

**MINUTES OF THE SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD IN THE ST SARIK ROOM, SONNING, ON WEDNESDAY
9 DECEMBER 2009, COMMENCING AT 8.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Bob Hine (BH), John Edmonds (JE), Mark Green (MG), Alan Furness (AF), Carole Barnett (CB), Gary Robinson (GR), Brian O'Callaghan (BOC), Annabella Marks (AM), Penny Feathers (PF) and Andy Bell (AB).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Diana Coulter, Mike Hart and Lynette Padfield.

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Bob Hine welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Executive Committee following the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 21 November 2009.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14 October 2009 were approved, subject to the following amendments:

- a) Item 3, line 1: the neighbour to be identified as Maureen Meer
- b) Item 4, line 4: 'comtemptuous' to read 'contentious'
- c) Item 9, line 1: 'Any Bell' to read 'Andy Bell'
- d) Item 12(a): to read 'GR said that it wasn't possible to do the Ipod walking/talking tour using the present website. BOC said that he would look into alternatives. Ali Driver was also interested in a similar pod-casted walk along the towpath.'

3. MATTERS ARISING

- a) Item 4: GR reported that Trevor Ottlewski had agreed to join the Planning & Traffic Panel.
- b) Item 9: JE said that it would be helpful if the Society's Constitution were set out in a small booklet, copies of which could be given to all Executive Committee members. MG said that he would prefer to have it electronically. After discussion, it was agreed that the Constitution should be updated to reflect the resolutions about combining the Traffic and Transport and Planning and Environment Panels and the extension to the Treasurer's term of office, following which copies would be emailed to all Executive Committee members, with a copy to be available at each Executive Committee meeting. AB agreed to undertake the updating and circulation, liaising with GR as necessary.
- c) Item 9: BH said that the Annual General Meeting had gone very well and that several nice comments about the evening had been received. He added that Ali Driver's presentation had been particularly well received. BH thanked all those who had participated in making it such a success and asked BOC to convey this to DC. CB and PF were also thanked for organising such an excellent meal.
- d) Item 12b: MG reported that 39 trees had been planted by Sonning Parish Council (SPC) as part of the national tree-planting event on Saturday 5 December 2009.

4. CO-OPTION

BH suggested that PF and LP should be co-opted onto the Executive Committee. This was favourably received. PF's co-option was proposed by JE and seconded by MG while LP's co-option was proposed by CB and seconded by AM. Both proposals were carried unanimously.

5. PLANNING & TRAFFIC PANEL

a) Planning

GR said that things had been fairly quiet with only two new applications. One was in respect of Uri Geller's proposed house extension involving further bedrooms and a gym. The other was in respect of an internal development of Mike Hart's house in Pearson Road. The Panel were looking at these applications but neither was thought to be contentious.

JE said that the application to develop the Fire Station site was now with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and should be out for consultation later in the week. He added that there could be a shortage of time to respond because of the holidays. It was understood that a senior member of the planning staff at WBC had some serious objections to the project. BH said that the scheme was of benefit to the village and that he believed that the architect, who had done a lot of work in the village previously, had done a good job on this project. GR agreed to keep the Committee informed of developments.

AM said that there had been a number of developments regarding the extraction of gravel from Sonning Eye. She had spoken to Barry Steele and that they were to meet in early January on his return from South Africa. More information was needed on recycling hardcore and waste and the value of agricultural land after its eventual reconstitution. David Woodward had approached Reading University regarding the availability of some students to assist with the collection of data. Judith Cassingham had also expressed an interest in joining the panel as a representative from Sonning Eye. GR suggested that the Society needed to determine what approach to take. He said that he believed that no mineral extraction application had ever been turned down and that the strategy should be to mitigate how it is done. He added that he had asked Ali Driver about the restoration proposal and had been told that suggestions had been made some five years ago that the site could be restored with the introduction of a wetlands area. BH asked about the proposed public exhibition and AM said that she believed that it would take place but it was not clear when. In bringing the discussion to a close, BH said that the Panel would need to discuss the situation in more detail when more information was known and that the Society should have a strong presence at the exhibition.

b) Traffic

GR reported that he had recently attended the inaugural meeting of the SPC's enlarged Highways Working Group involving co-opted members of the Society. Unfortunately, not everyone had been able to attend. A major outcome of the meeting was that a brainstorming session was to be held in early January to look at 'where we want to be with or without a third bridge'. It was likely that different sub-groups would look at different aspects with the help of a facilitator. Much work needed to be done. BH asked about the Working Group's thoughts on the Society's presentation regarding traffic signs. GR responded by saying that this was also being looked at by the Working Group, including the gateways into the village.

JE commented that he thought that the Vicar's indignation over the photographs used in the report was fully justified. In response, BOC said that the photographs were meant as examples of the proliferation of signs within the village and not necessarily examples of those to be removed.

MG said that another HGV survey had been conducted. This time it had been staged on the Oxfordshire side of the river. Four potential prosecutions were now being investigated by Oxfordshire Trading Standards. He added that he had attended a recent Neighbourhood Action Group meeting and had heard that the police were now checking vehicles at the same location using automatic number plate recognition technology. These checks had been very successful. BH said that the work was making a difference and that all those involved should be congratulated.

