



OXTON SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.00 pm 28th September 2022 St Saviour's Parish Centre, Oxton

Present: At least 36 members of the Society: John Heathman Rhiannon Evans, Alan Chape, Griff Round, Kirsty Cotton, Paul Cotton, Bob Knowles, Justine Shakespeare, Gordon Capper, Annette Capper, Ronnie Stone, Lorraine Kendrick, Peter Wright, Malcolm Reid, Kate Thornton, Paul Gelling, Ronald Jones, Joyce Little, Paul Edwards, Kirsten Edwards, Jeff Willis, John Booth, Sue Spencer, Rachel Leah, Andrew Hamer, Christine Willis, Kate Heathman, Janine Suggett, Cheryl Almond, Alan McGarrity, Edward Polhampton, Ann Fordham, Allan Brame, John Field, Dave Barden, Heather Alcock.

Apologies were received from 20 members: Sean and Diana Duncan, Kevin and Patsy Donovan, Steve Weber, Carla Walker, Paul Harris (Port Sunlight Village Trust), Patrick and Monica Toosey, Glyn Mon Hughes, Graham McLean, Chris Brace, Jean Dickie, Mick Whitley MP, Peter de Figueredo, Lynda Roberts, George Harrison, Don and Julie Firth-Williamson.

1. Welcome

The Chair of the Society, Rhiannon Evans, welcomed members to the AGM.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the last AGM, which had previously been made available to members by email, and with paper copies circulated at the meeting were approved. Proposed for approval by John Booth; seconded by Paul Cotton

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4. Chair's Summary of highlights and achievements 2021-22

The Chair outlined highlights from the last year, being:

- Recovery to normal modes of working following the end of Covid restrictions; with this in mind, the Chair specifically thanked Allan Brame and his team for their efforts during the Covid lockdown periods to ensure vulnerable residents were looked after and not left without essential supplies. Members present reflected this with a round of applause.

- Increased focus on the core strategy of the society, namely Conservation
- Successful Virtual Secret Gardens event, and the continuation of the Hanging Baskets project which won an RHS award.
- The successful work carried out by the History Group with periodicals, running the village walks and the promotion of a 6th blue plaque being installed to commemorate the life of Captain George Shultz
- A move to full multi-media communications by use of Twitter, Facebook as well as traditional methods with the emphasis on the need for a more co-ordinated approach to this subject
- Working with new committee members after several retirements at the last AGM.

The Chair also reflected on changes that have happened since her appointment some 12 years ago; these being ;

- Organisational change to the committee with several sub-groups carrying out the work of the society
- Focus on Design Awards to demonstrate and celebrate good practice in construction projects from local residents
- Development of partnerships with like-minded organisations E.g. the Williamson Art Gallery, Friends of The Arno and CAW (Conservation Areas Wirral) which is chaired by our committee member Alan Chape.
- The society has raised over £400,000 through its activities, most of which has been shared by local charities

The Chair asked for questions from members (none forthcoming) and then Approval of the Annual Report was sought and obtained: Proposed by Jay Little; seconded by Kirsty Cotton

5. Financial Report

The Treasurer, Griff Round presented an income and costs report for the last year's financial transactions. This highlighted the success of the virtual Secret Gardens event which provided a small amount of revenue. Because of this, for the year ending February 28th 2021, the society made a loss of just £504. A healthy bank balance meant that work on Conservation could continue.

Questions were invited from members present:

Janine Suggett asked whether the Society receives Gift Aid. The answer was yes, for most of our subscriptions.

John Booth enquired whether we are exempt of VAT charges. The answer from Griff round was that the society is not VAT registered and therefore pays VAT for services, as normal

A member (??) enquired on why we are paying bank charges. The response was that these have been recently introduced by our main clearing bank, HSBC, although we have opened a savings bank account to minimise transactions. If we were to move away from our main

clearing bank, then all members would need to change their subscriptions standing orders, something that the society did not wish to undertake.

This financial report was approved: Proposer Bob Knowles, Secunder Janine Suggett.

6. Election of Officers and Committee

The Secretary explained to all members present that the current Chair, Rhiannon Evans was to stand down from the Chair position at the end on this AGM meeting. This had been communicated to members through recent newsletters and website pages. Nominations for members to stand for election as Chair had been requested, and one nomination had been received from Chris Jarrey. There being no objection to this proposal, nor any other nomination, Chris Jarrey was appointed to succeed Rhiannon Evans as Chair of the society. Formal nomination of Chris Jarrey's appointment was received from Jeff Willis and Seconded by Alan Chape.

