

Minutes of 12th AGM, Pearson Hall, 21 November 2015

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Mike Hart welcomed everyone to the 12th Annual General Meeting of the Society and was pleased to see such a good turnout on a chilly evening.

2. APOLOGIES: had been received from Theresa and Philip May, Chris Clarke, Bob and Heather Hine, Barton and Elizabeth Guthrie, Patrick and Jo Hamblin, Diana Coulter and Brian O'Callaghan, Shelagh and Peter Flower and Jeremy and Caroline Gilmore.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the 11th Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 22 November 2014, were approved without amendment on the proposal of David Bates, seconded by Jonathan Crump.

4. BRIEF REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

a) Chairman's Report

Mike Hart thanked the retiring Committee for all their hard work over the year. He also thanked Penny Feathers for her continued support and Diana Coulter for her work as editor of *Bridge*. The Committee had met on six occasions and between Committee meetings all members had played an active part in running the Society. Committee meetings were open to all members who would be made most welcome. John Edmonds, the Society's President, would be sadly missed following his death in August 2015. He had attended Committee meetings right up until the time of his death and had kept all members of the Committee on their toes with his detailed knowledge of the constitution and his eagle eye for any typographical errors in the minutes. The Chairman listed the aims of the Society and suggested that they were as relevant today as when drawn up some 10 years ago. The Planning & Traffic Panel had continued to make representations to the planning authorities on a variety of planning issues and the Education & Social Panel had continued to arrange talks, visits and heritage walks, all of which had been well supported. The Chairman concluded by saying that membership of the Society had increased over the year. He said that new members were always welcome and that he looked forward to another successful year ahead.

b) Planning & Traffic Panel Report

Mike Hart presented Patrick Hamblin's report in his absence. The Panel had met monthly and attended all meetings of the Parish Council's Planning Committee as an observer, so that the latter's views on planning applications could be considered. The Panel had commented on various planning matters, including Mill House, Sonning Eye; Birchley, Old Bath Road; The Great House; August Field and Acre Field, Sonning; and Sonning Golf Club. The Panel had also supported the Sonning Eye Action Group with regard to the proposed infilling of gravel pits with inert waste and had pressed for the installation of cycle racks in various locations in Sonning. It had also organised the refurbishment of the gateway to the village in Sonning Lane, participated in a working group looking at traffic issues in Sonning and continued its work on the Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal. The draft appraisal report was now with Wokingham Borough Council for finalisation before being made available for public comment.

c) Education & Social Panel Report

Pauline Simmonds reported that it had been another busy and successful year. A fascinating talk in March on the Thames and its wildlife had been well attended as was the October talk by the Berkshire Family History Society on family trees and how to use the internet to research them. A visit to the ancient Hardwick Estate and Manor, near Mapledurham, in June had been another well-attended event. The guided tour, given by the owner, Sir Julian Rose, included viewing original Elizabethan plasterwork and panelling as well as a 'real' tennis court that was still in use today. The Heritage Walks in September had once again proved popular and the Society's stand at the Village Show had attracted a number of visitors, three of whom had joined the Society. Pauline Simmonds thanked Panel members for their hard work and Society members for their continued support.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Furness said that the financial report for the year to 31 August 2015 was set out in the Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2014/2015. He drew attention to the excess expenditure over income of £582, which he said was due mainly to the higher costs of the Annual General Meeting. Sales of the Village Voices book had slowed. A total of 365 books had now been sold, five since August 2015. There were no questions from the floor.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

It was reported that Allan Williams had agreed to continue as Independent Examiner for another year. Allan Williams was thanked for agreeing to do so.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Andy Bell took over the Chair for the election of the Chairman. He announced that there was one nomination only: Mike Hart proposed by David Bates and seconded by Bob Hine. Annabella Marks proposed and Penny Feathers seconded his election as Chairman, which was agreed unanimously.

Andy Bell handed back the Chair to Mike Hart for the election of the Society's three other officers: Vice Chairman: Bob Hine, proposed by Mike Hart, seconded by David Bates; Honorary Secretary: Andy Bell, proposed by Jean Hutchinson, seconded by Roger Hutchinson; and Honorary Treasurer: Alan Furness, proposed by Andy Bell, seconded by Sue Bell. It was proposed by Judith Hart and seconded by Linda Peters and agreed unanimously that the three aforementioned nominees be elected en bloc.

8. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mike Hart announced that there were two nominations for election to the Executive Committee. These were: Lesley Heaney, proposed by Shelagh Flower, seconded by Peter Flower; and Pauline Simmonds, proposed by Alan Furness, seconded by Penny Feathers. It was proposed by Jane Gascoine and seconded by Jonathan Crump and agreed unanimously that the two aforementioned nominees be elected en bloc.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Mike Hart invited the meeting to raise any other items of business.

i) Alastair Driver wished to give a quick update on Ali's pond. He said that it was 18 years since the reserve was created, during which there had been good times and bad. It was looked after by a team of volunteers, more of whom were required. He concluded by saying that he would pass around a piece of paper on which he would like people to sign up and join the 50/60 volunteers already on the list.

ii) Jane Gascoine asked what the Society was doing about a third Thames crossing. Mike Hart replied by saying that representations had been made in the past. A working group, made up of representatives from the various local authorities, had been established but progress was very slow.

iii) Ted Davey asked about road and footpath repairs in the village. Mike Hart said that this was an issue that was to be addressed in the forthcoming report by the Planning & Traffic Panel on traffic issues in Sonning.

