

Minutes of 9th AGM, Pearson Hall, 24 November 2012

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME: Bob Hine extended a warm welcome to all those present. He said that the Annual General Meeting was always a memorable occasion but this year was particularly so because of the power outage that had forced the meeting to relocate at short notice from the Pearson Hall to the Sonning Club. He thanked everyone for rallying around and being so understanding.

2. APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from a number of members; a full list is available from the Hon. Secretary.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The minutes of the 8th AGM, held on Saturday 26 November 2011, having previously been distributed, were unanimously agreed to be an accurate record on the proposal of Annabella Marks, seconded by Lesley Green.

4. BRIEF REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

a) Chairman's Report

Bob Hine explained that as his report was set out in the Annual Report & Accounts, he would attempt only to enhance it. He reported some mid-term changes in responsibility on the Executive Committee and thanked Mike Hart and Jeremy Gilmore for stepping in as Chairman of the Planning & Traffic Panel and as Webmaster respectively. He also thanked the *Village Voices* team of Mary Chapman, Annabella Marks, Judy Baldwin and Lesley Green for all their hard work in putting together the book, which he was delighted to say was now available, hot off the press. Finally, he thanked Andy Bell for his work on both the Executive Committee and the Planning & Traffic Panel, and Diana Coulter for masterminding the photographic competition and for editing *Bridge*. He said that he was sure that we were the envy of many a civic society in the high quality of our newsletter.

b) Planning & Traffic Panel Report

Due to the absence of the Panel's Chairman, Bob Hine summarised the activities of the Planning & Traffic Panel. The Panel had been actively involved in supporting the two Parish Councils by reviewing various planning applications. It had also been involved in the Conservation Area Assessment (CAA), which Sonning Parish Council (SPC) intended to discuss with residents at a public exhibition early next year. He concluded by saying that traffic volume and speed through the village continued to be a problem and that the Panel was working with SPC to consider what could be done to mitigate the problem.

The Society's President, John Edmonds, regretted that there was no representation on the Panel from Sonning Eye, particularly as its residents had played a major part in setting up the Society. He very much hoped that someone would come forward to serve and asked any interested persons to contact Mike Hart.

c) Education & Social Panel Report

Penny Feathers reported that the Panel had been very active during the year: involvement in the scarecrow trail, organisation of two very successful walks and talks and the photographic competition, which recorded a year in the life of the two villages. New members had been recruited at the Village Show and there had been good support for the Heritage Trail walks that had taken place the following day. Penny Feathers thanked everyone on the Panel for their help in arranging events and Society members for their support. She concluded by drawing attention to an unusual and interesting event due to be held in 2013: a group visit on Sunday 16 June to the Fawley Hill Railway and Country Estate. The Society had been very fortunate to secure 50 tickets to this unique place, which only opens to the public on four days each year. It offered a wonderful family day out and the Society was looking for expressions of interest from members by the end of February. If insufficient numbers were forthcoming, the event would be opened up to others.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Furness indicated that the financial report for the year to 31 August 2012 was set out in the Annual Report & Accounts. He drew attention to the refund of the donations for the CAA, which had been repaid as it was felt that SPC was better placed to manage the project. Bob Hine thanked Alan Furness for looking after the Society's finances so ably; at the last AGM he had issued a plea for a new Treasurer to come forward due to Alan Furness having to stand down. It gave him great pleasure to announce that, subject to an amendment to the Society's Constitution, Alan Furness, with encouragement from his wife, was willing to stand for re-election.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Bob Hine reported that the Society was most fortunate to have Allan Williams as its Independent Examiner. It was a role that he had undertaken for many years and one that he was willing to continue to perform.

7. AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 7.5 OF THE SOCIETY'S CONSTITUTION: John Edmonds took the chair at this point. He explained the rationale for the proposed amendment to the Constitution; for it to be approved a two-thirds majority of those members present was required. The proposed amendment was put to the vote and carried without objection.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

John Edmonds announced that four nominations for election as the Society's officers: Chairman: Bob Hine, proposed by Andrew McCoy, seconded by Alan Furness; Vice Chairman: Mike Hart, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Andy Bell; Honorary Secretary: Andy Bell, proposed by Alan Furness, seconded by Ken Peters and Honorary Treasurer: Alan Furness, proposed by Andy Bell, seconded by Sue Bell. It was proposed by Hazel Russell and seconded by Brian Arrowsmith and agreed unanimously that the aforementioned be elected en bloc.

9. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

John Edmonds announced six nominations for election to the Executive Committee: Penny Feathers, proposed by Daphne Payne, seconded by Alan Furness; Jeremy Gilmore, proposed by Brian Brooker, seconded by Pat Doyle; Lesley Heaney, proposed by Janet Fielder, seconded by Ken Peters; Annabella Marks, proposed by Andy Bell, seconded by Nick Marks; Pauline Simmonds, proposed by Diana Coulter, seconded by Alan Furness; and Patrick Hamblin, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Allan Williams. It was proposed by Diana Coulter and seconded by Hazel Russell and agreed unanimously that the aforementioned be elected en bloc.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bob Hine resumed the Chair and said that he was delighted to announce that the Society's environmental expert, Ali Driver, had been recognised with an entry in *Who's Who*. This was for distinction and influence in the field of environmental conservation. All those present warmly applauded the announcement.

Bob Hine invited the meeting to raise any other items of business. There being no other business, the meeting closed.



2012/2013

Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2012/2013

Executive Committee Report

Bob Hine, Chairman

The Committee's members in 2012/13 have been: Bob Hine (Chairman), Mike Hart (Vice Chairman), Andy Bell (Hon. Secretary), Alan Furness (Hon. Treasurer), Penny Feathers, Jeremy Gilmore, Patrick Hamblin, Lesley Heaney, Annabella Marks and Pauline Simmonds.

The Executive held six meetings during the year which were all well supported with an average attendance of 85%. We welcomed Patrick Hamblin to the Executive following the 2012 elections; he has taken an active role strengthening the work of the Planning and Traffic Panel in addition to supporting the Education and Social Panel.

I am very pleased to report that the Society website has continued to benefit from Jeremy Gilmore's professional expertise, with interesting updates that provide for enticing viewing, to ensure you have the opportunity to be kept informed.

Significant progress has been made on the Sonning Conservation Area Assessment which is a joint project with Sonning Parish Council. Thank you to all those involved.

Last year I was pleased to report that the Village Voices team had continued with their unstinting work in preparing text for the publication of a book. We were duly rewarded with the launch of the book at the 2012 AGM which was by



The launch of our hugely successful book, "Village Voices", at the AGM in 2012: the authors and editors were Mary Chapman, Judy Baldwin, Annabella Marks and Lesley Green

Society Membership

Lesley Heaney, Membership Secretary

The Society's membership stands at 212, which is made up as follows:

- **3 Corporate**
- **174 Double**
- **35 single**

20 members did not renew this year but the Society has managed to recruit 13 new members, whom we welcome most warmly.

The Executive decided to commission a low cost yet professional

torch light due to a power failure!

In this my final year as Chairman, I am pleased to report that I have enjoyed great support from the Executive team together with many members of the Society for which I am most grateful.

We are most fortunate to have a talented editor for our quarterly newsletter and I note that Diana Coulter has now produced 36 editions of *Bridge*. All are worthy of the bookcase and I look forward to the continuity that Diana provides

with this most informative publication.

Finally I would like to seize this opportunity to thank Penny Feathers for all that she has done over the past nine years serving on the Executive. Penny served as Secretary for five years from inception and for the last two years has led the Education and Social Panel. Penny will be stepping down at the AGM and we wish her

well, although I am pleased that she has agreed to continue to support the Education and Social Panel, especially with ticket sales for our programmed events.