The election of the remaining Officer posts:

Vice Chair – Jeff Willis

Secretary – John Heathman

Treasurer – Griff Round

These were unopposed re-elections and were approved: Proposer John Field with Secunder Peter Wright

The following were elected to serve on the Committee: Dave Barden, John Booth, Alan Chape, John Field, George Harrison, Bob Knowles, Heather Alcock, Carla Walker, Steve Weber, Dominic Wilkinson.

These were unopposed re-elections and were approved: Proposer Kate Heathman, Secunder Rachel Leah

7. Design Awards.

Jeff Willis presented awards and commendations as follows:

Design Award to Paul Edwards of Edwards News for the refurbishment of the shop frontage and particularly the side window historical photographic print.

Joint Design Commendation to Deb and Adam Stevenson and to Heather and David Alcock for the restoration of the sandstone wall on Mount Pleasant and Nun Close.

Design Commendation to Heather and David Alcock for the re-building of the sandstone wall at the rear of Grassguards Well Cottages

Design Commendation to Amanda and Nim Subhedar for the building of the brick boundary wall at 26 Templemore Road

8. Awards for Outstanding Contributions to Oxton and its Community.

1. Bob Knowles read out a citation for the work carried out by Moira Young, as a volunteer for the Oxton book shop, located within the Williamson Art Gallery complex, and also her work for the History Group. This was enthusiastically supported by all members present. A certificate was presented to Moira by The Chair.
2. Jeff Willis read a citation to recognise the work done for the society's Secret Gardens projects during the years 2016 – 2019 by Joyce Little. This was enthusiastically supported by all members present. A certificate was presented to Joyce by The Chair.
3. Jeff Willis read a citation to recognise the work done for the society's Secret Gardens projects during the years 2016 – 2019 by Leslie McGarrity. This was enthusiastically supported by all members present. A certificate was presented to Alan McGarrity (in Leslie's absence) by The Chair.

9. The Future

Chris Jarrey introduced himself to the members present and stated his intentions for the future, particularly with regards to the urgent requirement to attract new and younger faces to the committee and in the engagement of a young generation to the concept of conservation.

Alan Chape then outlined the strategic objectives and re-emphasised the core business of the society: i.e. protecting the character of the conservation area and raising awareness of its heritage. In addition, the following subjects were all on the society's agenda:

Heritage Houses; Education and Persuasion; Protection of walls and the tree canopy; New house design, The Council Local Plan; Traffic management and parking; Response to Climate change.

Other agenda items are the the Society's focus on Conservation, the revision of the constitution, and finally the need for educational and informative programmes for all Oxton's residents reflecting the conservation matters previously mentioned above.

Alan went on to explain that:

- we have high standards that must be understood by residents before they put a spade in the ground.
- that the village has an inbuilt conflict of interest where residents wish to remove walls to allow their cars to park near the owner's house to allow electric vehicle charging
- and finally the concept of "Beauty" and what this is meant in newly formulated planning advice from the government.

To back this up, Alan demonstrated a draft of a new conservation leaflet that it is intended to circulate to all Oxton residents in the near future.

Questions were taken from the floor:

It was remarked that during the wall restoration at Templemore Road, the cast iron road sign went missing. Several other comments were made concerning the poor quality workmanship carried out by Council workers (Village Road resurfacing) and also the cowboy activities of several contractors whilst carrying out building works, particularly their disposal of waste into the drains.

Paul Cotton raised the comment that the society also stands for “Community” and that this appears to be missing from the overall strategy. A discussion took place on this point.

Janine Suggett wished to raise the problem of gas or petrol operated leaf blowers and their poor environmental performance. This was noted and information was handed across from Janine for possible use in a future newsletter.

Kate Heathman offered the idea that the local estate agents could be used to notify potential new residents that purchasing a property in Oxton carried a responsibility, and perhaps the new leaflet previously mentioned could be available from the estate agents.

10. The final item of the meeting was a citation read by Alan Chape thanking Rhiannon Evans for her leadership and work for the society during her tenure as Chair.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and the meeting closed at 8.50pm