6. EDUCATION PANEL

In the absence of DC, PF gave a report from notes provided by DC.

a) **Events**

The clear-up of Ali's Pond, scheduled for Saturday 24 October 2009, was cancelled due to bad weather and will now be re-scheduled in Autumn 2010.

The Village Voices exhibition will run at the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) from Saturday 9 January 2010 to Sunday 25 April 2010. A private viewing of the exhibition for an invited guest list, including representatives from other local societies, local record offices, officers of the Society and other members of the great and good, is to be held on Friday 15 January 2010. Two special group visits had also been arranged for the afternoons of Friday 19 February 2010 and Saturday 20 March 2010, at which some of the contributors would be present to talk to visitors. The group visits had been advertised in a flyer distributed with the Winter 2009 edition of Bridge. If these group events prove popular there is the possibility of putting on a third visit in April 2010.

Consideration was been given to organising a visit to BBONT nature reserve at Bix in the Spring of 2010.

b) **Bridge**

The next issue of Bridge is scheduled for delivery over the weekend of 27/28 February 2010, with a deadline for contributions of Saturday 13 February 2010. BH suggested that the Committee work to a deadline of one week earlier, because of slippage.

Ineke McCulloch had kindly offered to take over the Thames Street/Charvil Lane drop. The 'vacancy' for a distributor advertised in Bridge was for Sonning Eye. David Woodward was kindly helping out but did not wish to do it on a long-term basis. AM suggested that Jane Gascoine might be willing to help and CB agreed to talk to her on the Society's behalf.

c) **Oral History Project**

AM said that Malcolm Stansfield had written a piece on the project for the Winter 2009 edition of Bridge. She added that a few more recordings were to be undertaken and then possibly a book. BH said that many people continue to get much pleasure from the project. He read to the Committee a letter that he had received from Mary Chapman thanking the Society for the beautiful bowl that had been presented to her at the AGM. He also read an email that he had received from Mary Chapman informing him that SSE Awards for All had said that they were 'very pleased to see that you had delivered a successful project and had used your award money to make a positive contribution to your community and that they would now close their file'.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

AF had circulated the accounts for the period to 9 December 2009. He pointed out that the Village Voices project was in credit by around of £1,400. This was after a recent payment to Hannibal Design (£290) and the return to the Ernest Cook Trust of unspent funds (£185) that had been awarded to the project specifically for the production of children's books. Some 200 DVDs remained and, as the cost of these had already been factored in, their eventual sale would improve the credit figure. Overall, the Society had a balance of a little over £3,700, most of which was held in a reserve account and a savings account. AF added that subscriptions for 2010 were now due and that these would improve the financial position. BH thanked AF for his clear reporting and said that a busy time was ahead with the receipt of subscriptions. BOC said that there could be a problem with direct debits if subscriptions were increased. BH responded by saying that any decision to increase subscriptions could be left until nearer the next AGM but JE drew the Committee's attention to Item 4 of the Constitution which said that the subscription rates shall be a matter for the Executive Committee.

AF said that in order for the new Honorary Secretary, Andy Bell, to become a signatory to the Society's bank account it was necessary to pass two resolutions:

IT WAS RESOLVED that the new Honorary Secretary, Andy Bell, be added to the list of signatories to the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society's bank account and that the outgoing Honorary Secretary, Penny Feathers, be removed from the list of signatories to the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society's bank account. The resolution was proposed by AF, seconded by CB and passed unanimously.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the National Westminster Bank continue as the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society's bank. The resolution was proposed by MG, seconded by GR and passed unanimously.

8. SOCIAL COMMITTEE

PF said that there was little to report. The intention was still to hold a Summer Luncheon in the garden of Sonningdene, Pearson Road, on 20 June 2010. BH said that he would talk to the owners of Sonningdene to confirm that they were willing to have the event staged in their garden.

9. MEMBERSHIP

BH thanked CB for the membership list that she had recently distributed. CB said that subscriptions for 2010 were already coming in and that three new members were pending.

10. OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETIES

BH thanked AF for sending to him the Civic Society Bulletin, Issue 5. He said that it was an interesting 12 page document, which other members of the Committee would probably enjoy receiving. AB agreed to forward copies to all Committee members.

11 MEETING DATES IN 2010

Following discussion, it was agreed that Wednesday was probably the best day of the week for Committee meetings. Dates for 2010 were agreed as follows:

WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2010
 WEDNESDAY 14 APRIL 2010
 WEDNESDAY 9 JUNE 2010
 WEDNESDAY 4 AUGUST 2010
 WEDNESDAY 6 OCTOBER 2010

It was also agreed that the next AGM would be held on Saturday 20 November 2010. PF reminded the Committee that a speaker was required for the AGM and BH asked the Committee to give some thought as to who might be suitable. GR suggested someone from the Civic Society but BH felt that it would be better to have someone from within the Society. It was understood that Gordon Jones was willing to give a talk on Berkshire's Boundaries but this was felt to be more appropriate for another evening rather than the AGM.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) BH told the Committee that he had received a card from PF thanking the Society for the gift, which she was to use on something for her garden.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 9:20 p.m.