

MINUTES OF SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Held in the St. Sarik Room at 8pm

Wednesday 14 December 2005

1. PRESENT: Chris Clarke (CC), John Edmonds (JE), Lynette Padfield (LP), Diana Coulter (DC), Carole Barnett (CB), Nick Marks (NM) and Penny Feathers (PF). APOLOGIES: Pat Doyle (PD), Dennis Mason (DM), Brian O'Callaghan (BOC), and Sally Hughes (SH)

CC said that before going further he would like to welcome Ken Henderson and formally co-opt to the Executive Committee. This was proposed by JE, seconded by PF and unanimously agreed.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: These were agreed and signed by CC.

3. TRAFFIC PANEL: KH said that he hoped to formalise the structure of the panel. Members would rotate taking the minutes and there would be no formal secretary. Work to be undertaken included chasing the 3rd bridge question and looking at pavements, paths and 'the street scene'. There were 9 people on the panel, 4 of who were computer users and KH intended to ask John Russell and Chris Fry to join them. Between them they would monitor the websites of Reading, Wokingham, Oxfordshire and S. Oxfordshire Councils. They would also gain information from the Parish Council's minutes, the Highway's authority website and local newspapers.

Sonning Bridge. Frank Brown from Wokingham DC would give a talk about the computer study by Oxon/Reading and Wokingham at Pearson Hall in February 2006. It was hoped that many people would take the opportunity to attend and this could be advertised on the S&SE S website and in Bridge.

4. PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL PANEL. JE said that a general account of the Panel's work was in his report to the AGM and the article in Bridge No. 5. The Panel met at North Lodge on 27 October 2005 when he had handed over the Chairmanship to Pat Doyle. Recent developments included:

Greendown. Wokingham DC was considering this that evening, which explained the absence of PD and BOC. They with Carole Rose were representing the Society, and PD would be speaking against the application, as would Pam Glasspool for SPC. As had happened with Old Walls, the WDC officers were recommending approval, so the case could go either way. Moreover, it was even more divisive than Old Walls. A petition against had been signed by 50 residents, but another petition saying "no objection" had been signed by 20. He noted that Society members featured on both lists, which included many who lived a considerable distance from the site. This illustrated once more the problem with people "signing things" when they had little idea of the facts of the case.

Dower House. The applicant was now running two different applications. The Society continued to oppose both and was hoping to persuade SPC to do likewise.

Great House (White Hart). Work continued in the car park, based on a planning application going back to the 1980s. He understood that a local resident was objecting strongly on legal grounds. The Panel would continue to watch this one.

5. EDUCATION. DC reported that the Woodyer booklet had broken even. Copies had been distributed to the 6 copyright libraries, which may eventually bring one or two orders. MERL, Reading library, Surrey History Centre and Wokingham libraries had purchased copies. Subsequent purchases would help to reduce the £151.00 deficit on the Heritage Open Day itself.

Bricks of Yesteryear Talk – Friday 27th January 2006. At the time of the meeting about 30 tickets had been sold. This would be advertised in the next edition of the Parish Magazine and forthcoming issues of the Berkshire Local History newsletter. It was also hoped to get some press coverage.

Future Events:

March Talk and May Walks. At the time of the meeting, the March talk had not been resolved, but the May walks were O.K.

Scarecrow Trail. 28 and 29 May 2006. It was hoped to have a Society stand and Scarecrow (possibly Mr. Woodyer), at North Lodge. PF would speak to Pam Glasspool about this. An appeal for help with the scarecrow construction could be made in the next edition of Bridge.

Cathy Hail had suggested a paper theatre Extravaganza. Although interesting, it was agreed that this did not fit closely with the Society's objectives.

Website. Following the "Restored to Glory" programme (BBC 2 on 1 December) on Grafton Vicarage by Henry Woodyer, there had been a noticeable increase in the visits to the website.

DC asked Panels to liaise directly with Steve about contributions to the website.

Email address. Five available – must have one for the Webmaster, but we could have one for each Panel and for Bridge (or leave one vacant in case we have a 'cause' from time to time). DC would welcome thoughts by 6 January, so that Steve could set it up. It was agreed to invite Steve to the next Executive meeting to thank him for his work and ask his advice on the way forward.

Press Officer. Bart Guthrie had declined to take on this position, so it was back to the drawing board.

Oral History Project & Guiding. DC was still working on the special project with C of E primary school children late spring/early summer. Mary Chapman was still going to attend the Oral History Society course. DC would try and get the guides together in the New Year.

Bridge. Copy deadline for the winter issue is 15 January as DC was aiming to distribute it the weekend immediately after Nick Siney's talk.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Guidance for Panels). CC and JE circulated copies of draft guidelines for the Planning and Traffic Panels, which had been prepared by JE and agreed by PD and KH. It was agreed that the two chairmen would now seek the agreement of their respective panels and report back to the next meeting.

7. AGM – 19 November 2005. DC said some members had said that the business meeting was conducted very briskly. A discussion followed about the possibility of changing the format and instead of a speaker encouraging a discussion with panel representatives. Questions could be sought prior to the AGM so those replying knew what they would be asked. CC suggested sounding members out to see what they thought.

8. MEMBERSHIP. CB said the current membership stood at 229. 78 had already renewed their subscriptions.

9. SOCIAL COMMITTEE. PF said it was still hoped to hold a lunch at Lynette Padfield's home in June 2006.

10. TREASURER'S REPORT. DM was not present at the meeting, but had said that all was well with the account and 6-month liability insurance had been taken out through the Civic Trust. This would be renewed in April.

11. CIVIC TRUST. JE reported on the 12th November meeting of some 20 civic societies in Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire, hosted by the Farnham Society. He, and Carole and Nigel Rose represented S&SE S, and had found the experience invaluable. They were much encouraged by the very close links between the local councils and the Farnham Society, especially regarding Conservation Areas, and interested to hear that some smaller societies faced larger development plans than we did.

12. SONNING PARISH COUNCIL. KH (briefed by SH), and JE (briefed by PD), said that apparently the SPC meeting the previous evening had featured some discussion of the Society, with one Councillor saying there should be no contact with the "un-elected" Society and another remarking "who are these people?" PD had suggested that CC should write to all Parish Councillors.

JE said that he had spoken that afternoon to an official at the Civic Trust. She said this problem did occur very occasionally (though more often the other way round, with a Society official out of control!) She confirmed JE's belief that Councillors and Society officials could liaise informally on all relevant topics. She added that it was usual to have at least one local Councillor on a Society's Executive Committee, and JE knew that this was so in Henley and Hurst. He therefore thought we should indicate to both Parish Councils that the society would welcome a representative from each; we could then consider co-opting them onto the Executive Committee.

CC agreed and said that after Christmas CC would write to each Parish Council explaining what the Society does and attach pertinent extracts from the Constitution.

13. NOTICE BOARD. Nothing to report. DC said this is currently with DM and PD, who were waiting to receive guidance about the size.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS. NM reported on the western corridor and the take over of parishes on the other side of the river. Reading looks at land along the river as part of Reading, and therefore part of Reading for planning and traffic. CC suggested that perhaps we should ask Nigel Rose to look at the relevant documents and give advice.

Licensing. PF said that the Society's AGM had been included as one of the events for the Pearson Hall. The necessary form can be obtained from Lesley Bates, which PF would do.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 9:10p.m.

Please see separate attachment for the dates of Executive Committee meetings and AGM in 2006.