There being no further business, Mike Hart closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their support and wishing them an enjoyable evening.



2015/2016

Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2015/2016

Executive Committee Report

Mike Hart, Chairman

The Executive Committee members this year have been: Mike Hart (Chairman), Bob Hine (Vice Chairman), Andy Bell (Hon. Secretary), Alan Furness (Hon. Treasurer), Jeremy Gilmore, Patrick Hamblin (Chairman of Planning & Traffic Panel), Lesley Heaney (Membership Secretary), Annabella Marks and Pauline Simmonds (Coordinator of Education & Social Panel). Trefor Fisher has played an active role as the Sonning Parish Council observer at committee meetings, helping to strengthen the links between the two organisations.

Your committee met six times during the year with good attendance at every meeting. Together with its loyal band of helpers the committee has continued to fulfil its mandate defined in the Society's constitution. The Education & Social Panel has kept up a high standard of events with a wide variety of talks on interesting subjects, all of which have been very well attended. Our Planning & Traffic Panel has met regularly and has made many representations to our local planning authorities both in favour and against planning applications which are judged against the Society's objectives of "high standards of planning and architecture" and "securing the preservation, protection, development and improvements of historic, natural or public interest". The ever-popular heritage walks have continued, with new guides helping to continue this tradition. Thanks to Diana Coulter we have continued to publish the *Bridge* magazine to its usual high standard.

I am pleased to report that the Conservation Area Appraisal is finally nearing fruition. The previous version was

adopted by Wokingham Borough Council in 1996 and work started on the current version in 2011 as a joint initiative between the Society and Sonning Parish Council. After a kick-off meeting which outline the purpose of the appraisal, teams of volunteers walked around an allocated survey area and recorded their impressions of the buildings, streets and open spaces. The results were then collated and turned into a cohesive document which went through several stages of review before the final draft was made available on the Wokingham Borough website for a public consultation. The photographs and text on the panels that you see in the hall tonight were displayed in Pearson Hall during this public consultation on two days last month. Comments from the public consultation will be reviewed and changes made as necessary before the final document is approved by Wokingham Borough Council as an "evidence based" document. The defining characteristics that are recorded in the Conservation Area Appraisal will then be used as yardsticks against which future planning applications will be judged.

The Society is most grateful to the teams of volunteers who analysed the distinctive features of the character areas and a special vote of thanks goes to Diana Coulter and Louise Ryan, then a recent graduate of Reading University and now a senior conservation professional, for their formative contributions to the final document.

Membership remains buoyant. We welcome our new members and thank them and our regular members for their interest and involvement in the Society's activities this year, details of which are given in the following pages.

Society Membership

Lesley Heaney, Membership Secretary

The Society's membership stands at 211, which is made up as follows:

- 3 Corporate
- 176 Double
- 32 Single

Whilst our membership remains fairly stable, we would always welcome new members.

Please let me know of any newcomers to the two villages. I will then deliver a welcome brochure to them.

A tasty reminder of the excellent talk in March, when beekeepers Jeremy Gilmore and Tracey Hicks provided fascinating insights into the secret lives of bees



Financial Report for year as at 31 August 2016

Alan Furness, Honorary Treasurer

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

Sales of the *Village Voices* book continue with income during the last year amounting to £148.80 for 16 copies sold. By the date of this report total income from book sales was £3,472.70 and 381 books had been sold.

As regards Other Activities, the excess of expenditure over income for other activities is £121.76 as analysed in the Financial Statement below, which together with the previous year's credit balance brought forward, shows a credit balance carried forward £3,188.86.

SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY

GENERAL FUND AT 31ST AUGUST 2016

	£
BALANCE AT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2015	
General	3,310.62
Village Voices	<u>2,887.05</u>
	6,197.67
EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	
General	(121.76)
Village Voices	<u>148.80</u>
	27.04
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2016	
General	3,188.86
Village Voices	<u>3,035.85</u>
	<u>6,224.71</u>

GENERAL FUND REPRESENTED BY:

CASH AT BANK - RESERVE ACCOUNT	6,200.00
CASH AT BANK - CURRENT ACCOUNT	<u>24.71</u>
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2016	<u>6,224.71</u>

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2015 TO 31ST AUGUST 2016

<u>INCOME</u>	£	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	£
MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,091.00	NEWSLETTER	452.79
AGM	1,337.90	AGM	1,427.52
ANCESTORS & ARCHIVES	197.00	ANCESTORS & ARCHIVES	100.68
SECRET LIVES OF BEES	194.00	SECRET LIVES OF BEES	62.93
TEA PARTY	460.00	TEA PARTY	350.47
BANK INTEREST	2.84	SUBSCRIPTIONS	109.00
		DONATION	500.00
		GENERAL EXPENSES	115.91
		LIABILITY INSURANCE	285.20
VILLAGE VOICES INCOME:		VILLAGE VOICES EXPENDITURE:	
VILLAGE VOICES BOOK SALES	148.80	Miscellaneous	0.00
		EXCESS (DEFICIT) INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	
		General	(121.76)
		Village Voices	<u>148.80</u>
			27.04
	<u>3,431.54</u>		<u>3,431.54</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 2016.

