



Minutes of Oxton Society Committee Meeting 5th March 2024, 19.00 St. Saviour's

Present:

Jeff Willis	(JW)	(Vice-Chair)
John Heathman	(JH)	(Secretary)
Alan Chape	(AC)	(Conservation and Partnership)
Bob Knowles	(BK)	(History Group)
Annette Capper	(ACa)	(Friends of The Arno)
Dominic Wilkinson	(DW)	(Planning Lead)
Don Firth-Williamson	(DFW)	(Business liaison)
Allan Brame	(AB)	(WBC)
George Harrison	(GH)	(Trees)

1. **Apologies** were received from Steve Weber, Carla Walker, Griff Round, Heather Alcock, John Field.
2. **Approval of minutes.** The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
3. **Conservation.** See report submitted
 - a. One planning application since the last report.
APPH/23/01586 18 Rosemount

Further to the above application the Oxton Society does not consider the landscape and building works within the boundary of the property to be contentious and has no objection to these elements.

However, we have serious concerns about the proposal to significantly widen the vehicular entrance on Rose Mount, specifically the loss of approximately three metres of high sandstone wall this would entail. The Heritage Statement mentions this section of wall having a 'significant contribution to the conservation area'.

The revised Local Plan Conservation Area policies WD 2.2 and CON-SA3.3 (Oxton Village), state that proposals within the Oxton CA "will be supported where they....conserve and enhance the essential unifying features of the landscape and street scene throughout the area, particularly...historic sandstone boundary walls". Clearly the removal of such a long section of a high sandstone wall in a very prominent location would be in contravention of the relevant Local Plan Conservation Area policy and cannot be supported by the Oxton Society.

b. Ashton House. No news.

c. Actions to promote conservation: Proposal by Alan Chape (see reports). Measures and actions from this were discussed. Main points:

1. Article 4. This would involve removing permitted development rights of property owners to ensure the heritage character of their properties was not destroyed by inappropriate changes. This would mean they would have to apply for planning permission for matters which would be a new requirement. Prior to engaging with Insall's

(or other organization to identify what properties would be affected) we should seek assurances from WBC that they would actually enforce Article 4 on property owners. It is assumed that this would affect up to approx 50 properties and would set a standard of process that would be beneficial in helping owners to develop their properties in a sympathetic and energy efficient way.

Overall, the actions proposed were:

- 1) In collaboration with CAW, we ask the Council to consider support for a pilot Article 4 for Oxtun covering, say 50, of heritage houses. They would be identified by an independent specialist consultancy (eg Insalls), financed by the Society.
 - 2) In the context of emerging national and local Design Guides we keep a watching brief on:
 - the Ashton House site especially to monitor the release of the remainder of the site and arrangements for the maintenance of the surrounding sandstone wall.
 - Any proposals for the development of the site at the junction of Palm Hill and Shrewsbury Rd
 - 3) We seek a meeting with the Highways Dept (including Allan Brame) to review measures to improve traffic circulation and parking provision.
 - 4) Join forces with CAW, Mountwood and Lower Heswall to seek a new protocol on responsibility for trees and report on progress of the ongoing TPO review.
- The actions were approved and Alan Chape was thanked for producing this thorough report.

d. Tree report. As per report submitted. **JH to ask** Dwain Chong to take over point of contact role with WBC. Advert for extra tree group staff is in the next newsletter.

e. Heritage lamp posts. Waiting to hear back from Paul Graves at WBC on our proposal to refurbish the posts. **(JH)**

4. Finance

- a. End of year report preparation in progress.

5. Community items

- a. **Communications.** Next newsletter is currently in final preparation. Distribution expected mid-late March.

b. **Business update.** No news from businesses. After promises of contributions towards the rubbish collection at Xmas lights event, nothing was forthcoming. More effort required in this matter for Secret Gardens.

c. **Hanging baskets.** Baskets have been ordered.

d. **Secret Gardens.** Planning continuing OK. Next meeting of organization committee is 12th March.

e. **Blue Plaques.** Sir Peter Faulkner Shephard progressing. More info required on this candidate. **Action BK**

f. **Callister Gardens.** (Interest was declared by AB and DW). JW outlined a proposal to link up with this organization in a similar we do with Friends of the Arno. Chair Cathy Warren has enquired whether we will donate to their fund to build a new pavilion. Agreed that we should engage with this organization, but waiting on change to constitution before we consider this further.

g. **Xmas Lights.** JH requested authorization for £250 to remove lights from trees, test and report back on what is required to restore working sets. Approved.

6. Sub-group reports:

- a. **Friends of The Arno.** As per reports sent out. Funding from WBC in maintaining Little Arno has been received.

b. **History.** As per report. Digitisation of records - concept and method consultation is on-going (HA/BK). Publication of second compilation of periodicals imminent. JW commented (agreed) that the quality of output from this group is excellent.

c. **Membership.** (JW). Modernisation of membership records onto a modern digital platform nearly complete.

7. AOB.

a. Constitution. JH reported that Charity Commission is working on a back-log of cases and that their estimation of dealing with our constitution changes is likely not to happen for another 6-8 weeks.

b. 20mph wheelie bin stickers. (JH) These have come to our attention. Stickers are approx £1 each. Approval was received to purchase 50. Intention was to issue these to SG garden owners for their street bin on the day of the event, and to anyone else who wants one.

c. Clean up Oxton's streets. JF has asked AB to help with improving situation where most heritage lamps on Rose Mount are not working. JH has been doing weekly litter pick and will be engaging Wirral Wombles/FB sites to try and encourage more activity. Clearing the mountain of leaf mulch is still an issue.

8. Date of next meeting

Agreed to be **Tuesday 7th May 7pm** at St. Saviour's

The meeting finished at 8.45pm