It has been another interesting and busy year for the Society and the activities of the Panel's are reported in more detail overleaf.

looking marketing flyer, which could be posted through the doors of any Sonning & Sonning Eye residents who might like to join the Society. Jeremy Gilmore and Pauline Simmonds came up with a very good design.

We have so far delivered about 50 flyers to houses south of the A4 and have been encouraged by a response from 5 new members. We will extend the deliveries over the next few months.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that it is not always easy to know when new people move into the two villages, so I would appreciate any news you can provide so that I can drop them a welcoming note.

Financial Report for year as at 31 August 2013

Alan Furness, Honorary Treasurer

For this year's report, the General Fund is analysed between the *Village Voices* project and Other Activities.

The *Village Voices* book was published last year and sales commenced at the last AGM. By the date of this report income from book sales had reached £2,836.70 and 315 books had been sold.

As regards Other Activities, the excess of expenditure over income is £331.26 as analysed in the Financial Statement below, which together with the previous year's credit balance brought forward, shows a credit balance carried forward of £3,488.92.

SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY

GENERAL FUND AT 31ST AUGUST 2013

		£
BALANCE AT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2012		
General	3,820.18	
Village Voices	<u>1,418.81</u>	
		5,238.99
EXCESS (DEFICIT) INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR		
General	(331.26)	
Village Voices	<u>984.04</u>	
		652.78
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2013		
General	3,488.92	
Village Voices	<u>2,402.85</u>	
		<u>5,891.77</u>
GENERAL FUND REPRESENTED BY:		
CASH AT BANK - RESERVE ACCOUNT		5,800.00
CASH AT BANK - CURRENT ACCOUNT		<u>91.77</u>
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2013		<u>5,891.77</u>

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2012 TO 31ST AUGUST 2013

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,115.00	NEWSLETTER	487.25
AGM	952.00	AGM	846.19
MAIDEN ERLEIGH WALK	37.00	MAIDEN ERLEIGH WALK	20.00
HERITAGE OPEN DAY	104.00	HERITAGE OPEN DAY	20.50
LOCAL HISTORICAL BUILDINGS	226.00	LOCAL HISTORICAL BUILDINGS	80.97
FAWLEY VISIT	750.00	FAWLEY VISIT	750.00
DONATIONS	1.00	DONATIONS	850.00
BANK INTEREST	2.02	SUBSCRIPTIONS	97.00
		GENERAL EXPENSES	98.46
		LIABILITY INSURANCE	267.91
VILLAGE VOICES INCOME:		VILLAGE VOICES EXPENDITURE:	
VILLAGE VOICES BOOK SALES	2,836.70	VILLAGE VOICES BOOK COSTS	1,796.98
Miscellaneous	17.00	Miscellaneous	72.68
		EXCESS (DEFICIT) INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	
		General	(331.26)
		Village Voices	<u>984.04</u>
			652.78
	<u>6,040.72</u>		<u>6,040.72</u>

I have reviewed the above General Fund and Income and Expenditure Account which are in accordance with the books and records maintained. In my opinion the accounts represent a fair summary of the General Fund and Income and Expenditure of the Society for the year ended 31st August 2013.

Sonning:
16th October 2013

A.G.A. Williams
Chartered Accountant

Planning & Traffic Panel

Mike Hart, Chairman

The Panel in the past year has comprised Andy Bell (Secretary); Patrick Hamblin; David Bates; Brian O'Callaghan and John Argent with John Edmonds and Bob Hine as *ex-officio* members and myself as Chairman. Consultants to the panel are Ali Driver (Environment); Maureen Meer (Legal) and Allan Williams (South of A4). Sadly, we still do not have a representative for Sonning Eye.

Panel meetings to review planning applications have taken place monthly although a few have recently been cancelled due to the low level of significant new applications. We have also arranged a roster of panel members to attend Sonning Parish Council (SPC) Planning Committee meetings in order that our panel can coordinate its activities with SPC.

