



Minutes of Oxton Society Committee Meeting 4th April 2023, 19.00 St Saviour's

Present:

Jeff Willis	(JW)	(Vice Chair and Planning)
John Heathman	(JH)	(Secretary)
Griff Round	(GR)	(Treasurer)
Alan Chape	(AC)	(Conservation and Partnership)
Bob Knowles	(BK)	(History Group)
George Harrison	(GH)	(Tree Group)
Annette Capper	(ACa)	(Friends of The Arno)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	(Business rep)
John Booth	(JB)	(Hanging Baskets)
John Field	(JF)	(Blue Plaques)
Allan Brame	(AB)	(Wirral Borough Council)

1. **Apologies** were received from Heather Alcock, Steve Weber, Chris Jarrey, Carla Walker, Dominic Wilkinson
2. Jeff Willis chaired the meeting in the absence of Chris Jarrey. Ron Jones attended the meeting for the first item of discussion (Trees)
3. **Approval of minutes.** The minutes of the last meeting were approved as amended.
4. **Conservation**
 - a. Trees. Ron Jones and GH outlined where we are with this subject. It was emphasized that the role of a Co-ordinator to lead the group's transactions and process was not over-bearing on one individual and in fact did not require any specific knowledge of tree species or arborist expertise. If someone were to come forward to volunteer for this role, they would have a period of consolidation in the group before taking over the organization aspects. In the absence of a volunteer being identified, the role should be passed to a committee member, on a rota basis. It was also pointed out that WBC have come out of their shell recently and are being very visible in the CA, visiting sites where felling is proposed, and liaising with the society fully. A new employee is attending sites with Eric Bowman, the section leader for WBC. On this basis Ron and GH were attempting to meet up with Eric Bowman to re-establish an understanding of how the society and the WBC trees section work together effectively. **Action Ron/GH** to arrange this meeting.
On the subject of a full tree survey and strategic action plan for the future, AC asked whether we knew of other local groups who would have arborist expertise to hand - JH said that there were 2 companies who have indicated that they are willing to be take on this task, but that contact with the Tree Strategy Manager at WBC had been fruitless. A meeting, will be arranged (AC, JW, GH) to finalise the scope and action outputs of the survey. **Action AC** to arrange

- b. Planning Report. As per previously emailed: Watching brief on the Shrewsbury Road properties which have agreed a sale.
 - c. Resident's leaflet: This is ready to go and will be distributed to all addresses in the CA mid-April. Advance copies were circulated at the meeting. The committee were unanimous is that this was a first class document and thanks were offered to JW for leading this item.
- 5. Constitution** JH guided the committee through the proposed changes to the society's constitution. Agreement reached on most changes. A final draft will be issued prior to the changes being formally agreed at the next AGM. Discussion on how the Society's 'Objects' can be interpreted to assist activity outside the actual CA boundary. It was agreed that in general, if an area/organization can affect the CA's Objects, then this is legitimate investment by the Society. Discussion also on whether some financial governance could be introduced into the constitution – other constitution examples to be investigated. **Action JH** to complete draft
- 6. Friends of The Arno – Investment Options** As per reports, ACa outlined the investment options that exist for FOTA, and invited the Society to consider whether we would be willing to support this. Discussion on financial position followed with GR stating that as an approximate guide, £15k is available for conservation investment projects. It was agreed that a more accurate and thorough consideration needed to be made, but the committee agreed to fund the most imminent need for funding (option 2 "Extension to shed") to the sum of £3000. Further funding to FOTA will be considered alongside other projects. AC proposed that a formal process for considering such funding requests needs to be implemented. **Action JH** to formally inform Peter de Figueiredo of committee decision. **Action GR** to confirm the budget available for conservation projects.
- 7. Community items:**
- a. **Businesses.** DFW updated committee on recent meetings with the businesses. These have been sporadic in their attendance and commitment for action from the businesses. However there is a new contact within the sphere of the businesses via Paula Bassett (The Library) and Laura Dodd (Wirral Chamber of Commerce) who we should use as a means of communicating with businesses if required.
 - b. **Secret Gardens.** The society has been approached (through WBC) to donate free tickets to a charitable group of Ukranian refugees. It was agreed that free tickets would only be offered to this group if they offered to volunteer with the running of the event. **Action JH** to liaise with Kirsty Cotton/Lisa Stafford.
 - c. **Hanging baskets.** JB outlined an alternative option for making up the baskets and installing at an earlier date than normal. It was decided to stick to the original plan.
 - d. **Bunting.** Proposal to erect the bunting in time for Secret Gardens. Agreed. **Action JB** to arrange.
- 8. Sub-group reports:**
- a. **Finance.** GR stated general status of accounts (positive). Preparation of formal accounts for recently complete financial year for audit and AGM now underway
 - b. Friends of The Arno. As per report. ACa presented recent activity
 - c. History. As per report. BK stated that the digitization project is up and running again.
 - d. Membership. As per report.
 - e. Communications. JH passed on notes from Carla Walker: *Any photographs taken for use in Newsletters / periodicals, must be taken at the largest digital capacity setting in order to succeed at the print stage.*
- 9. AOB.** JW proposed and it was agreed to pay Rosie Hearnshaw for the compilation

work that she undertakes for our publications. £200 for a Secret Gardens programme, and £100 per Newsletter.

10. Date of next meeting is Tuesday 6th June. 7pm. St Saviour's.

The meeting finished at 9.00pm