Sonning:
26th September 2016

A.G.A. Williams
Chartered Accountant

Planning & Traffic Panel

Patrick Hamblin, Chairman

This is my third year as Chairman of the Planning and Traffic Panel. The members are Andy Bell (Secretary), David Bates, Mike Hart, Bob Hine and Brian O'Callaghan, with additional assistance from Prof Ali Driver (environmental advisor), Maureen Meer (legal advisor) and Allan Williams (south of A4 advisor). We are still currently short of representation from Sonning Eye.

Panel meetings continue to take place monthly in the Sonning Club. The dates are on the Society's website (www.sonning.org.uk) and the meetings are open to any member who wishes to attend. Please check before attending with a Panel member as it is sometimes necessary to change the date at fairly short notice.

The Society is also represented by an observer at the meetings of the Sonning Parish Council (SPC) Planning Committee so that the views of the SPC can be considered by the Panel. We have attended all of the Planning Committee meetings in this last twelve months.

Weekly lists of planning applications for both Sonning (published by Wokingham Borough Council) and Sonning Eye (published by South Oxfordshire District Council) are received and circulated to Panel members for discussion at the monthly meetings or earlier if necessary. From November 2015 to October 2016 a total of 63 applications have been reviewed. Representations are made to the respective planning authority on issues that are seen to be significant. In the past year representations have been made relating to various issues in respect of the following:

- Unit 1, Sonning Farm
- Land adjacent to Model Farm Cottages, Bath Road (two representations)
- Pavilion, Holme Park Sports Ground (two representations)
- Hillside, Pearson Road
- Apricus House, Garde Road
- Sonning Golf Club development, Pound Lane.

The Society has continued to support the Sonning Eye Action Group relating to flooding issues.

In May 2016 four cycle racks were installed outside the Pearson Hall. The Society is continuing to pursue the provision of further cycle racks in Sonning, with the next racks to be provided in the St George's Playing Field.

Our continuing thanks go to Ali Driver, who has been very much involved with Network Rail in connection with the work carried out in the Sonning Cutting. Members will recall that Network Rail contractors cleared a very large number of trees and undergrowth from this area, which was a superb natural habitat for birds and wildlife. Ali continues to monitor the situation.

The Panel felt the parking problems in Sonning were becoming increasingly worse and recommended to SPC that a small joint working group be set up to consider the problems and hopefully also consider at least some solutions. The first meeting was held on 28th October and was very constructive.

Education & Social Panel

Pauline Simmonds, Coordinator

With the help of an excellent team, the Panel has provided another varied and interesting programme of educational and social events.

One of our Society members, Jeremy Gilmore, supported by Tracey Hicks, started the year in March with an entertaining account of 'The Life of Bees'. The audience were fascinated by their 'secrets', asked numerous questions and inspected the equipment, including a real hive, a swarm net and of course some home-grown honey!

The Matthews Brickyard near Chesham, visited by the Society in 2014, influenced our Scarecrow in May. It featured a bearded 'Victorian Bricklayer', with appropriate tools, about to repoint the Chairman's house in Pearson Road!

In June the Champagne Tea Party in West Drive was primarily a social event to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday but members again were asked to 'get involved'. Gordon Jones, the host and Joyce Reed, one of our Panel members, produced two challenging quizzes. Searching for clues around the garden was good fun and greatly enjoyed but some of the answers still

needed discussion during the tea and cakes that followed!

Diana Coulter arranged four Heritage Walks in September plus two extra private sessions, booked by the Radstock WI and a local U3A group. We extended the publicity slightly this year and useful or good positive feedback was received. The tours reach a varied audience and the attendance figures indicate that they still provide a very valuable service to locals and visitors alike.

The 2016 programme ended with an excellent talk in the Pearson Hall about the development of Salisbury Cathedral by Stephen Dunn, the head guide. His detailed slides and extensive knowledge inspired many afterwards to plan a return or future visit to the historic Close and its surrounding area.

All events were well attended. Penny Feathers did an excellent job coordinating the ticket sales and two other Panel members, Patrick Hamblin and Annabella Marks

provided some new ideas and practical help behind the scenes. And of course our last Panel member, Lesley Green, is the Guest Speaker after the Supper. So very much a team effort. We thank them all for their support.