The Panel receives the weekly lists of planning applications and decisions published by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and South Oxfordshire County Council respectively. Panel members are circulated with relevant extracts from these lists and they are discussed at the monthly meetings or sooner if more urgent. Representations are made to the respective planning authority on issues that are seen to be significant. In the past year representations have been made in respect of the following:

- Redevelopment of the former Sonning Fire Station site. Both the conversion of the old Fire Station and the application for building a detached house on the adjacent land received planning approval from WBC despite representations from the Society and SPC. The Society expressed the view that whilst the last application was a great improvement on the previous proposals it was still excessively large for the plot size.

Education & Social Panel

Penny Feathers, Co-ordinator

Our 2012/13 programme began with a thought-provoking exploration of the Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve under the expert guidance of Grahame Hawke; it was followed by an excellent and generous tea at Mary Blustin's house.

In March we were delighted that Nick Siney was able to give his promised talk on local historical buildings, past and present. Knowledgeable and entertaining as ever, Nick was one of the 'surveyors' for the Conservation Area Appraisal; he shared his particular insights into the character of Sonning with a large audience. One of the key exhibits at the February public CAA consultation was an audio-visual presentation prepared by Jeremy Gilmore; by popular demand this was shown again before Nick Siney took the floor.

Our major event this summer was different in that it was a visit to Lord McAlpine's Museum and Railway at his estate in Fawley Hill near Henley. The Society booked 50 places so members and friends could enjoy the rare opportunity of visiting this working railway. The steam train ride through the estate was a delight and the museum exhibited fascinating memorabilia from around the country. The traditional fairground carousel brought back happy memories for many and a good day was had by all. The Panel has ideas for

- Demolition of August Field and replacement with 3 units in a barn-type building parallel to Charvil Lane and a detached house at right angles. Following the Planning Inspector's decision to turn down the appeal against an earlier refusal last year, a revised application was submitted which received approval. The Society had expressed its views to WBC that the proposals were inappropriate for its location within the Sonning Conservation Area.

- Positive representations have been submitted in respect of the redevelopment of The Cottage at Reading Blue Coat School and the refurbishment of the Palmer Pump in the High Street.
- Comments were sent to WBC about the negative effects of ever larger extensions to houses in Old Bath Road and West Drive.
- Both the Executive and this Panel have supported Sonning Eye residents in their petitions to limit the proposed expansion of gravel extraction.

The Panel has also actively supported SPC in drafting a new Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). The first draft was showcased at a public exhibition in Pearson Hall on 9-10 February 2013. A second draft is under way, with advice from the Association of Small Historic Towns and Villages (ASHTAV); it is planned to complete this for submission to WBC in December. Once finalised and adopted it will be an important reference document for future planning applications in the Conservation Area. ASHTAV meanwhile have drawn our attention to the Neighbourhood Planning legislation and the Society will be considering whether or not to embark upon the drafting of a Neighbourhood Plan, which would have statutory status and hence more teeth than the CAA.

other visits to nearby venues, so keep an eye on *Bridge* and *Sonning Parish Magazine* for 2014's programme.

The Society took a stand at the Village Show, and thanks go to Annabella Marks and everyone involved for making it such a successful day. For once the Heritage Open Days Weekend did not conflict, and thanks go to Diana Coulter, Brian O'Callaghan and Mark Green for leading five free, instructive and very well attended walks - this year entitled "Bricks, Bishops and other Riches".

As I write we are approaching our annual AGM/Supper. Last year the *Village Voices* book was dramatically launched! Sales have soared, both in Sonning and at local bookshops, so that it has more than covered the cost of publication. Congratulations to Mary Chapman and all her team. Although we hope for less drama on 23 November this year, we trust all attending will have a truly interesting and enjoyable evening! As ever thanks go to Annabella Marks, Pauline Simmonds, Diana Coulter, Gordon Owen, Catherine Penny, Joyce Reed, Patrick Hamblin and Lesley Green, all of whom are members of the Education and Social Panel. We are most grateful to them and everyone else who assists in any way to help us organise such an interesting programme.