be ready now until later in the year and would be ready for circulation round about the time of the AGM.
5. Tree report (as circulated). No issues to discuss
6. RE raised the issue of metal roller shutters on shop fronts after a request was made for clarity on their use in the conservation area by a society member. This follows recent break-ins suffered by some of the village shops. The rule, re-stated by the planning group, and agreed by the committee, was that new roller shutters are not allowed to be installed. It was also noted that the new CCTV system, now being LIVE, may deter future criminal behaviour.

## 7. Finance

(See accounts submitted with agenda). GR explained the current financial status of the Society and reiterated our reliance on a successful Secret Gardens event to allow future funding of projects. These accounts will be presented to our accountants for verification. **(Action GR)**. Submission to the Charity Commission will follow **(Action JH)**

AB asked what the £500 subscription was. GR responded that this was an annual fee

to be members of CivicVoice. Some discussion on this membership as some believe this might not be value for money. JW proposed to consider this with the Planning Group and advise **(Action JW)**

8. **Membership report.** (See distributed report) DB stated that the standing order system appears to be working well, although a small number of members are continuing to use cheques or cash to pay their membership.
9. **History Group report.** (See distributed report) In the absence of Bob Knowles, Rowena Beighton-Dykes outlined the highlights from the report. JW stated, which was agreed by those present that the quality of the history group periodicals was exceptional. In discussion RB stated that the human effort to move to a more IT based function may be prohibitive to achieve what the society is looking for.
- 10 **Friends of the Arno report.** (As circulated). No issues to discuss
- 11 **Village matters**
  - a. **Defibrillator machine.** No activity to report. A second machine is now present outside The Shrewsbury Arms pub.
  - b. **CCTV.** Now operational
  - c. **Hanging baskets:** In the absence of John Booth, JH updated the meeting: All planning and orders complete to install the baskets last weekend of May. Despite our reluctance to enter another competition, WBC have entered the baskets project into the Britain in Bloom competition on the basis that it is a sure bet for an award (fee to enter paid by WBC).
  - d. **Traffic measures.** AB updated the meeting: Following the visit by WBC officers to hear our concerns a number of items of concern have been taken away for a resolution to be devised.
- 12 **AOB**
  - a. Retirement of Chair. RE stated that so far no one had come forward to show interest in the position of Chair.
  - b. Annual plan of events and key dates. JH explained plan previously sent round and asked for comment. It was noted that this meant that only 3 newsletters would be produced per year; in March – to advertise Secret Gardens; in June – ahead of hanging baskets; and in October – ahead of Xmas Lights. It would also mean that the invitations and paperwork for the AGM would be mainly distributed by email, with only approx. 50 members requiring a paper invitation. RB stated this would have an impact on History Group periodical publications – matter to be considered further before decision made.
- 13 **Date of next meeting.**

This is planned to be Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June starting at 7pm. St.Saviour's

The meeting finished at 19.40